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The case of Jasmin

A vegyesházasságban felnövő kétnyelvű gyermekeket mindkét szülő nyelvének elsajátításához hozzá kell segíteni. Ehhez elengedhetetlen, hogy a szülők vagy a saját nyelvükön beszéljenek a gyermekkel, vagy olyan környezetet biztosítsanak, amelyben a gyermek számára mindkét nyelv rendelkezésre áll. A gyermek különböző kontextusokban történő nyelvválasztásában meghatározó szerepet játszik a szülői kommunikációs minta. Jelen tanulmányban egy palesztin (arab)–kanadai (angol), Kanadában élő kétnyelvű család ötéves gyermekével rögzített 25 perces telefonbeszélgetésben megfigyelhető nyelvválasztási mintákat mutatjuk be. E rövid beszélgetésből messzemenő következtetéseket nem tudunk levonni, de az elemzésből jól láthatók a gyermek nyelvválasztási tendenciái.

1. Introduction
1.1. Language

People with their languages transmit and express not only feelings, thoughts, expectations, aspirations and ideas, but at the same time they express and define who they are and how they wish to be seen by others. So, it is the clef to a person's self-identity, which helps persons to share feelings, express emotions, experiences, tell stories and convey complex messages and knowledge. The view of language is broad; in linguistics, language is examined as an open system that influences and is influenced by non-linguistic factors. Research in applied linguistics views language as a great power for learning across the lifetime. It is not only the role in transmitting feelings, norms and beliefs. Imberti (2007), clarifies that language provides us with a significant frame of reference and a relational context that sustains our identities, it is our greatest mediator that allows us to relate and understand each other. Generally speaking, language is seen from several points of view in terms of being a human procurement; it is a tool and a capacity.

1.2. How bilingualism and bilinguals are defined

As well as identity, bilingualism can also be defined in multiple ways. Bilingualism is defined by lay people as the ability to use two languages with the fluency characteristics of a native speaker. A person is bilingual if s/he uses two languages habitually with native-like control like, and bilingualism is the constant

use of two languages. In popular belief, being bilingual means being able to speak two languages perfectly; which is also the approach of Bloomfield (1933), who defines bilingualism as the native-like control of two languages. Titone (1972:11), states that "bilingualism refers to the person's capability to speak a second language, follow the concepts and structures of that language rather than paraphrasing her or his first language or mother tongue". All these definitions focus on native-like competence. Mohanty (1994a:13), limited the definition of bilingualism to its social communicative dimension, he claims that "bilingual persons or communities are those with an ability to meet the communication demands of the self and society in their normal functioning in two or more languages in their interaction with the other speakers of any or all of these languages". Grosjean (1989) clarifies that the bilingual is not two monolinguals in one person. He argues that bilinguals rarely use their languages equally in every social environment. They use their languages for different purposes in different contexts and in communicating with different partners. As a result, their skills and abilities in using each of their languages reflect their needs, preferences and identities in the multifaceted social contexts in which they interact with others. He adds that their competence in each language is activated to a more or less extent depending on the use, context, participants and situation. Also, Grosjean (2010) clarifies that bilinguals are often perceived as having acquired their languages in early childhood without an accent in them. These bilinguals are often called 'real' and 'balanced' bilinguals. However, he defines bilinguals as people who use two or more languages or dialects in their everyday life, which definition changes the emphasis on the language proficiency or fluency; it concentrates rather on the function of the languages and the needs of the bilingual. Beardsmore (1982) adds that a person is only bilingual if s/he is a functional bilingual. This means that his or her bilingualism is measured by the ways in which he or she uses the language and the quantity of the language which is being used.

There are different ways in which one can become bilingual. The acquisition of two languages at a time is simultaneous if children become bilingual since birth as they are exposed to two languages by their parents or caretakers (Grosjean 2010). Sequential acquisition refers to the acquisition of a second language after the first one, and the person becomes proficient in a second language later than in L1 (Baker 2006). Reasons for acquiring a second language can usually be clustered under two headings: societal and individual. For the latter one, reasons vary from cultural awareness to acquiring a language for career purposes and employment while the former can include interaction across continents, trade, information and power. Baker clarifies that second language is learned due to educational, political and

employment demands as well as to the communicative needs of the society in which people live.

