



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

Università degli Studi di Padova

Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari

Corso di Laurea Triennale Interclasse in
Lingue, Letterature e Mediazione culturale (LTLLM)

Classe LT-12

Tesina di Laurea

Shaping identity through Bilingualism and Translanguaging

Relatrice

Prof. ssa Fiona Dalziel

Laureanda

Giorgia Asolati

n° matr. 2002702 / LTLLM

Anno Accademico 2022/2023

To my beloved grandfather Umberto, I wish to be an
inspiration for others as you have been for me

Al mio amato nonno Umberto, spero di essere un'ispirazione
per gli altri come tu lo sei stato per me

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	Page	3
Introduction		5
Chapter 1: Bilingualism		
1.1 Defining bilingualism		7
1.1.1 Reasons for Bilingualism		9
1.2 Language choice		10
1.2.1 Cross-linguistic influence		11
1.2.2 Code-mixing		12
1.2.3 Code-switching and borrowings		13
1.3 Language Acquisition		15
1.3.1 Simultaneous acquisition		15
1.3.2 Sequential bilingualism		18
1.3.3 Critical or sensitive period?		19
Chapter 2: Identity and Translanguaging		
2.1 Defining biculturalism		21
2.1.1 Linguistic Identity		22
2.1.2 Cultural switching		24
2.1.3 Examples from the interview		25
2.2 Translanguaging		25
2.2.1 Creativity and Criticality		27
2.2.2 The Linguistic Repertoire and Language Portraits		28
2.2.3 An Example of a Language Portrait		29
Chapter 3: Analysis of linguistic identities: a case study based on bilingual people		
3.1 Methods and Participants		33
3.2 Results		39
3.3 Discussion section		43
Conclusion		47
Appendix		49
Italian Summary		75
Bibliography		81
Webography		85

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In primo luogo, voglio ringraziare con tutto il cuore la mia relatrice, la professoressa Fiona Dalziel, per avermi incoraggiata e sostenuta durante questi ultimi mesi. Grazie per aver creduto nella mia tesi e per aver supportato un argomento che mi è rimasto molto a cuore.

Voglio ringraziare la mia famiglia, i miei genitori, Marco e Stefania, e mio fratello Matteo, senza i quali niente di tutto ciò sarebbe stato possibile. Grazie per aver creduto in me e per essermi stati affianco.

Un particolare grazie ai miei nonni, Norma e Umberto, che mi hanno sempre sostenuta, amata e ascoltata nella preparazione dei miei esami.

Ringrazio i miei zii e le mie cugine Lory e Alessia, che mi sono stati vicini durante tutto questo percorso.

Un ringraziamento speciale al mio ragazzo Luca che in questi ultimi anni con il suo amore ha rimesso insieme i miei cocci rotti, spingendomi a non mollare mai, a dare il massimo di me stessa e ad essere soddisfatta della persona che sono diventata.

Un grazie ai miei migliori amici Giorgia, Michele, Rebecca, Lorenzo, Andrea e Tommaso che non mi hanno mai lasciata sola, vi ringrazio di tutto il sostegno e l'amore col quale mi avete supportato in tutti questi anni.

Un grazie anche all'università, che nel suo complesso mi ha permesso di migliorarmi come persona, di creare obiettivi da raggiungere, ma soprattutto che mi ha fatto conoscere delle persone stupende. Sono stati tre anni di gioie, pianti, aperitivi, ma soprattutto anni in cui ci siamo sempre sostenute a vicenda, vivendo esperienze e creando ricordi che ci accompagneranno per sempre. Un particolare grazie a Ronke, Alice, Margherita, Martina, Eleonora e Noemi. Voi avete reso questo periodo della mia vita indimenticabile.

Infine ringrazio tutti i partecipanti della mia intervista senza i quali questa tesi non sarebbe esistita.

INTRODUCTION

Today, there exist more than 7000 languages around the world and it is very difficult to find a monolingual society among all the globalized countries. States such as Japan or Portugal may be those closer to the concept of monolingual societies, but there still exist linguistic minorities that use dialects in their personal relationships. This dissertation provides several definitions of bilingualism and analyzes the factors that cause or push people to become bilinguals. The first chapter of the thesis will explain language choice, language shifting and language maintenance, providing the main reasons that influence people in these choices. Bilingualism has not always been well-seen, causing feelings of inadequacy and behaviors of inequity; today in some cases it still not be well-perceived by some people, unaware of its complexities and benefits.

Some bilinguals limit their use of code-mixing and code-switching because some people perceive these as a sign of poor linguistic competence or a lack of linguistic control. On the contrary, in most they are a sign of great linguistic competence in two or more languages or they are used to fill a linguistic gap. The aim of this dissertation is to describe the phenomenon of bilingualism and its linguistic techniques, underlying the high skills which are embedded in a bilingual person. Language acquisition in bilinguals is not always the same as not everyone is exposed to the same amount of linguistic input and influences. Simultaneous acquisition and sequential acquisition characterize different kinds of acquisition and different level of proficiency and fluency. According to linguists and researchers there exists a period of time in which language acquisition is easier and faster and it is situated between 2 years old and puberty. This does not mean that after this period it is impossible to achieve balanced bilingualism, but this process will be much harder and more mnemonical rather than spontaneous.

Chapter two focuses on biculturalism, translanguaging and linguistic identities. Bilinguals are not always bicultural; in fact there can be monolingual people who are bicultural, but also bilingual people who are bicultural. It is up to the single person. In the case of a bilingual and bicultural person there co-exist not only two languages, but also two cultures which characterize their way of thinking, personality traits and life in

general. Both influence personal areas of people, such as psychological and sociocultural ones, and linguistic identities. Language use, intermarriages, geographic area, society, and the presence of minority groups are only some of the factors that influence biculturalism. The process of adaptation depends on the culture of the native country and on that of arrival; the more similar two cultures are in some ways, the harder adjustment. Interior complexes can be a consequence of failed attempts at adaptation.

During the last century a new pedagogical practice was introduced to improve students' comprehension and skills in two or more languages, fostering flexible bilingualism. This process, called translanguaging, develops part of the multicompetence that a bilingual should have, breaking all the boundaries between languages and building one complex dynamic repertoire in which all languages spoken are included.

Many bilinguals state that they feel they are a different person according to the language that they are speaking and this statement will be the focal point of the third chapter where it will be discussed and explored. The aim of my dissertation is to investigate how personality and identity may be influenced by bilingualism, but not by creating a new different person according to the language used, but as a result of a process of adaptation to a context or situation. Shifts in behavior are common in bilingual people as a cultural strategy. For this reason I interviewed ten bilingual people (some of them are bicultural too), who answered questions on their personal experiences (country of birth, where they spent their childhood and language used at home with their families) and on their personal perception on their way of thinking, their personality switches and so on.

The third chapter will conclude by comparing the literature presented in the first and the second chapters with the findings from the interviews, underlying key point and differences.

CHAPTER 1

BILINGUALISM

As this dissertation aims to explore the linguistic and cultural identity of bilinguals and multilinguals, in this chapter I will first provide a general presentation of what bilingualism is and I will list the main reasons that enable people to become bilingual. While bilinguals are speaking, they often switch from a language to another, leading to a language choice based on topic, participants or situation. This gives place to language mixing and cross-linguistic influences that I will explore in the chapter. Furthermore, I will discuss language acquisition and the two main types of this learning process in childhood: simultaneous and sequential acquisition. I will provide some examples related to these categories and through this I will analyze the concepts of language dominance, second language acquisition, sensitive and critical period. I will conclude this chapter by underlying the difference between bilingualism and biculturalism.

