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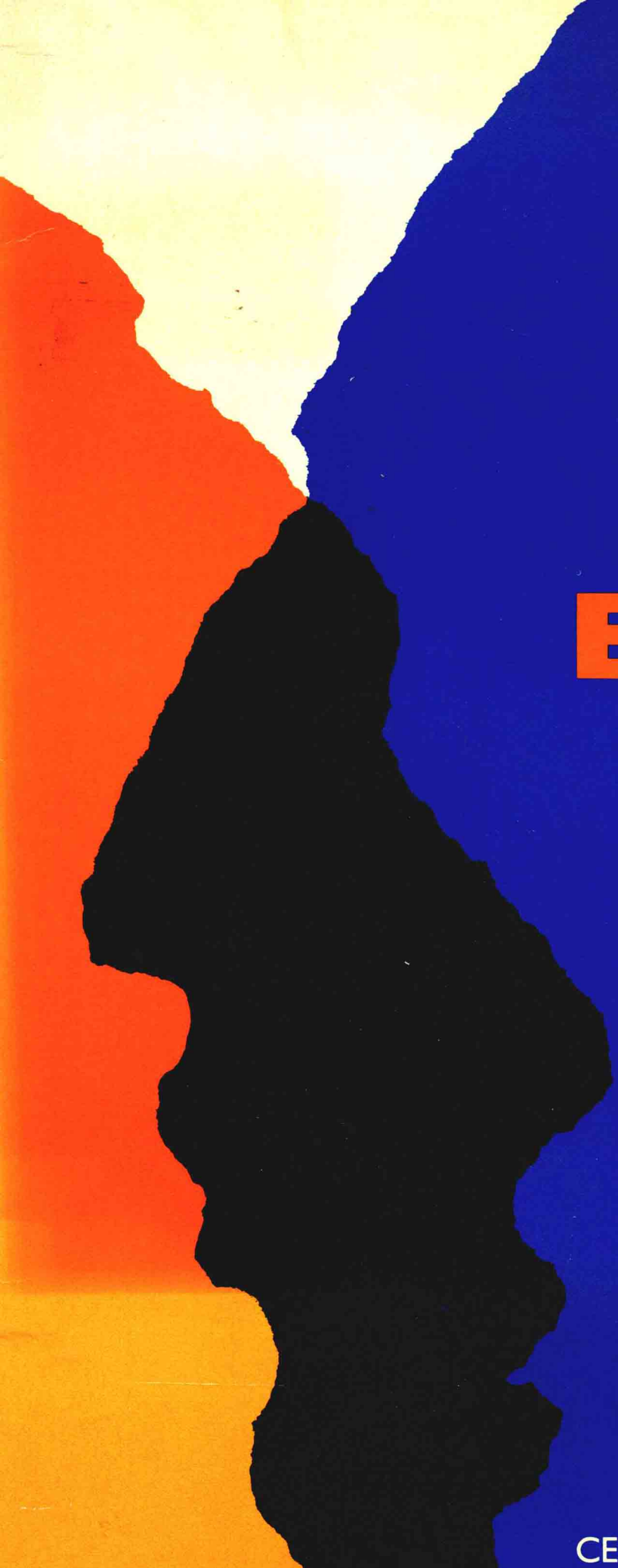

Bilingual Education Series: 10

Faces and Facets of Bilingualism by Wallace E. Lambert, Catherine E. Snow & Beverly A. Goldfield, Anna Uhl Chamot, Stephen R. Cahir

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Introduction

In the opening essay of this volume, Wallace Lambert presents us with some diverse social and psychological correlates of bilingualism. He asks us to consider bilingualism as an important world phenomenon that takes different forms and has different correlates and consequences in various places.

Two observations are particularly important as we attempt to understand bilingualism and to take a closer look at the implementation and efficacy of bilingual education as an educational alternative for children in the United States. First, when bilingualism is defined broadly, there are many more people in the world who are bilingual than are monolingual and there are many more individuals whose schooling is in a second language than those who are educated in their mother tongue. Furthermore, in large areas of the world, bilingualism is a way of life, a social and linguistic circumstance to be accepted, drawn on, nurtured, and cherished; it is not a problem, a difficulty, a deficit to be overcome.