1.3. Bilingualism and young people

There is no doubt that there are several factors that shape the young bilingual identity. The parents' opinion about bilingualism and family views are considered as the most important factors having a strong impact on the person's view of his or her languages and bilingualism, their language learning and language maintenance. Different studies shed the light on this question (Pease-Alvarez 2003, Molyneux 2006 among others). Pease-Alvarez (2003), studies Mexican American parents' attitudes towards the language education and socialisation of their children, the dynamism of perspectives across individuals, time and generations. They assert that family and the immediate social environment have the main impact upon young bilingual children's views on their languages on one hand, and their opportunities for language maintenance and learning, on the other. Molyneux (2006), emphasizes the role of family impact on bilingual children's language development and on the children's interaction towards their parents.

In the monolingual or bilingual educational context, the teacher enhances the students' feeling and self-esteem in their languages (Cummins 1996, 2000, 2003). Cummins confirms the idea that the language or languages we speak form our identities by the way we use them to express ourselves, and the words we use represent who we are in our interactions with people. For a bilingual person, the use of one or two languages forms a vital aspect of the individual's connection to one or two cultures and one- or two-family backgrounds. Cummins underlines that this is an important factor that affects the education of many students with their background languages more than the dominant language of the society.

De Houwer (2006) adds a further classification of early bilingual development and clarifies the importance of the distinction between the relative timing of the start of the two languages' input at as early an age as from birth to three years. According to her definition, Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA) begins from the moment parents start to verbally interact with their babies, which begins right after birth maybe even prior to birth, according to Byers-Heinlein, Burns, & Werker (2010). Bilingual Second Language Acquisition is a bit delayed onset of L2 acquisition, usually from one month of age to one year. De Houwer (1990), interprets Early Second Language Acquisition (ESLA) as the stage in which babies start being addressed in only a single language (L1) then after a year at least they start being addressed in a second language (L2) in addition to their first one (L1).

Bhatia (2006) explains if a child learns the second language after the age of three or four this is referred to as sequential bilingualism. The way these children are approached differently in the society is dependent on the way and age of becoming bilingual. For example, the majority in the European and Arabian societies believe that individuals cannot be bilingual or trilingual unless they are exposed to languages from a very early age or they have parents with different language backgrounds. Kenner and Ruby (2012) clarifies that the status of languages depends on the community. For example, in many English-speaking countries, English is emphasized whereas other community languages are undervalued. Due to this, the way in which a bilingual person is viewed is often influenced by the general view of the statuses of the particular languages involved, which represents another important factor at shaping the young bilingual language identity.

1.4. Language policy in bilingual families

Growing up as a bilingual can take different forms in families. Parents commonly view bilingualism as an investment in their children's intellectual development and academic success and therefore, better opportunities in the job market (Döpke 1992 and Piller 2001, as quoted by Pavlenko, 2004: 180). On the other hand, parents prefer to share their cultural selves and preserve family ties intact with their children of all ages. Due to that parents determine their language policy as to how they will raise their kid, which language they will use.

King and Fogle (2013:172) state that "Family Language Policy addresses child language learning and use as functions of parental ideologies, decision-making and strategies concerning languages and literacies, as well as the broader social and cultural context of family life".

Although there is a common belief that parents use in equal proportion their languages and children spontaneously acquire both native languages, Yamamoto (2001), claims that great variations are found between families depending on family language policy, which is not simple as many factors control it. DeCapua and Wintergerst (2009:6) mention that "social and political attitudes towards bilingualism can influence families' ability to raise their children bilingually". Parents always try their best to find a suitable strategy in order to optimize their children's proficiency in the two target languages as Palviainen and Boyd (2013: 223) state. Moreover, they express the idea of the one person – one language (OPLO) strategy, where parents have different mother tongues, which was first introduced by Ronjat (1913). The strategy rule states that both parents consistently speak their first languages to their kids, which brings clarity, balance, and children identify a specific language with each parent. However, as King, Fogle and Logan-Terry

(2008: 909) point out, not all bilingual families follow this strategy accurately in everyday life. Using the minority language at home is considered as another of the most successful strategies in acquiring and learning other languages, for example, when Spanish parents living in the USA use Spanish at home all the time with their children while the children learn and speak their adopted country's language at school, with friends and neighbours. Another way to raise a bilingual child is with what is called the 'time and place' strategy (Pearson 2008). It's a sort of mix between the two previous strategies. For example, parents could follow the 'one parent – one language' principle during the week and use the 'minority language at home' strategy at the weekend. Mixed language policy has also been seen as one of the effective ways, in which strategy parents use the language that best suits the topic or the situation. For example, children could choose the minority language for more family-related topics and pick to speak about school in the majority language (because they are taught in that language).