1.1 Defining Bilingualism

The meaning of "bilingualism" varies depending on the context in which it is used (Grosjean, 2013:5-6). This word can refer to the use or knowledge of two or more languages, needing two languages in daily life, providing information in multiple languages and so on. Over the years, several definitions have been proposed to define what bilingualism is. Two important factors concerning bilingualism have been identified: language proficiency and language use. The first one refers to the linguistic level of all the languages that a person knows, while the second one relates to the frequency of use of a language. Bloomfield (1933:56) stated that "Bilingualism is the native-like control of two languages", but according to this statement, bilinguals should be fluent in an equal way in both languages, which is rare. This point of view was shared by the Webster's dictionary (1961, cited in Hamers, Blanc, 2000:6) which described a bilingual person as a daily user of both languages, who has mastered them perfectly. On the contrary, Macnamara (1967, cited in Ling, 2018:14) argues that a bilingual is "anyone who possesses a minimal competence in only one of the four language skills, listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing, in a language other than his mother

tongue”. Haugen (1969: 1-17) offered another less constraining definition by saying that “bilingualism begins at the point where the speaker of one language can produce complete, meaningful utterances in the other language”. As we can see, some researchers focused on the idea of language use and others on that of language proficiency (2013:7-8).

In the last few years, a definition has been adopted by some researchers, such as Grosjean (2013:7-8), who defines it as “the use of two or more languages (or dialects) in everyday life”. This statement does not exclude language proficiency; in fact, using a language daily, a person should have a certain level of knowledge. In addition, this definition includes not only people who speak two languages, but also those who speak one or more dialects. In 2010, Grosjean designed a figure that takes into consideration both language use and language proficiency.

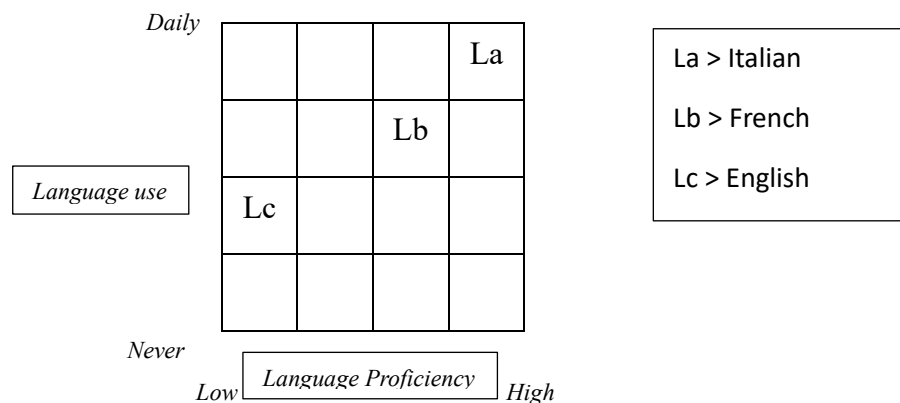


Figure 1: Language use and Language proficiency (Grosjean, 2013:8)

In this example, the language in which the person is more proficient is Italian, which is the one most frequently used too (daily). French is used almost daily, but with a lower level of proficiency. English is used rarely and the speaker does not have a high level of knowledge. This person is clearly bilingual in Italian and French, but this grid does not consider the bilingual’s language skills (writing, speaking, listening and reading).

1.1.1 Reasons for bilingualism

Bilingualism is a phenomenon present in almost every country, in each society and in all age groups. Bilinguals and multilinguals are the majority in the world, being two thirds of the world's population; there exist about 150 countries, in which more than 7000 languages are used. According to Li Wei (2007:3) languages are living organism and for this reason they born, evolve and disappear. Consequently, language contacts are present worldwide because people speaking different languages get in contact constantly. Therefore, it is difficult to find a monolingual society (Baker, 2017:43). In several countries most of the population is bilingual, such as Switzerland, Belgium, Canada or countries in African continent, while in others, such as Japan, Portugal and Island, the percentage of bilingual people is lower, but in any case, bilingualism is present.

According to Grosjean (1982:30-41), bilingualism can arise due to a number of factors. First of all there is that of migration. There are many reasons that push people to migrate to other countries: natural catastrophe, military invasions and colonization, religious, social and political persecutions are only some of them. When people migrate to another country, they generally learn the language of that area, but they may still use their native language at home, developing bilingual skills. Among the factors that contribute to the creation of a bilingual society we must mention culture and education. In Roman times teachings were both in Latin and Greek. In the same way today, many students are educated in a language that is not their L1, but in a *lingua franca*, heritage of previous colonization or a language used in the economic and political environment. The development of technology is another important factor, in fact, through internet people can check information and communicate by using different languages (Li Wei, 2007:4). To conclude, other reasons can be economic and commercial factors, such as industrialization and urbanization, in multilingual nations sometimes led to the adoption of a *lingua franca*, which gained an economic importance.

As stated above, besides the different circumstances, all these situations have a common feature: people learn a second language (L2), in addition to their first tongue (L1) or grow up with two languages. But what happens to people who acquire a second language? Although the consequences of bilingualism are various, they can be summarized in two

main categories (Grosjean, 1982:36-39). A bilingual can decide to maintain both languages or he/she can return to a state of monolingualism by using only one language. According to the first instance, for example, if in a bilingual community everyone is fluent in both languages, they can get along just as well by using only one language.

Furthermore, bilingualism might lead to cross-linguistic influence, such as code switching, code mixing or transfer (see chapter 1.2.1). For example, if a bilingual is talking to a monolingual, he/she will probably use the language known by the interlocutor, while if the situation changes and he/she talks to a bilingual, he/she can choose one language, the other or to use both by mixing them (Bialystok, 2001:65-68).

1.2 Language choice

People frequently shift their variety of language in daily interactions in accordance to who they are speaking with. This linguistic choice can be defined as register. Halliday (1978, cited in Eggins, 2004:90) identifies three factors in the context that affect the register choice in every situation. They are field, tenor and mode. The first one refers to the topic, subject matter or social activity type; our language choices are different according to the situation. The second one is linked to the role that we play in the interaction (social role, e.g. student/lectures or friend/friend); it can be affected by age, ethnic background, gender and how well people know each other. The third one is related to the channel and mode of communication used by the interactants; there is a first difference between oral and written interactions, but it can also refer to visual and multimodal texts. All these elements have a huge impact on the type of language that will be used in the conversation (Halliday, cited in Eggins, 2004:90-103).

As regards language choices, Ervin-Tripp (1968:8-9) writes that: “A speaker in any linguistic community who enters diverse social situations, normally has a repertoire of speech alternatives which shift with situation”. She lists four key variables that affect the choice of speech repertoire which are settings and situation (place and time), participants and their role in the interaction (personal details such as work field, age, sex, ethnicity, but also factors like the degree of intimacy between the speakers), topic (religion, politics, sports, animals) and function (greetings, apologies, giving information). Another function

can be including or excluding someone from a conversation, in fact people can use the language that the others are using in that moment or change it to communicate with someone that understand both languages.

While monolinguals can switch from one variety to another (register), bilinguals can also change languages when they speak to other bilinguals. Therefore, in this situation there are several variables. When the speakers are monolingual, they can use only one language to communicate, while if the speakers are bilingual, they can choose to answer by using one of the two languages or by mixing them. (Grosjean, 2013:126).