It is within this spirit that we present this volume of essays prepared by a distinguished group of researcher-scholar-teachers on behalf of the Center for Applied Linguistics in collaboration with the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. These papers are intended to examine bilingualism and to provide explicit information for teachers about the ways in which they can help language minority children nurture and sustain their first language while acquiring a language of wider communication--English. The time must soon come in the United States when we cease to regard bilingual education as a form of compensatory education and instead look on it as a form of enrichment education.

G. Richard Tucker
Center for Applied Linguistics

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Bilingualism: Its Nature & Significance

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One of the wonders of the social world is the capacity humans have for creating a variety of languages. Even more wonderful, in my thinking, are the potential linkups we have between and among languages because of people who are bilingual.

Suppose for a moment that we had no modern communication systems and that an important message had to be circulated throughout the world by person-to-person communication. Let's suppose that the message is a socially significant one--for instance, "eating acorns protects one from cancer"--and suppose that the discovery took place in the toe of Italy and the news is to be relayed up to the Swiss, Yugoslav, and French borders and from there out around the world. Although the message would certainly have a bumpy transmission through numerous dialect communities in Italy itself (Hall, 1980) and through various language groups in multilingual Yugoslavia, it would ultimately penetrate all language barriers.

The most important elements in the relay, of course, would be bidialectic or bilingual people, and they would be found in high concentrations at the borders of each linguistic community. They would have developed their bidialectic or bilingual skills through communication experiences in the region of overlap of the two codes, or they might be migrants from one region to another, meaning that they brought their old-community code along with them. In either case, chances are that they would be less versed in the written form of the other language than in the spoken form.

Of course some bonafide residents of each community could also be bilingual if they had the interest and inquisitiveness (like that of an anthropologist) to get to know another community's language, literature, and culture. This more educated subgroup would likely be better versed in the written than the spoken form of the other language. As we shall see, the ways people become bilingual make important differences.

At certain relay points, only a few people would be bilingual enough to translate the message, whereas at other points many bilinguals would be available. An English version of the message might pass without need of translation among large numbers of educated Danes or Swedes, whereas a Danish or Swedish version would stop abruptly at the ports of England or France before a Danish-to-English or Swedish-to-French bilingual could be found. Thus, certain languages at certain times in history end up high on a hierarchy of language status or usefulness while others have little usefulness outside a restricted community. Where one's language falls in this hierarchy influences one's attitude toward learning another language; those with a high-status language wonder why they need to know any other language, whereas those with a low-status language realize they must.

My aim here is to describe what it is to be one of these critical message relayers and, more generally, what the social significance of being bilingual is. First of all, bilinguals are people who, because of ancestry, interest, or sheer place of residence, have social and emotional connections with some "other" place and some "other" group. The demarcation between "own" group and "other" group is emphasized more by monolinguals than bilinguals, for it is the monolingual person who is especially likely to wonder and ask questions about bilingualism, questions such as: Can one really depend upon the allegiances of those who are partly connected elsewhere? The monolingual, who is shut out of the communication flow in a bilingual's other language, often becomes suspicious (sometimes even paranoid) about what might be being communicated in the unknown code.

It is just a short step, then, to where the monolingual would become concerned about social policies that might encourage either societal or individual forms of bilingualism. For a society, the argument goes, the more bilinguals there are, the less integrated and cohesive (and thus the less productive) the society must be; for individuals, the more bilingual they become, the less integrated their personalities must be. Of course, the argument continues, there will always be a need for bilinguals to translate and relay messages from one ethnolinguistic group to another and that chore can be done best by those who are in transition--still bilingual but on the road to real integration in the new group. In any case, translating and message relaying might best be considered as mechanical, relatively low-status operations. There is no sense in encouraging or aggrandizing bilingualism at any level. It is quite a different matter, however, when the better educated within one's own ethnolinguistic group learn other languages and learn about other people's ways of life. Their bilinguality and their allegiances are not questioned so long as they can prove that they have deep, unshakable roots in the home society.

Only recently has this traditional view of bilingualism been challenged, and the challenge has come mainly from new research findings in the behavioral sciences. Consequently, we now have a clearer picture of what bilingualism is and how it works. Rather than being a person divided between two linguistic and cultural groups, belonging to neither one fully, the bilingual can be said to have the potential of belonging comfortably to both ethnolinguistic groups and to be a well-integrated person as a consequence. At the society level there is a growing appreciation for the presence of bilinguals who, in the minds of some people in both developed and developing nations, are beginning to be seen as a precious national resource.