Fabbro (1999) mentions that neurolinguistics added other modalities to the question of language acquisition. Children can acquire the two languages within their own families without previous planning of the use of either language is involved. Another method includes using only one language until the child reaches a certain age, between three and six, and then gradually introducing the second language later. The last but not least method described here is the use of the L1 of the parents at home if they share their language, whereas children acquire the second language in the society, where they live, such as for instance in international schools; more generally, outside their own families. It is clear that if a child is to acquire a given language, he or she must have ample opportunity to hear that language as well as to engage in communicative interactions with an interlocutor. There is no doubt that parents play a significant role in young children's language development and in such a bilingual environment. However, children do not seem to use two languages all the time.

In our paper, we examine a dialogue sample of a five-year-old bilingual child growing up in an Arabic-English speaking (Palestinian-Canadian) family living in Canada, where the family language policy is the 'one parent – one language' strategy. The dialogue was over the phone, and the call was fully transcribed. Each transcript was divided into utterances based on intonation contours, and all transcripts were formatted according to the regulations of CHILDES (Child Language Data Exchange System) (MacWhinney, 1995; MacWhinney & Snow, 1990). Findings suggest that the child's input and output are significantly associated with her ability to commence L1 and L2 performance and build knowledge in each language. Adding to all of that, it can be speculated through referring to other studies

(Fantini, 1987; Lindholm & Padilla, 1978; McClure, 1977; Saunders, 1988; Taeschner, 1983; Navracsics, 1998) that the person involved in the interactions with the child could be one of the major factors in explaining the child's language choice.

2. Methods
2.1. Participant
The participant of this study is Jasmin, a five-year-old child of a Palestinian-Canadian bilingual family, in which the father's first language is Arabic and the mother's is English. The married couple have been living in Canada for five years: they only have one child (Jasmin). The mother is bilingual, who can speak English and French fluently. The father is a fundamentally trilingual person, who speaks Arabic and English fluently and has some production capacity in French. English is the dominant language between the members of the family, but sometimes French is also used. The parents claim that they practise the 'one parent – one language' input model but with different degrees of adherence. For Jasmin, exposure to Arabic, which is not the language of the society, is mainly limited to the home. Jasmin's father uses Arabic with Jasmin and motivates her to repeat and speak Arabic by using short songs, words, phrases, sometimes YouTube videos, and encourages her to listen and talk to his family and relatives in Palestine. He thinks that learning Arabic is a vital issue in order to preserve Jasmin's culture and linguistic connection with her half home country.

Jasmin is a normally developing child with no vision or hearing problems, she started to speak English in her 8th month, Arabic after age two French recently, at age five. Her parents are working, so in her first year, she used to spend most time with her grandparents rather than with her parents, but after the first year she started going to a bilingual kindergarten where her teachers use both English and French. According to her mother, Jasmin spends more time with her than with her father during the week but at weekends, the father stays more with her. Jasmin has friends in her kindergarten, they use English to communicate.

2.2. Procedure
The dialogue sample analysed here was recorded during a phone call, which lasted approximately 25 minutes. The phone call was fully transcribed, each transcript was divided into utterances based on intonation contours, and all transcripts were formatted according to the CHILDES (Child Language Data Exchange System) requirements (MacWhinney, 1995; MacWhinney & Snow, 1990). CHILDES (Child Language Data Exchange System) is considered as one of the most useful free sources of database of child language acquisition, with a special emphasis on child

language input and output. CHILDES comes with a handy tool called (CLAN) Computerized Language Analysis, it is a program designed specially to analyse data transcribed in the format of the Child Language Data Exchange System (CHILDES).

2.3. Coding

To assess language choice, we coded all the utterances that Jasmin said according to language type: (i) only Arabic (A), (ii) only English (E), (iii) at least one morpheme from each of the two languages (Mixed) (A+E), or (iv) an utterance attributable to either or neither language (Non-language specific).

3. Results
3.1. Language use

The findings presented in Table 1. show that the English language is more dominant than Arabic; Jasmin uses the universal words in both languages such as 'iPad', 'Chocolate', 'Doughnut', 'okay', 'bye'. However, we must see that the first three words quoted here refer to basically North-American entities or internationally known realia's, which are parts of the American culture, and known all over the world as a result of globalisation. These words appear in other languages as well as loan words. Since the girl lives in an English-French bilingual society, it is also clear that she uses the English language for social interactions, greetings, etc.. At the same time, Jasmin also spends more time with her mother, and has a much greater amount of English input. Although Jasmin spoke to her mother in English, she answered her father's questions in Arabic, she used long pauses when she was listening to the Arabic speaker via the phone call.

Jasmin	Arabic	English	Mixed	neither	Total
	15 words	23 words	9 words	2 words	49 words

Table 1. Languages used in the short conversation

Jasmin was able to differentiate between Arabic and English, and in spite of this fact, she used 9 mixed word utterances.