1.2.1 Cross-Linguistic influence

Cross-linguistic influence is the term used to describe all effects that one language has on another. This word, which encompasses the concepts of interference and transfer, is at the core of a linguistics argument. Language transfer can be defined as the influence that the first language has on the way of speaking the second language. Before going into the hypotheses concerning cross-linguistic influence, we need to provide a definition of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and to explain the role that it plays in linguistic influences. According to Ellis (1997:3), SLA studies the process through which individuals learn a second language (L2), either inside or outside school, in addition to their first tongue (L1).

The aims of SLA are to explain how L2 acquisition occurs as well as the internal and external factors which affect learning. The internal ones are represented by personal aptitude (natural disposition to learn a language), motivation and language strategies (individual techniques to learn), while the external ones are provided by the quality and quantity of language exposure (Ellis, 1997:5-6). Another objective of SLA is to study interlinguistic influences to simplify the acquisition learning process. When a person starts learning a new language, he/she creates a single mental grammar, called interlanguage, which is transitional because learners add and delete rules over the time. SLA studies the way in which people create cross-linguistic influences by using the linguistic structures of their L1 (stronger language) in the L2 (weaker language) to overcome linguistic gaps and needs during the learning process (Ellis 1997:32-34).

Going back to cross-linguistic influence, exist two major hypotheses about its origins: the first one contends that languages have evolved independently, while the second states that this phenomenon is due to an interdependent evolution. Studies have been carried out to test both statements, but no answer has been found. Another theory is that this phenomenon only takes place in certain domains (Bialystok, 2001:65-68).

According to Hulk and Müller (2000, cited in Grosjean, 2013:130-132), it occurs in two situations, when the structures are influenced by an interface at the level of syntax or pragmatics, or when there is an overlap between the two languages, therefore language A allows one option and language B allows another. An example of the first condition deals with dislocated sentences and it is especially productive in English-French children. On the other hand, the overlap condition, for instance, involves adjective placement in French-English children due to the presence of adjectives before and after the noun in French, but only before in English.

1.2.2 Code-mixing

The term code-mixing is used to describe changes at the word level, therefore one or a few words are written or told in a different language (Grosjean, 2013:133). According to Muysken (2000, cited in Kim, 2006:44-45) we have a case of code-mixing where grammatical structures and lexical features from two languages are present in one sentence. While using code-mixing, the grammar of one language is adapted to the grammatical structures of the first language used; in this way the foreign words that are inserted in the sentence adapt to the context without altering it from a grammatical point of view (Malube, 2015:341). In a typical example, a child inserts an Italian noun in an English sentence, giving the following result: “Can I have a glass of *acqua*, please?”.

Code-mixing is not always indicative of a lack of inhibitory control or a sign of a poor linguistic competence, but based on recent studies, children are thought to employ it as a technique to communicate clearly and fluently. In contrast, it is seen as an important part of the development of bilingual competences to most children, even though teachers and parents do not approve his usage. For this reason, some strategies have been created, that

Lanza (2004:260-268) has identified as “parental discourse strategies” to help children to avoid code-mixing:

- Minimal Grasp strategy, the child’s mixed-up utterance is not comprehended by the parent who asks for a clarification
e.g Child: “Can I go to the *parque*, please?”
Parent: “Where do you want to go?”
- Expressed Guess strategy, the parent uses a guess to rephrase the child’s mixed statement
e.g Child: “Can I go to the *parque*, please?”
Parent: “So you are saying that you want to go to the park?”
- Repetition, the child’s utterance is repeated by the parent without using code-mixing
e.g Child: “Can I go to the *parque*, please?”
Parent: “Can you go to the park?”
- Move on, the conversation continuous without any question or clarification
e.g. Child: “Can I go to the *parque* please?”
Parent: “Yes, you can.”
- Code-switching, the parents answer to the child by using the language that the child has introduced through code-mixing
e.g. Child: “Can I go to the *parque*, please?”
Parent: “Si, puedes ir al parque.”

1.2.3 Code-switching and borrowings

Code-switching has been described in several ways over the last century. Fallis (1976, cited in Baker, 2017:104) stated simply that “it is the alternation of two languages”, while Scotton and Ury (1977, cited in Grosjean, 2015:145) argued that “it is the of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation or interaction” and to conclude, Kharkhurin and Li Wei (2014, cited in García, O., Wrigh 2015:41) claims that “Code-switching is the alternation and mixing between different languages in the same episode of speech production”. It can involve a word, a phrase, a sentence or several sentences. Code switching is not a sign of linguistic incompetence or of a lower level of knowledge, but it

is a governed methods applied as communicative technics to convey linguistic and social information. In accordance with Mabule (2015:346-348), it is used for different reasons, to fill a linguistic need, to use the “appropriate expression” according to the speaker, to include or exclude someone, to emphasize or amplifies a point, to express a concept that does not have an equivalent in that language, for confirmation or with a social and identity function and so on. Another use can involve fixed phrases such as discourse markers or greetings: e.g. *Oyes*, we should go to school tomorrow because we have a *español* test.

In most cases, Code-switching is created at an unconscious level, used to communicate a message to another person that will understand them anyway. However, this linguistic phenomenon is now well-seen by monolinguals, who consider it as a negative mixture of grammar and vocabularies (Grosjean, 2013:133-134). Sometimes it is given a pejorative name such as Franglais (a mixture of French and English) or Spanglish (a mixture between Spanish and English). In addition, those who use Code-mixing widely may be called “semilingual” or “nonlingual”, meaning that this person is not able to speak neither language alone because he/she does not know enough well any of them (Grosjean, 2013:18-20). Not all bilinguals use code-switching. In fact, because of the fear of being teased a huge number of bilinguals never use it, or at least, they restrict it to situations in which they would not be mocked or disliked. Teachers or parents usually follow strict norms regarding language use, so bilinguals usually avoid Code-switching in these cases.

If we assist in the integration of one language into another, we do not talk of code-switching anymore, but we talk about borrowings (Baker, 2017:101). The reasons for borrowing are very similar to those for code-switching, but exist two types of them. Idiosyncratic loans are used only by bilinguals, but there are other words, called established loans, that now have become part of a community’s vocabulary. In the past these words did not exist in that language, they are made up of words or similar sounds that are part of another language community. For example, “Poet” and “music” are part of structured loans because they were borrowed from French.

1.3 Language Acquisition

The process of language acquisition in children and adults is influenced by the social context. The state of the person, the quality and quantity of the linguistic input and the background can make a difference in the learning process. Work, school, and families are important factors that should be taken into consideration while studying language acquisition (Hamers and Blanc, 2000:17).

In bilingual and monolingual children, the general patterns of language development are similar. They both pass through babbling, one-word and two-word stages, which are completed more or less at the same age in monolingual and in bilingual children.

First of all, we should make an initial distinction between simultaneous and successive acquisition in bilingual children. McLaughlin (1978, 2013:13-23) set at 3 years old the threshold for successive bilingualism. However, there will be differences between a child that has been exposed to both languages since birth and another whose exposure to one of the two languages begins between 2 and 3 years old.