To arrive at this new perspective, researchers began by checking on some widespread beliefs--for example, the belief that being bilingual results in some type of mental confusion or retardation. Carefully conducted surveys of the performance on intelligence and school achievement tests found that bilinguals, instead of being handicapped, were actually scoring higher than matched monolinguals on IQ tests and moving along as swiftly if not more swiftly in school (see Lambert, 1978, and Cummings, 1979, for reviews of the pertinent research studies).

Then researchers began to ask questions about the mind of the bilingual. Does it function as well as the monolingual's mind? We now have several reasons to argue that it may be something more and something better than the monolingual mind. For one thing, the fully

bilingual person manages to work effectively with two linguistic systems and to keep the two functionally separated (see Lambert, 1969). For example, the bilingual can listen to a long list of words read word by word, half presented in one language and half in the other in a mixed order, and remember not only as many as a monolingual can when the whole list comes in one language, but also almost never make translation errors in recall, i.e., saying grapefruit when pamplemousse was the word actually presented. Furthermore, the two systems provide the bilingual with a cross-language and cross-cultural comparative perspective that the monolingual rarely experiences, e.g., a realization of the important differences that exist in shades of meaning across languages, not only in the meanings of words but also in the meanings of gestures, sounds, and pitches.

This sensitivity to meaning that comes with bilingualism deepens one's understanding of concepts. It becomes clear that concepts have distinctive meanings in the context of each linguistic system, and this realization broadens one's perspective on language and reality. Through experience, bilinguals realize that words are only arbitrarily attached to referents (e.g., the things we sit on are called chaises in one system, Stuhls in another). This awareness protects bilinguals from the traps of "reification" i.e., believing that because there is a name for something, that something necessarily exists, or that names and referents are naturally linked and inseparable. As a consequence, bilinguals are better able to think beyond the bounds of linguistic systems and to play and create with words and concepts. It is as though bilingualism provides persons with a mental stereoscope, enabling them to see concepts in perspective, and this is perhaps what Wilder Penfield meant when on several occasions he argued that "the bilingual brain is a better brain."

A word of caution is called for, though, because not all bilinguals are able to maintain functional equivalence in their two languages, nor are all able to reap the advantages of bilinguality. Many are held up in their progress toward full bilingualism because of personal and motivational reasons (see Gardner and Lambert, 1972), and many, because of society's insensitivities, are forced to abandon their bilinguality (see Lambert, 1978).

As for the healthiness of the bilingual's personality, the few research findings so far available reveal no signs of disturbance or maladjustment that can be attributed to bilingualism. For example, young people who become functionally bilingual through immersion programs benefit by increased self-esteem and confidence because of the experience (see Lambert and Tucker, 1972), and those who were permitted to become bilingual and bicultural through early family experiences develop a deep appreciation for their parents and the roles parents play, at the same time as they benefit from the cultural diversity represented by their parents (see Aellen and Lambert, 1969).

Recent research by sociolinguists has also forced a re-examination of the effects of linguistic and cultural pluralism on the economic and social development of societies. Stanley Lieberson and colleagues, for example, in their cross-national comparisons of mother-tongue diversity and national development find no substance to the belief that mother-tongue diversity hampers the economic or social development of nations (Lieberson and Hanson, 1974). This new research has direct implications for developed nations like the United States and Canada which receive

large numbers of immigrants. There are signs that these nations are experimenting with changes in their social and educational policies so as to protect the languages and cultures of newcomers. Thus, there may be the beginnings of an appreciation for languages and cultures as precious societal resources. There are of course serious and cogent counter arguments to such changes, and much more research is called for before we can expect fundamental modifications in national policies on societal pluralism (see, for example, Rabushka and Shepsle, 1972).