Example 1: the interlocutor uses only Arabic for greetings and Jasmine answers by using one word but with [h] sound instead of [ح] sound due to the clear influence of the English language. The word should be 'منيحة' instead of 'منيهة'. Jasmin listens carefully to the interlocutor with long pauses to determine the language of the interlocutor. In line 14, Jasmin's answer is perfect in the Palestinian dialect and, as like other Palestinian children of her age, she uses the words 'حليها تيجي' (let her come), which can be addressed to females. Despite substituting the sound [خ] for

[ح], which normally happens to kids in the Palestinian environment, Jasmin replies to her father in Arabic directly while talking to her mother in English at the same time. Adding to that she uses the word 'بنستنا' (We are waiting) in line 16 to refer to the plural, which means that her father and mother are waiting with her.

Example 2: Jasmin uses only English in lines 8, 18, 22. When the interlocutor addresses her in English she replies in English, and at the same time, she wants her mother to understand what the interlocutor is asking her about. In line 9, the interlocutor uses both languages and Jasmin answers perfectly in both languages (lines 10, 12, 20).

Example 3: Jasmin uses 9 mixed words (lines 4, 10, 12, 16, 20 and 22). In line 4, the answer to the interlocutor's question in Arabic but she answers in English 'yea' / jeɪ /, which is close to the Arabic dialect word ايه / eɪ / and means yes. We are not sure whether she did it purposely or it is related to cross-linguistic influences. Also, the interlocutor asks Jasmin in lines 9, 11 and 19 in mixed Arabic and English, and Jasmin perfectly shows her understanding and answers in both languages by using one word in Arabic and the rest in English, so English language is the dominant one for her. Adding to all of this, Jasmin uses repetition in line 20 to emphasize the type of Doughnut that she likes and wants.

Example 4: Jasmin uses words which are neither English nor Arabic in lines 14 and 18. These words are *blablablabla* and *nananana*. As we can see the first word consists of three sounds [b]+ [l]+ [a] and the second word consists of two sounds [n]+ [a] only. These words sound like music in order to show her happiness. Interestingly these sounds are universal and can be used by kids all over the world.

1. **Interlocutor**: مرحبا.... كيفك ياسمين؟ (HELLO, HOW ARE YOU JASMIN?)
2. **Jasmin**: منيهة## (GOOD)
3. **Interlocutor**: انا اشتاقتلك... وانتي؟؟ (AND I MISSED YOU… WHAT ABOUT YOU?)
4. **Jasmin**: ياه# (YEA)
5. **Interlocutor**: شو عم تعملي؟ (WHAT ARE YOU DOING?)
6. **Jasmin**: ####
7. **Interlocutor**: عم تلعبي؟؟ياسمين؟؟معي؟؟عم تلعبي؟؟ (ARE YOU PLAYING? JASMIN? ARE YOU THERE? ARE YOU PLAYING?)
8. **Jasmin**: Yeah, Mom look…hahahaha
9. **Interlocutor**: ياسمين عم تلعبي مع ماما؟؟؟ say hello to your mom (YOU ARE PLAYING WITH YOUR MOM? SAY HELLO TO YOUR MOM, PLEASE)

10. **Jasmin**: Mom she say hello… ايه على اي باد نلعب(YEAH, ON IPAD WE PLAY)

11. **Interlocutor**: اجي؟؟؟ ياسمين؟؟؟ اجي العب معكم؟ may I come to play with you??? (JASMIN, MAY I?)

12. **Jasmin**: ###### تعالي (COME)... she wants to play ####with us hahahah######

13. **Father**: نخليها تيجي؟؟ شو رايك يا بابا؟؟؟ (MY DARLING, SHALL WE LET HER COME? WHAT DO YOU THINK?)

14. **Jasmin**: ايه حليها تيجي (YEAH, LET HER COME) blablablablablabla

15. **Interlocutor**: يلا جاية (I'M COMING)

16. **Jasmin**: okay, waning…we wait…بنستنا (WE ARE WAITING)

17. **Interlocutor**: يلا جاية... شو بدك اجيب لك معي؟؟ (OKAY, I'M COMING, WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO BRING FOR YOU?)

18. **Jasmin**: nanananan…..Doughnut

19. **Interlocutor**: انتشوكاليت؟؟ ولا فانيلا؟؟؟ شو بدك؟؟؟ (CHOCOLATE? VANILLA? WHAT DO YOU WANT?)