1.3.1 Simultaneous Acquisition

At the beginning of this century, several definitions of simultaneous acquisition were proposed. According to De Houwer (1995, cited in Wei, Auer, Paradis, 2007:15) “simultaneous bilingual children are those whose dual language learning experiences began at birth or at least at the age of three”. This statement includes bilinguals who have been exposed to at least two languages since birth, but also who have had only an acoustic exposure, but without using it in first person. Instead, Grosjean (2013:120) affirms that:

“BFLA (Bilingual First Language Acquisition) may be defined as the current acquisition of two languages in a child who is exposed to them from birth and uses both regularly in early childhood”.

In this way passive bilinguals are excluded from the classification of simultaneous acquisition. In contrast, in the case of simultaneous, going through the same stages at the same time. For this reason, these two languages cannot be distinguished as language 1 (L1) or language 2 (L2), because any of them come first or second, but simultaneously.

Although, sometimes a dominant and a weaker language can be identified, but we will talk about it in chapter 1.3.4. Most linguists and researchers have adopted the terms Language α and Language β , following De Houwer (cited in McLaughlin, 1984:72). Children to be considered simultaneous bilinguals must produce complete and meaningful sentences in both languages, but they can be more fluent in certain spheres in language α and in others in the language β . It is crucial for them to show an appropriate level in both languages according to the age (cited in McLaughlin, 1984:72-73).

Simultaneous acquisition of bilingualism can vary according to several factors (Baker, 2017:87-88), resulting in 4 main categories according to the languages used to communicate to the children by the family members and relatives. The first category consists of the languages that the parents are able to speak; sometimes parents are bilingual, other times they can be monolingual, while learning the language of the community. The second category is made up by the languages that each parent actually speaks to the child; despite the fact of being bilingual, some parents choose to not use both languages, but only one. In other situations, one parent may speak one language, while the other one uses another. Another category is based on the languages that family members speak to the child; in other cases, both parents might be monolingual, speaking the same language to their children, but there can be a different language that children use at school, outside and in the streets. To conclude, the last category consists of the languages that the child experiences in the community; sometimes children might experience both home languages in the community. In contrast, other times they can be raised monolingual and learn another language at school for example by taking a course exclusively in that language.

Volterra and Taeschner (1978:303-319) suggested a 3-stage model language development in the bilingual child. Nowadays, according to Grosjean (1982:187) this theory is not accurate and the topic of language mixing and separation is still an issue. The key question in this linguistics debate is if two or more languages developed by a child are part of one integrated system containing elements from each language or separated linguistic systems. In the first stage, children create only one lexical system in which are present words belonging to both languages. Only in the second stage, children distinguish

between two lexical systems, one for each language, but they still apply the same syntactic rule in both languages (one grammar). To conclude, in the third stage, children develop a second grammar and, in this way, languages are differentiated in lexicon and syntax (Volterra and Taeschner, 1978:303-319). Nicoladis (1998:106) proposes a different theory from that above. According to him “in terms of phonology, lexicon and syntax, children seem to produce their two languages differentially from very early in development”, affirming that the existence of a single system is not possible.

When talking about simultaneous bilingualism, the ideal case is the situation in which the child has the two-input balanced (50-50) in order to develop both languages at the same time. Even though some people are close to this ideal, the majority of bilinguals are quite distant to balance their linguistic knowledge (Grosjean, 2013:122). Usually people, especially children, use a predominant language for some purposes and the other language for other purposes. The frequency of exposure is another important factor that leads someone to a balanced or unbalanced development. It is difficult to find a situation in which a child is exposed to the same quantity of language for each language. We refer to a language as the dominant one if it is stronger than the other. In reality, we talk of language dominance and imbalanced development when a child's language has evolved more quickly or with greater skills. A bilingual child is more likely to demonstrate dominance in one language for two key reasons (Grosjean 2013:123). The first one is that in some languages it can be more difficult to process and use specific lexical constructions. The second one is the frequency of exposure, which is important for the development of linguistic skills.

An example of simultaneous bilingual who had a balanced development of language skills is Ma. (see interviews page ..). Her parents have always used both languages to talk to her, her mother has used French and her father Italian to talk to her since she was born. Despite this, she argues that she feels comfortable using both languages, but if she must use technical terms or discuss topics such as economy or politics, it is more spontaneous for her to speak Italian. She also has several interferences between the two languages. What is interference? It occurs in children or people when the two languages are kept in balance and their domains are properly defined.

1.3.2 Sequential Acquisition

In the case of sequential (or successive) acquisition, a child learns a first language, his native tongue, and then he acquires another language (second language acquisition) (Wei, Auer, Paradis, 2007:15). Sequential bilingual children usually use their first language at home with their parents and the second language outside (e. g. school). According to studies (Baker, 2017:93-94), in the US less than 1 out of 20 children become fluent bilingual due to several factors. A lack of opportunity or motivation, a focus on the development of writing and reading skills instead of speaking and listening abilities or a low aptitude for second-language acquisition are only some of those motivations. In western (e. g. Belgium) and eastern countries (e. g. Singapore) this kind of bilingualism is more successful.

Returning to the discussion at hand, by talking about Informal Second Language Learning, we refer to the cases of a level of bilingualism reached through the street, friends, internet, television and so on. In contrast, Formal Second Language Learning is the expression used to describe the language acquisition through formal education, school and voluntary language classes, but also through extra schooling developed for specific purposes. It is this the case of community language classes, voluntary provision for religious, cultural, social and ethnic minority reasons and adult provisions (Baker, 2017:93-96).

Successive acquisition differs from simultaneous acquisition because it regards all the ages, while the second one is related only to children who have been exposed to two languages since birth (Grosjean, 2018:18-20). The weight of the relationship between age and language learning in gaining language proficiency is still at the center of debates today. The arguments are divided into two main sections; at one end are those who think that lower is the age, easier is the process of acquisition and more proficient is the result. At the other, people contend that thanks to the more developed processing skills, the higher is the age, the more successful and efficient will be the acquisition. Singleton (1989, cited in Baker, 2017:97) presents a fair review of this topic. His analysis can be summed up in the next 5 points. First of all, young and older students are more or less successful at the same level in second learning acquisition (1). However, younger

children seem to acquire easier sound systems. Those who learn a second language in their childhood are likely to achieve higher levels of proficiency than those who learn it when they are older (2). On the other hand, elder students use to start learning a language in formal educational settings more quickly than younger students. Anyway, language exposure is a crucial element for successful learning. For this reason, it can be an advantage for children to be exposed to that language throughout the educational career, allowing them to reach a higher level of proficiency. This does not exclude the possibility of a high linguistic level for adults if they are keen to learn and motivated (3). Teachers of a second language in elementary school must stimulate children, providing suitable resources, topics and materials and allowing them to enjoy the learning process (4). To conclude, immigrant children, especially in the United States, are pushed to learn English in a short period of time. This happens due to some researchers' claims about the existence of a critical period of acquisition set between 2 and 7 years old. Nowadays this period is not called critical period anymore, but instead advantageous period, set in early childhood and school days (5).

1.3.3 Critical period or sensible period?

Is it correct to talk about a critical period while discussing language learning? The answer is no. Grosjean (2013:147) affirms that there are two advantageous periods for language acquisition, which are childhood and school days. This term means that the second language acquisition should be quicker and successful in young children. However, this does not exclude the possibility of learning a language in other periods of life (such as adulthood). In the critical period Hypothesis, according to Lenneberg (1967, cited in McLaughlin, 1978:46-47), the natural language acquisition can happen only before the loss of the brain elasticity that takes place after puberty (between 2 years old and puberty). After this age, the lateralization of language function is completed, causing difficulties in mastering a new language or in overcoming an accent.