It turns out then that many of the bilingual person's problems of adjusting and coping are determined primarily by the attitudes and reactions of amorphous collectivities of people in society. On a person-to-person basis, things usually go more smoothly. But society is harsh and often merciless because people in collectivities pick up on the slightest sign of ethnicity--including the way a person uses language--and read all sorts of things into it, often things that aren't really there, except in the minds of the "reader." Take the accents bilinguals often have in their speech. Accents reveal in an instant the whole experience of expatriation and migration that is sometimes a joyous affair but often a spirit-wrenching one. For many listeners, accents conjure up stereotypes about "foreigner" or "stranger in our midst," with all the attendant suspicions about bilingual/bicultural people with divided allegiances and the like. Society thus makes up its collective mind about people on the basis of small things like accents and language styles.

Of course the status hierarchy of languages works itself into these judgments, and thus bilinguals with humble backgrounds are singled out and hurt most. Research is now exploring this social judgment-making process. For instance, tape recordings are made of a series of speakers, each reading a standard passage. In the series some speakers are bilingual or bidialectic so that they give two renditions, one with and one without an accent or a foreign language. These readings are presented to listeners who are asked to judge the personality makeup of each speaker. The listeners are kept ignorant of the fact that the same speakers appear at different places in the series.

What is astonishing in such studies is the fact that so many listeners, from all walks of life, attribute biased, stereotyped traits to a speaker according to the language or accent guise the speaker momentarily adopts. Thus, the accent or the other language evokes in large proportions of listeners an image of a less dependable, less socially attractive, less likely to succeed person than is the case when the same person drops his accent and "speaks white" (see Lambert, 1967; Giles and Powesland, 1975).

There is, of course, no truth to these attributions, but true or not, they are so crystalized and wide-spread in so many societies that they constitute a formidable barrier to interpersonal communication and understanding. Knowledge about this process paves the way for correctives, and these are now being tried out. For example, innovative approaches to learning about other languages and cultures are being introduced to children in school settings, and these seem to have a corrective effect (see Lambert and Tucker, 1972).

These studies of reactions to speech style indicate that society puts great pressure on ethnolinguistic minority groups to shed the traces of old cultures, languages included, and to embrace the new. This pressure usually means that members of a less prestigious ethno-

linguistic community are expected to accommodate to some vague but powerful norm about the expected and acceptable language of communication. They are induced to put aside their native or home language and even the accented traces associated with it. They are expected, in other words, to venture on a route toward bilingualism that essentially subtracts the home language by shifting the focus to the new, usually more prestigious, language of the host culture. We refer to this form of bilingualism, where the language of the new country comes to substitute for the original home language as "subtractive" bilingualism, implying that in the long run the bilingualism is more apparent than real since one language is progressively put aside or subtracted.

Some now believe that this experience leaves ethnolinguistic minority group members--adults as well as children--in a psychological limbo and that it contributes to the often noted incapacity they have with both native and new-nation languages and the difficulties they have in achieving in school or in occupations (see Lambert, 1978). By way of contrast, "additive" bilingualism characterizes those who are at home and well rooted in their own language and culture but who delve seriously into the mastery of a second or foreign language. Additive bilingualism provides opportunities for mainstreamers to "add" one or more languages to their repertories and to enjoy a number of personal advantages--in self-confidence, openness of mind, intellectual enrichment--as a consequence of becoming bilingual (Lambert and Tucker, 1972; Genesee and Lambert, 1980).

The challenge for social planners and educators in this decade, then, is to help transform instances of subtractive bilingualism into additive ones. Some research on how such transformations take place are available (see Lambert, 1978; Lambert, Giles, and Picard, 1975), but much more has to be done. These transformations involve radical changes in collective thinking. Instead of being pressured to accommodate and to put their home languages behind them, the ethnolinguistic minority group is given an opportunity to develop fully the home language by being schooled in the early years through that language so that it can be written and read as well as spoken and understood. The "rooting" of the home language in this fashion is coordinated with an independent program of study conducted through the national language, enabling the "minority" group young person to be at home in both languages and cultures.

As I see it, our best chance to meet this challenge is to recognize that there are two faces to bilingualism, a subtractive and an additive face, and to provide opportunities for majority group members--the mainstreamers in society--to embark on effective programs of language learning and bilingualism. Mainstreamers are the ones who stand to profit so much from the addition of a new language. Society stands to profit even more because as soon as mainstreamers make the gesture to develop real skill in other languages, they thereby demonstrate an appreciation for minority groups and minority languages. This appreciation then would be the impetus minority group members need to master and be proud of the home languages and cultures they are so often pressured to bypass and ignore.