20. **Jasmin**: ايه (YEAH).... Chocolate Doughnut ### Chocolate

21. **Interlocutor**: I will bring you Chocolate Doughnut…. wait for me…or I will send it to you with daddy??? What do you think???

22. **Jasmin**: #### okay### باي (BYE) bye

23. **Interlocutor**: Bye, bye…

4. Discussion and conclusion

Jasmin's parents admitted claim that they use the 'one parent -– one language' strategy but the dominant language for the child is English. The Canadian mother, when she is alone with her daughter, speaks only in English with some exception of a few French words and sentences, while the father uses both Arabic (the Palestinian dialect) and English. However, English is the most frequently used language in the family. In this context, when one of the parents is alone with the child, they use the parent's language. However, the child seems to be more encouraged to use the communication partner's language as long as the partner keeps using that language. It is clear when the interlocutor uses Arabic and Jasmin answers in Arabic after making herself sure about the language. When the interlocutor changes to English, she does the same but not all the time. When her father gets involved and speaks in Arabic, she is encouraged to use Arabic with the interlocutor, but at the same time, she tells her mother in English what the question is about. It can be speculated through referring to other studies (Fantini, 1987; Lindholm & Padilla, 1978; McCulre, 1977; Saunders, 1988; Taeschner, 1983) that the partner in communication

is one of the major factors in determining the child's language choice. Although Jasmin uses grammar in a perfect way in both languages, she misses the Third Person Singular *s* in line 9, and the copula (*are*) is also missing in line 16. In Arabic, there is a word order problem in line 10. All of these 'mistakes' are considered as normal, the minor ones are characteristic of any monolingual child at this developmental phase.

In spite of the fact that Jasmin uses lexical items retrieved from both Arabic and English with the capability of differentiating between the two languages, in this short interview she used two words that are neither Arabic nor English.

Bi- and trilingual children are usually very good at code-switching and mixing depending on the situation and the person involved in the interaction. Navracsics (1998) and Johnson & Wilson (2002) find that multilingual children can differentiate their languages in their speech production lexically and pragmatically and that they both sound like adult native-like speakers of their languages. Navracsics (2014) clarifies that raising a multilingual child is not an easy responsibility. Parents need to take many different considerations to ensure the language development of the child without any problems. Implicit learning is very important in childhood. What we learn implicitly is related to emotions.

Emotionality is an essential issue. One might suggest that the degree of emotionality is related to language dominance: the more comfortable one feels in a language, i.e. the higher the proficiency level in that language compared to the other language(s) spoken by the person, the more intimate one's relation to that language. One would think that emotions may best be expressed and articulated in the language that provides comfort for the speaker. Räsänen and Pine (2014) in their study found support for age and proficiency relevance in language and emotions, but Aycicegi and Harris (2004) came to the conclusion that non-native language has the same, or even stronger, emotional connotations than the native language. There is also a presumption that a graded emotionality exists across the languages spoken by a person. As Navracsics observed in her study on an early third language acquisition of a bilingual pair of siblings, Persian, the mother's L1 was used only in emotionally dense situations (either negative or positive), most of the time even without the mother's awareness. This is the highest level of intimacy that can exist in parent-child communication. And this intimacy resulted in Persian being the language that influenced English and Hungarian at the phonetic level of phonological development.

Input is variable and dynamic, and one of the bilingual kid's languages will be dominant. However it is not granted that the language that provides the greatest amount of input will be the dominant one. .

In conclusion, children are very clever, and due to their multilingual awareness, they can differentiate between the languages. They know which language they should use with whom. Parents play a vital role in their kids' language acquisition process, and by providing the sufficient amount of input they can assure that the child will develop normally in their languages. The partner in communication is one of the major factors in determining the child's language choice, which is also confirmed by other researchers (Fantini, 1987; Lindholm & Padilla, 1978; McClure, 1977; Saunders, 1988; Taeschner, 1983; Navracsics, 1998).

However, output depends on many different factors, as e.g. the children's mood, the surrounding environment, the context, the child's emotions towards the languages, etc. Bohman *et al*. (2010) find that children's input and output (as measured via interviews with the parents as well) are significantly associated with their abilities to initiate L1 and L2 performances and their sufficient knowledge in each language.

In conclusion, Jasmin, who responds in English when addressed in Arabic, is more proficient in English, yet her Arabic proficiency is not necessarily significantly lower as she understands everything and is ready to answer. These results are consistent with previous literature, which indicate that even two-and-a-half-year-old bilingual children are capable of identifying their languages and can make their own choices when responding to the partner in the interaction. It would be important to collect more recordings and observations of interactions over a longer period of time, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the awareness in multilingual children.

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