At the beginning, the critical period Hypothesis was tested by Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle (1978:1114-1128) who analyzed the development of linguistic skills in English-speaker children and adults who moved to the Netherlands recently. Children were between 3 and 15 years old and together with adults they were tested three times in several aspects of language such as lexicon, grammar and pronunciation. Surprisingly, while all the other

groups still improved their skills, children between 12 and 15 years old, during the first session, reached levels similar to those of native speakers. To conclude the test, Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle (1978:1117-1122) stated that second language acquisition is quicker for children between 12-15 years old. Over the years, a number of researches have been carried out, some findings have supported and others have contradicted this early conclusion. However, if on one hand children are advantaged by the sensitive period, adults have more developed extralinguistic skills, such as categorization and memory that allows adults to memorize faster new words and structures. Unlike adults, children improve their phonetic perception before their grammar. In fact, before learning any grammar, a young kid who is typically spoken to in a foreign language has already been accustomed to the sound system of that language.

Two relevant cases that allowed researchers to deepen the topic of language acquisition were those of Victor and Genie (Lightbown, Spada, 1993:11-13). Both people grown up without being exposed to any linguistic input. Victor lived 13 years in the wood of Aveyron, while Genie lived 13 years locked up in a dark room. They both presented the absence of a language and despite all the efforts and technics that experts used to help them, Victor succeeded in speaking only two words. Genie acquired some linguistic structures and vocabularies, but she shared features of abnormal language development exhibited by adults with brain damages.

CHAPTER 2

BICULTURALISM, IDENTITY AND TRANSLANGUAGING

In this chapter I will first introduce what biculturalism is and I will explain its role in defining linguistic and cultural identity in bilingual people. For this reason I will provide the definitions of 'linguistic' and 'identity' and then the meaning that these two words acquire together. Many researchers, including psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics among others, have studied why bilinguals change from one language to another. All the effects that these changes have on behavior and personality traits will be discussed in this section. In the second part of the chapter I will stress the role of translanguaging and of a person's linguistic repertoire. I will conclude by talking about language portraits, the visual representation of all the languages that a person knows, providing some real examples of these from the interviews that I have carried out (see Appendix).

2.1 Defining Biculturalism

According to Grosjean (1982:157-162), bilingualism and biculturalism are not the same thing and for this reason they do not automatically co-exist. There can be people who are both bilingual and bicultural, people who recognize themselves in one category or in the other, but also monolinguals who are bicultural (e.g. children of immigrants of second generation or French-speaking Bretons). These people take part in the life of two or more cultures. A culture involves not only the language, but also norms, values, symbols, behaviors and attitudes that characterize a society and his members.

Biculturalism is a way to acculturate, which is the process of assimilating and adapting to a new culture (Nguyen, Martinez, 2012:1). A huge number of the world's population is impacted by this significant and pervasive psychological process. It can affect several personal areas such as the psychological and the sociocultural ones. The former refers to the emotional well-being which can be positive, such as self-esteem and life satisfaction or negative, such as anxiety and depression. The latter is related to the personal competences which include achievements, career and social skills.

In the case of migrants, Grosjean (1982:157-162) states that it is not always easy for them to adjust to the new culture. Some people may not wish to adjust, while others make an effort, but are rejected by society. Occasionally the two cultures, that of the native country and that of the country of arrival are so different that the “cultural shock” is inevitable. According to Grosjean (1982:160), the adjustment may even be harder when the two cultures are in some ways similar or they just overlap (e.g. US and British culture).

The level of biculturalism attained varies according to a number of factors such as arrival. Bicultural bilinguals may try to adapt their behavior to the context and culture, and this can result in a change in personality traits (Bialystok, 2001:240). To quote the Czech proverb, “Learn a new language and get a new soul”, many bilinguals state that they feel they are a different person according to the language that they are using, but this is only partially true. In fact, what is perceived as a personality change, might actually be a shift in behavior and attitude in response to the adaptation to a culture (or language). To summarize it is a bicultural strategy to adapt to the context.

Grosjean (1982:162-166) argues that children of migrants can find it more difficult to by his/her peers, but at the same time also by the society and by his/her parents. Biculturalism can be more adaptive in bicultural environments; big cities that every year receive a large amount of migrants facilitate inclusion, but also allow people to keep their previous culture while adapting to the new one. People might decide to use their biculturalism in all situations (blended biculturalism) or to switch their behaviors according to the cultural context (alternating biculturalism) (Dev, 2010:26-32).

2.1.1 Linguistic Identity

In the first instance I will explore the meaning of these two words apart and together. On one hand, according to the Cambridge Dictionary “LINGUISTIC is something connected with language or the study of language”. Furthermore, François De Saussure claims that ‘linguistic’ is related to language and that it must be considered as a social phenomenon, a structured system that can be studied synchronically (at one point in the time) and diachronically (its development through time).

On the other hand, according to the Cambridge dictionary , “IDENTITY is the fact of being, or feeling that you are, a particular type of person, organization, etc.; the qualities that make a person, organization, etc. different from others”. In addition, Barth (2007:9-38), as regard as identity, talks about a boundary that groups build between themselves, rather than the characteristics of group members.

To summarize these assumptions, we talk about Linguistic Identity, when people experience a sense of belonging to a socially structured system because of their language and/or culture (Cambridge dictionary, online version). What occurs when someone changes from one language to another? Does his/her identity or personality change too? (Bialystok, 2001:240).

When a child born, he/she has an innate faculty of receiving linguistic signs of every language. Chomsky’s theory of language acquisition (1959, cited in Baxter, Clause, Chapel, 2022:10) states that the human brain structure allows language learning and usage. According to him languages contain similar structures which are part of the universal grammar; when children grow in a bilingual context they acquire the grammatical structures of both languages. In his view, children store information that can be used in another moment for written and oral communication.

For this reason children are able to understand the functioning of society through languages, binding together personal and social identity. The former concerns “who you are”, as everyone is different in this regard, every person is unique. A soul, a body and the physical existence are three fundamental criteria for a personal identity and they are not influenced by other entities. On the contrary, social identity is given by others and it cannot be determined by the linguistic repertoire alone. We need people to tell us who we are to be part of a group. For this reason, identity may be divided into individual awareness which is private, subjective and to which we refer by using ‘I’, and social identity, which is public, intersubjective and to which we refer by the pronoun, ‘you’ (see Figure 2) (Riley 2007:87).

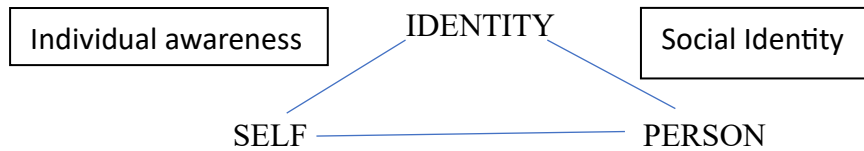


Figure 2: Individual and Social Identities (Riley 2007:87)

Now that we have defined the two main identities that coexist in one person, what happens if a person speaks more than one language or belongs to more than one culture? What happens to bilingual Linguistic Identities?