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Bilingual Education & First Language Acquisition

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HOW CAN ELEMENTARY TEACHERS BENEFIT FROM KNOWING ABOUT FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION?

Knowing something about the way children have learned language during their first few years will help the classroom teacher to understand two things about their students: how best to facilitate further language growth in the classroom and why some children seem less able than others to deal with the language demands made in the classroom.

Elementary teachers use language for all the tasks they face each day in their classrooms--explaining, teaching, praising, disciplining, regulating, joking, and chatting with their students--and they generally assume that their students use and understand language as they themselves do. When something goes wrong in the completion of one of those daily tasks, teachers often fail to consider that it may be a language problem, not recalcitrance or a learning disability, that is causing the breakdown.

As adults, we are used to the idea that language has many different functions, and that it must be used differently in different settings. Children who arrive for the first day of school, however, may have experienced language in only a small number of settings and may literally not know how to talk in unfamiliar situations, even though their language is well developed and quite adequate in the familiar settings. For many children, school is their first encounter with language used to convey new and complex information, to display knowledge, to play language games, or to talk about language itself. In addition, some children may be facing the task of learning to do all these things in a new language--English.

Furthermore, children's own language skills are noticed and evaluated not just in terms of how effectively they communicate needs and ideas but as language. Classroom performance may be rated on the basis of how well a child understands verbal directions, asks and answers questions, and responds in classroom discussions. Some children may fail at these tasks, not because of low ability or poor language skills, but because the tasks are unfamiliar to them. They do not have the experience of using language as the classroom demands. The barriers to successful communication in the classroom are quite obvious for children learning English as a second language, since they must acquire a totally new set of language skills. It is important to remember, though, that even the children from English-speaking homes must learn new uses and styles of language, if they are to function effectively in the classroom.

WHAT DO CHILDREN WHO ARE STARTING SCHOOL KNOW ABOUT LANGUAGE?

Most children entering school can understand almost all of what adults say to them (in their first language) and can use language for a wide variety of communicative purposes. They can demand (*Give me a cookie*), request politely (*Won't you please give me a cookie?*), report (*Jennie wasn't at school today*), inquire (*Is this a dinosaur or an alligator?*), deny (*My name isn't sweetiepie!*), promise (*If you come to my house, I'll show you my bicycle*), and threaten (*If you don't give me back my bicycle, I'll tell my mommy!*). These communicative functions are called speech acts--the act that one is trying to accomplish with one's speech. Research has shown that all children, whether from language-rich or language-poor backgrounds, are similar in their development of speech acts. All normally developing five-year-olds can produce a wide variety of speech acts--i.e., they can use language for a wide variety of communicative purposes.

The same speech act may be expressed in different grammatical forms. The speech act "request" can be expressed with a declarative sentence (*I want a cookie*), an imperative (*Give me a cookie, please*), or an interrogative (*May I have a cookie? Could you give me a cookie?*). By the time they are three or four years old, most children are skilled at using sophisticated, indirect speech acts (e.g., *I sure am hungry* or *Those cookies look good*) rather than direct speech acts (*Gimme a cookie*) to accomplish their purposes. Their use of indirect speech acts reveals a well-developed ability to calculate the effect of their utterances on the listener. In addition, of course, it means that they have mastered the complex grammatical rules governing the correct form of statements, questions, imperatives, and negatives. The complexity of those rules is revealed by the kinds of mistakes made in the process of learning them, both by three- and four-year-olds, who say things like "Why you are going to work?" "Where mummy's office is?" and "It don't can go", and by older second-language learners who say things like "How works this?" "Where goed you?" and "I no can go. No is late enough."

Perhaps the most significant feature of language is that it is a system which can be used to create an infinite variety of meanings, using a limited set of words and sentence patterns. In order to learn the language system, children must sort out regularities and patterns in the speech they hear. The mistakes children make suggest they are using a system of rules in their early language. The toddler who uses the word ball to refer to an orange or a tire is telling us that the most important feature of ball for him is "roundness." The child who says "goed", "eated", "seed", and "weared" is telling us that she has learned the English rule for forming past tenses; if she did not know the rule, she would never be able to produce these forms she had never heard.

Many of the mistakes made by children learning English as a second language are identical to these errors of first-language learners--the so-called "developmental errors." For second-language learners, as for first-language learners, these mistakes reveal that they are doing a good job of identifying regularities and forming rules about English, and that they are taking an active role in the language learning process. Second-language learners may also at times produce an English expression based on the native language. A native Spanish-language speaker, for example, may say "he has three years" instead of "he is three years old," giving a literal translation of the Spanish expression. This kind of confusion is called an "interference error," because

it reveals interference from the first language. Both interference and developmental errors occur because children's thought processes are more advanced than their language--they are trying to say things for which their knowledge of the language is not yet adequate. The fact that children make such errors means that they are striving to discover the correct way to talk about all the complex things about which they are thinking.

WHAT ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE DO CHILDREN ENTERING SCHOOL STILL NEED TO ACQUIRE?

There are four areas in which elementary school children's language will still show considerable development: vocabulary, some complex syntactic constructions, metalinguistic awareness, and certain social uses of language. Vocabulary is the area of development most familiar to elementary teachers. A large part of the science and social science curriculum in the elementary years consists of giving children new words to use in thinking about the world. In addition, some old words which children much younger than six are already using will come to acquire a more complex meaning for them. Many four- and five-year-olds use come, bring, and keep partially incorrectly (Come it to me instead of Bring it to me; Bring it there instead of *Take it there*; You can keep these home instead of *You can take these home)*, suggesting that, though they have a good idea of the meaning of such words, their definitions are not yet completely developed.

The grammatical constructions that first-graders have not yet fully mastered include the passive (*The horse was kicked by the cow* might be interpreted as *The horse kicks the cow*) and sentences with the verb ask, which is interpreted as if it meant tell (*Ask Cookie monster what he likes to eat. You like cookies, Cookie Monster*). Such constructions are relatively rare in speech to preschoolers, so it is not surprising that it will take them a few extra years to learn how to understand and produce them.

Metalinguistic ability refers to the ability to think and talk about language. This ability is quite separate from, and develops much later than, the ability to use language for communication. Preschool children do not yet separate language from what language means, so they cannot recognize that words are arbitrary symbols. The preschooler firmly believes that a rose by any other name would not only smell different but be different! For example, if asked for a long word, most preschoolers will say something like "hose" or "snake," whereas a short word is "little finger." Clearly, the inability to recognize that the length of a word depends on how it sounds, not on what it means, can be a great hindrance in learning how to read. The child who expects the written word chair to look like a chair might be able to learn to read pictographs but will have trouble with an alphabetic writing system. Futhermore, preschoolers, when asked for a word, will usually give either a whole sentence or a phrase like "the big black dog." They might well agree that most nouns and verbs are words but deny such status to articles (a, the), prepositions (in, on), or auxiliary verbs (is, had). There is some suggestion, though, that metalinguistic awareness is an aspect of language development in which the bilingual child excels over the monolingual child. The child who has learned that perro and dog both mean the same thing, who has discovered that Spanish sentences cannot be literally translated into English and still make sense, who finds

that many adults cannot understand what he or she is saying in one language but can understand it in another, has had considerable opportunity to reflect on and learn about the arbitrary nature of the relationship between sound and meaning.

The appropriate way to talk in various social situations is something many schoolchildren, even some adults, have not yet learned. How many of us feel fully confident that we know what to say at a funeral? At a retirement reception? At a job interview? Such skills are, of course, largely social skills, but they are also intrinsically linguistic. Having the right thing to say in such situations--knowing the language to use--is the key to correct social behavior. Knowing how to express condolences, tell a joke, or introduce oneself to strangers at a party means having learned what to say and when to say it. That learning depends on having experienced such situations, having had the opportunity to observe how others act in them. The teenager at his first party or the adult at her first funeral is faced with exactly the problem of the six-year-old on the first day of school: they all know perfectly well how to talk, but none know precisely what to say in this situation.

WHAT ARE THE OPTIMAL CONDITIONS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING?