2.1.2 Cultural Switching

People who grow up in a bicultural or multicultural environment may struggle to balance their cultural and linguistic identity due to the influence of both cultures (Bourhis, Genesee, 1982:1-5). If we think about the benefits of a bicultural identity, we must mention a wider knowledge of the world thanks to the contact with two or more cultures. Consequently, people are able to switch their cognitive behavior and personality responses according to the situation. Both Cultural frame switching and Code-switching (see chapter 1) are examples of cultural switching. The former is the method that bicultural or multilingual people use to change their perspective of the world in order to adapt to language and culture that they are currently using (Grosjean, 1982:279-284). This technique may lead to the activation of different values and even personality traits. The latter involves the shifting of the way of speaking from a language to another. This form of communication is not just limited to speaking, but it includes gestures, body language and ‘cultural expectations’ too.

As more and more languages and cultures are embedded in a person, it becomes harder to preserve one speech community without assimilating aspects of other cultures (Riley, 2007:39-59). The process of cultural switching is not always spontaneous; sometimes changings in personality traits, perceptions and intonations are not perceived by the speaker, but only by the others. In fact, these shifts are due to a change of social roles and attitudes. Bilinguals typically acquire their languages in a variety of situations associating various feelings, actions, and attitudes with these circumstances, leading the bilingual to react or reply in a number of ways according to the them.

2.1.3 Examples from interviews

Over the last few months I have carried out interviews (see Appendix) based on linguistic and cultural identities, personality traits changes and language switches. One of the 21 questions (see page .., question 14) was about the self-perception of personality shifts (see Chapter 3). Only 2 out of the 10 people think that they are always the same person, with the same values and behaviors in all the languages that they speak. One person argues that he changes his personality traits, becoming a different person, when speaking his non-native languages. On the contrary if he speaks English or Italian, he feels that he has the same personality features. However, the majority of people state that they perceive not only differences in their personality, but also in their humour, intonation and attitude.

The age of the respondents who feel some change is between 14 and 24, the one who feels it partially is 35 and the two people who do not perceive it are 50 and 68. One interviewee argues that she feels that she has a cheerful intonation in Spanish and a more neutral intonation in Italian, while two other respondents affirm that they feel calmer and relaxed in Italian, but, on the contrary they are more aggressive in their other first language (Romanian and Moroccan). Some say that according to the language that they are talking, they feel more relaxed, more serious or rigid. All these assumptions appear to confirm the idea of adapting behavior and intonation in accordance with the language used and the situation. The majority of the interviewees feel the change between the two or more languages, while only three people perceive it partially or not at all.

2.2 Translanguaging

Translanguaging, in accordance with García (2013:20-30) is a linguistic phenomenon that enhances and promotes different languages and cultures, allowing people to use in a creative and flexible way all the languages that they know. Cen Williams first used the term "translanguaging" in 1994 to describe the process of switching the languages used for input and output. According to Williams (2002 cited in Li Wei, 2018:8-9). Translanguaging in education is the practice of using one language through a process of cognitive bilingual involvement to support another, in order to improve comprehension and the student's activity in both languages. In this way, the weaker language is improved

too, thanks to the relation with the dominant one. According to Baker (2011, cited in Lin, 2017:3) “To read and discuss a topic in one language, and then to write about it in another language, means that the subject matter has to be processed and digested”. This means that if someone reads and explores a topic in a particular language, in order to produce a written or an oral explanation in another language, he/she has to understand and mentally translate it.

Translanguaging, as the word its-self says, is the “trans” approach to bilingual education and it concerns three key points (García 2013:3); This term refers to a *trans-system* and a *trans-space*, which means that these practices are not only limited to educational systems, but it goes beyond. This space allows bilinguals to integrate social spaces that in other ways would be divided. It is a space to translanguaging that has transformative power in which are generated new identities and values (Li Wei, 2018:17). In addition it presents a *transformative nature*, involving the evolution of old structures of language and education into new one. To conclude it is *transdisciplinary* because it entails the creation of a tool that allows people to understand language and education, but also human sociality, cognition and learning, social structures and relations.

García (2011: 147) states that the practice of translanguaging goes beyond code-switching, which is the alternate use of two or more languages. In fact, it describes how speakers create and use unique and interconnected discursive practices. Those cannot be categorized into one or more traditional definitions of a language because they combine two or more languages that the speaker knows. This means that bilinguals have a huge linguistic repertoire in which all the languages that they know and/or understand are present, creating flexible bilingualism. In fact, this process allows students to improve all their skills, reading, listening, speaking and writing, by taking notes, discussing and processing information in both languages.

Translanguaging can be used beyond education, because emergent bilinguals are pushed to translanguaging, to think and reflect too. By doing so, these people create not only two different linguistic repertoires, but one complex dynamic repertoire in which are included both languages (or more). Canagarajah (2011, cited in Lin, 2017:6) defines this repertoire

as an integrated system, arguing also that translanguaging can be considered part of the multicompetence that a bilingual should have. In fact, bilinguals' minds differ from monolinguals' minds because the latter are limited by a single language and culture. On the contrary, bilinguals experience a co-existence of two or more languages, which allow them to be more open-minded and multicompetent. Some years later, Canarajah (2013: cited in Lin, 2017:6) coin the term translingual practice which includes all the expressions which reflect the fluidity of language practices, such as translanguaging and code-mixing, insisting that the first one is not solely a social practice, but also a linguistic theory; in fact it creates in the mind of them who use it a grammar shaped though social interaction and negotiation.

To sum up, translanguaging breaks all the boundaries between languages and culture, promoting the creation of a single repertoire, without any kind of strict structure. This concept goes beyond the traditional teachings, in order to advance social justice, eliminate preconceived notions and to equalize social standing among all people (Lin, 2017:7). In addition, translanguaging entails the continuous change of sociocultural identity and allows bilinguals to use a double way of thinking, reacting creatively and criticality according to both languages. It allows people to use all their languages in a creative, critical and flexible way.

2.2.1 Creativity and Criticality

Creativity and criticality are bound together; a person cannot be creative without taking thoughtful decisions. Li Wei (cited in Wright, Boun, García, 2015:226) states that creativity is “the ability to choose between following and flouting the rules and norms of behavior, including the use of language.” In order to be creative (Li Wei, 2013:24-25), a person must break the barriers between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the traditional and the unconventional, and the comfortable and the challenging. On the other hand criticality is the ability to use available data to act properly and provide a response in accordance with the situation. These two elements combined can lead to co-operation and the improvement of communication skills. In class they allow students to go beyond the classic concept of teaching and lectures, motivating and challenging them. Since language

is used in unique ways, students must apply reasoning abilities in addition to memorization of material.

2.2.2 The Linguistic Repertoire and Language Portraits

The concept of the linguistic repertoire is related to translanguaging and *trans-spaces*: in fact, bilingual people resort to a repertoire of all the languages that they use. In this space the linguistic and cultural identities and values are mixed together, creating a repertoire without any boundary. The idea of the linguistic repertoire was initiated by Gumperz in the 1960s (Busch, 2012:2-3) when he conducted research in two villages, one in India and one in Norway. At the beginning, he called it “verbal repertoire” which was related to “all the accepted ways of formulating messages. [...] Speakers choose among this arsenal in accordance with the meaning they wish to convey” (Gumperz 1964, in Bush, 2012:2-3). In this way language choice and social issues are linked together, blending in a sociolinguistic concept. A particular expression, being part of a “verbal repertoire”, should be recognized with the same meaning by all the members of the community.

How can we study the linguistic repertoire? A few years ago, the Research Group *Spracherleben* (Experiencing Language) at the University of Vienna's Institute of Linguistics started using a multimodal biographic approach to study linguistic repertoires. At the beginning, in a primary school, children were given body silhouette (see Figure 3) and they were asked to paint it according to the languages that they speak and the parts of the body in which they feel connected to those languages (Busch, 2018:2-10). Today, this tool is known as the ‘language portrait’.