Children learning to talk must discover the rules and regularities in the language they are learning, and they must map the speech they hear onto what they see going on around them. Children have a lot of help from caregivers with these tasks. The speech addressed to children tends to be slower, simpler, better enunciated, and more repetitive than speech addressed to adults; thus, children have less trouble figuring out what actually was said than older language learners would have. But just being exposed to clear speech is of course, not enough to help anyone learn language. Imagine trying to learn a language by listening to it on the radio; no matter how slowly and carefully the announcer spoke, there would be little chance to learn anything useful from this speech because there would be no chance to figure out what he or she meant. The crucial feature of caregivers' language to children is that it is so closely tied to what the children are experiencing--what is going on around them, what they are seeing, and what they themselves are trying to say. The one-year-old turns to look out the window, and his mother says, "Airplane?" He drops his cup, and his father says, "All gone!" He raises his arms to be lifted into his highchair, and mother says, "Up you go." The child's own actions and focus of attention determine to a large extent what is said to him, and he thus has the chance to relate those simple, clear, repetitive adult utterances to what he is experiencing. The utterances are made interpretable.

Or consider the 18-month-old who says, "Mummy go." Her father answers "Yes, Mummy's gone to work. She'll be back after your nap this afternoon." The child's very simple utterance is expanded and put into correct, complete grammatical form. Thus children who are just starting to talk about past events get the chance to hear the past tense, even before they can produce it themselves. The children's utterances are extended--new information is given that is relevant to the topic introduced by the child. Evidence suggests that the best kind of parental speech during this early period of language acquisition stays pretty close to the topics introduced by the children. The greater richness and complexity of the parental utterances are more useful if those

utterances are related to topics the children have introduced. In addition to input about language, parents who talk to their children in this way are providing large amounts of information about the world and how it works.

By the time children are ready for school, their language is sufficiently developed for them to understand and learn from more complex speech about topics introduced by others and about events that cannot be directly experienced. Children themselves often initiate such complex and abstract discussions--"Why the sun is hot?" "Why Mommy doesn't have a beard?" "Why germs make you sick?". Children of this age are ready to learn about language through language--learning new vocabulary items by hearing definitions of words, playing games like "rhyming words," opposites, etc. However, bilingual children's proficiency in the second language may not be developed enough for the abstract discussions that these children are able to conduct in their first language. Nonetheless, the basic principle of language acquisition continues to hold--children learn the most from input that is responsive to their interests and focus of attention. The classroom is the first situation for many children in which they must attend to and act upon language that is not directed specifically to them. This may be why classroom routines--establishing predictable, recurrent activities--seem to work so well in the primary grades. Such routines may be especially important to bilingual children. The vocabulary and structure of a new language are acquired more easily when classroom activities are organized around daily routines that become a familiar context for language learning. Knowing what is going to happen next can simplify the task of organizing their own activities so that second-language learners can attend to and learn from the language the teacher is using.

DO ALL CHILDREN LEARN LANGUAGE THE SAME WAY?

Normally developing children progress through a similar sequence of stages in learning their first language. The single-word stage of pointing and naming is followed by meaningful combinations of two or more words. Later developments, such as the ability to form questions and express negation, also follow a predictable pattern in the language of most children.

However, there are also differences in language learners, which may reflect differences in the language children hear or differences in the strategies adopted by any particular child for solving communicative problems. For example, names of objects may dominate the early vocabulary of some children, who seem to spend several months wandering around the house labeling things just for the fun of it. Other children learn only a few labels but large numbers of social and expressive words--such as "bye-bye," "thank you," "mama," "want," and "naughty" during the earliest stage of language acquisition. Some children learn new words or forms by imitating them from adult speech, while other children rarely imitate. Some children try out new words or expressions as soon as they have heard them, whereas others prefer to figure out exactly what a word means or how a rule works before they will use it themselves.

Other differences in styles of language learning reflect differences in how language is used in the home or community of the child. Different cultures vary enormously in their expectations concerning language behavior. For example, among many Native American groups, children are expected to be silent in the presence of adults, whereas middle-class

white Americans generally encourage children to be talkative. These principles of language use that govern when to talk, how to address adults, and the like are brought to school by children who may be very surprised to discover that their teachers' expectations differ from their parents'. Although such behaviors and principles differ for different ethnic or social class groups, they are part of the language system and are learned just as the words and the structure of the language are learned. An understanding of how these cultural differences in language use operate can assist the teacher in supporting a child's successful transition from talk at home to talk at school.

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