The main objectives of this work were the study of language awareness and giving children the opportunity to talk about their languages and their cultures, comparing them. After painting the figure, they were asked to explain their correlations between colors, body parts and languages. They had to explain their thoughts and feelings related to the languages too.



Figure 3- Template of the body outline (Busch, 2012:8-10)

This portrait (Busch, 2012:8-10), which is a visual representation of the linguistic repertoire, has been used in education and in schools to explore bilingualism and multilingualism and to identify the best strategies to avoid linguistic and cultural exclusion. At the same time, body silhouettes encourage the reflective process and focus on the perspective of the participants, demonstrating the crucial relationship among emotions, language learning and personal experience.

In Figure 3, the body silhouette (Busch, 2018:9) does not present gender details or other specific elements such as hair, eyes, toes or cloths. The only distinction that can be made is through the different position of the arms, even though it might not always serve as a distinctive purpose. The image is a point of intersection between the internal and external sides, between what the people think and what the others perceive. Sometimes, the colors are associated with the same emotions or objects, such as with national colors or national flags.

2.2.3 An Example of a Language Portrait

To conclude this chapter, I have chosen one of the language portraits that one participant in my interview (see page ..) has produced. The native languages of the woman who painted this language portrait are Italian and Argentinian (Spanish). She studied English at school; she understands it, but she has a low level, so she has decided to not include it in the language portrait. In describing her linguistic repertoire (Figure 4), R. has chosen

to use light blue to indicate Argentinian and red for Italian. The light blue stands for the Argentinian flag (Figure 4).

R. has chosen red for Italian and she has used it to draw the brain because she has



Figure 4 - An example of Language Portrait

completed all her studies in Italy and for this reason she tends to think in Italian. The red mouth indicates the speaking activity, because she feels more comfortable speaking in Italian, rather than in Spanish. Her heart is in Italy, her friendships, her boyfriend and most of her relatives are here in Italy. The red point in the belly indicates the future and procreation; she would like to bring up her children in Italy, but she wants them to inherit her Argentinian and Bolivian heritage too. To conclude, her feet symbolize a saying: “before judging someone, you should put his/her shoes on”. This means that you cannot judge someone if you do not try his/her life. She has done this thing only with Italian people, so she thinks that she knows Italian people better, rather than the Argentinians.

She considers herself as 100% bilingual, and she feels she has only a single huge identity in which can be found all the languages that she speaks. She belongs to two linguistic worlds and she is connected to both her languages, but more to the Italian culture rather

than the Argentinian one. However, now she is living in Sicily and she feels that Argentinian culture is in some way related to that of the south Italy. R. presents herself as being part of two linguistic and cultural worlds in her present, but also in her past and in her future. Her linguistic repertoire has been evolving since her birth and this process is still present now. Her name, together with her physical features, remind R. of her Argentinian roots, and she is proud of them.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF LINGUISTIC IDENTITIES: A CASE STUDY BASED ON BILINGUAL PEOPLE

In the last chapter of my dissertation, I will analyze the results that I have obtained through interviews with bilingual people. I will first describe the methods and participants, providing a presentation for each participant and the main aim of the interviews. I will then compare the results that caught my attention, in the light of the theories of the previous chapters. The present chapter aims to investigate some research questions which represent the heart of my dissertation:

- What role does bilingualism play in the respondents' lives? Is it perceived positively?
- What do the respondents think about their linguistic identities?
- Do the participants perceive a personality change according to the language used? Does this represent a real switch?

1.1 Methods and Participants

This study was conducted through an interview made up of 20 open questions (see Appendix) which were filled in by 10 participants of different ages, who are all bilingual since birth. The questions concern the linguistic background, linguistic and cultural identity, language usage, personality changes and cross-linguistic influences. The participants are aged between 14 and 68 years old and they are all considered to be simultaneous bilinguals. Some of them were passive bilinguals during their first years of life since their parents only spoke $L\alpha^1$ at home and they were consequently exposed to $L\beta^2$ only outside. They present different linguistic backgrounds:

¹ Language Alfa; some researchers prefer using this instead of using L1 (language 1), because not all bilinguals present a language in which they are more proficient, sometimes they have the same level in both languages

² Language Beta; used instead of L2 (language 2)

Participants	Native languages	Other languages	Age
V.	Italian and Romanian	English	14 years old
R.	Italian and Spanish (Argentinian)	English	21 years old
N.	Italian and Moroccan	English, French, Spanish	21 years old
E.	Italian and Arabic	Arabic, English, French, Spanish, German and Dutch	22 years old
Ma.	Italian and French	English	23 years old
L.	Italian and French	English, Spanish	24 years old
A.	Italian and Russian	English, French	24 years old
B.	Italian and English	French, Spanish, German and Swedish	35 years old
Mi.	Italian and Spanish (Argentinian)	English, French	50 years old
T.	Italian, French, Croatian	English, Dutch	68 years old

Figure 5 – The interviewees

All the participants have studied at least one other language at school, in addition to their two or three native languages. The entire transcriptions of the interviews can be found in the Appendix, while in the next paragraphs there is a short presentation for each participant which allows the readers to understand with the respondents and the main events and experiences that have shaped their linguistic repertoires and their linguistic identities.

V. is an Italian Romanian girl, who is 14 years old. She was born in Italy of Romania parents. Until she was 3 years old, she spoke only Italian because her father used only Italian with her, but she understood Romanian too because her mother used both languages. For this reason, at the beginning of her life, she was considered as a passive bilingual. According to Grosjean (2013:120), a passive bilingual cannot be

considered as a simultaneous bilingual because in this way the languages are not at the same level. However, as we stated before, it is almost impossible to find a balanced bilingualism, therefore researchers as De Houwer (cited in McLaughlin, 1984:72) argue that to be a bilingual it is sufficient to produce complete and meaningful sentences in both languages.

When V. was at kindergarten, her teacher told her father that it would be better for her to learn to speak Romanian. From that moment, her father started to talk to her by blending the languages through code-mixing (by mixing both languages in the same conversation). She is currently at high school and she speaks Romanian fluently, but she feels she has some accent issues. She travels to Romania once every two years, where she spends between two to four weeks. Now she is studying English too.

N. is a 21-year-old Italian Moroccan man. He was born in Puglia, in Italy, of Moroccan parents and he moved to Venice when he was three. He has always spoken only Arabic with his grandmother and his parents, and Italian out of the home since he was a child. The frequency of exposure impacts the knowledge of a language; as a consequence of speaking only Arabic at home, his bilingualism is not well balanced and sometimes he struggles in expressing his thoughts (Grosjean 2013:123). He studied English, French and Spanish at high school and now he still studies the first two. He is currently studying languages and he is working as a Receptionist in a Luxury Hotel in Venice, where he uses English daily and often Spanish and French.

R. is an Argentinian Italian woman who is 21 years old. She was born in Buenos Aires and when she was only some months old she moved to Italy. She grew up with her grandparents, who spoke Spanish and Italian at home; her grandmother is Bolivian and his grandfather is Italian, but he spent his life in Argentina. She has been exposed to dual language learning experiences since birth, although she refused to use Spanish, and for this reason she is considered a simultaneous bilingual (De Houwer, 1995, cited in Wei, Auer, Paradis, 2007:15) When she started middle school, everything changed; she started to study Spanish and for her this was more and more spontaneous. At high school she studied English and Spanish, but she was not very successful in the study of the former.

E. is a 22-year-old Italian Moroccan woman. She was born in Italy of Moroccan parents. She grew up speaking only Moroccan at home with her parents and she was taught to write and read Arabic. Now she uses Italian to communicate with her brothers. She travels to Morocco every summer to visit her relatives, especially her grandparents. She considers both languages as her native languages. When she thinks, she blends all her language together, creating a kind of non-language. This practice is actually called translanguaging and in education it is the practice of using one language through a process of cognitive bilingual involvement to support another, improving comprehension and all the other activities (Williams, cited in Li Wei, 2018:8-9). She is currently attending Cultural and Linguistic Mediation at the university of Padua and she is studying French, Spanish, English and Dutch. When she was at middle school she also studied German.

Ma. is an Italian woman who is 23 years old. Since her birth her mother has spoken to her in French, while her father in Italian. She used to travel to her grandmother's house in France every summer for a couple of months. After one of these trips, Ma. decided to avoid speaking Italian, so while her teacher talked to her in Italian, she always answered in French. This reaction was a response to the process of adjustment to two languages and cultures. Sometimes, the child is unable to relate to the two cultures and this leads to an inner conflict where the child feels unaccepted and can refuse to use one of the two languages, like this case (Grosjean, 1982:162-166).

When she was at primary school, her teacher suggested that her mother should not teach her to write in French because this would create "interferences" between the two languages. When she had mastered written and oral Italian structures, her mother started to talk to her always in French again. When she was at high school, she studied English: she found it easy to learn vocabulary, but she had some problems learning grammatical structures and writing texts. After high school, she moved to Paris as an Au Pair girl and she enrolled at university to study psychology. Now, she has been there for 3 years.

A. is an Italian Russian woman who is 24 years old. She was born in Russia of Russian parents, who grew up in Kazakhstan. They moved to Russia after their wedding and then they moved again to Germany when A. was 6 months old. When she was 2, they

moved to Italy. Her age allowed her to naturally acquire Italian. In fact, according to Lenneberg (1967, cited in McLaughlin, 1978:46-47), this kind of acquisition take place only before puberty; after it the brain loses his elasticity and the lateralization of language function is completed.

Her parents used to speak only Russian at home, especially while the grandmother was living with them. She started to speak Italian only at kindergarten, and she also practiced it with her godmother. Her mother wanted her to integrate in Italian society and enrolled her in catechism classes and into the scout group (to let her attain a high level of biculturalism, Bialystok, 2001:240). When she was at middle school she started a course to learn how to read and to write Russian. At high school she studied English and attended French (b1 level) and Greek courses. Now she is living with her mother and they speak Italian most of time, sometimes mixing Russian terms. She only speaks Russian with her grandparents and her aunts. When she speaks with her cousins she uses English (they are from Germany, Spain and Belgium). She works at the airport at the check-in desk, where she uses mainly Italian and English and sometimes French and Russian.

L. is a Belgian Italian man of 24. He was born in Belgium of an Italian mother and a Belgian father. When he was a child his parents used to speak both languages at home, therefore he has developed a balanced bilingualism (Grosjean, 2013:123). He has a degree in Translation and he has attended a master's in Spanish and English Translation. He participated in an Erasmus program in Valencia for five months while he was at university. He is currently working as a Direction Assistant in the Taekwondo Sports association, where he uses French and English daily. He uses Spanish only in business trips and Italian to communicate with his relatives. He has grown up in a bicultural environment and sometimes he struggles to balance his cultural and linguistic identity as a consequence of the influence of both cultures, but he recognizes the wider knowledge of the world allowed by bilingualism ((Bourhis, Genesee, 1982:1-5).

B. is a 35-year-old Italian Nigerian man. He was born in Italy of Nigerian parents. At first, they used only English and a Nigerian dialect at home. Only when B. started primary school, they decided to speak Italian at home to facilitate his language acquisition. In fact, according to Chomsky's theory of language acquisition (1959, cited

in Baxter, Clause, Chapel, 2022:10), when children grow in a bilingual context it is easier for them to acquire the grammatical structures. He has travelled to Nigeria a few times in his life to visit his relatives. He studied French and German at high school, and Spanish and Swedish at University, where he attended Languages, Civilization and Linguistic Sciences. B. is currently the singer of a band and he has worked for several years as linguistic mediator and as an English teacher.

Mi. is an Italian Bolivian woman of 50. She was born in Italy of a Bolivian mother and an Italian father who emigrated to Argentina. At first, at home, the parents used to talk only in Spanish, because her mother did not know Italian. Her father tried to teach her mother Italian and therefore she was exposed to this language, but she started to speak it well at kindergarten. She uses both languages with her children because she wants them to understand it. She has travelled to Argentina twice, one with her parents to meet her family there, and once with her husband to allow him to meet her relatives. Mi. learnt the Treviso dialect when she was an adult, but she tends to mix it with other dialects of the area. She is currently working in a multinational company in the field of customer care, where she uses all the languages that she knows (Italian, Spanish, English, a little bit of French).

T. is a Belgian Italian man of 68. He was born in Belgium of Italian parents who had been living until that moment in a town in Molise (San Felice). There the languages of the community were Croatian and the dialect of the area. His parents spoke only Croatian at home and when they travelled once a year to Italy, his family also used an Italian dialect. At that time, T. spoke Croatian fluently and he understood the dialect. When he started kindergarten in Belgium, his parents started to use only French at home. At middle and high school, he studied English and Dutch. At the same time, he followed an Italian course by mail. He received homework and tasks by mail from Italy and he had to complete and send them back to receive an evaluation. He married an Italian woman, who moved to Belgium and therefore their son has grown up as a bilingual. They often use code-switching and code-mixing; in these cases the grammar of one language is adjusted to the grammatical structures of the first language used. In this the foreign words used do not alter the structure in any way (Malube, 2015:341).

He is currently attending a Spanish course with his wife. Now he is working as a designer of technical user manuals in the military field and he uses mainly English for the technical names and instructions.

1.2 Results

The majority of participants were born in Italy, while two of them were born in Belgium, one in Russia and one in Argentina. Seven of them are currently living in Italy, while two are living in Belgium (they are relatives) and one is living in France (see questions 3 and 5). Most of them spent their childhood in Italy, travelling sometimes to their countries of birth. It is the same for those living in Belgium, who travel once a year to Italy to see their relatives (see question 4).

The respondents speak both of their native languages at home, but with different percentages. Half of them speak less Italian and more the other language. The others mix the two languages to adapt to the situation or to express themselves in a suitable way according to the context (using the “appropriate expression”, Malube, 2015:346-348). The participants with siblings affirm that they usually use their foreign language to communicate with their parents, while they mostly use Italian to speak to their siblings (see question 6). For example, Mi., who is married and has children, said that if there are only her children in the room, she uses Spanish, while if there is her husband she uses Italian so as not to exclude him from the conversation. According to Halliday (1978, cited in Eggins, 2004:90), this language shifting, called language choice, is made in accordance with three factors, which are field, tenor and mode. They refer to the topic, the role played by the participants, the channel and the mode of communication. These elements influence people linguistic choices. The process used by bilinguals and multilinguals when they mix languages is called code-mixing, which is not a lack of inhibitory control or a sign of poor linguistic competence, but it is an important part of the development of bilingual competences (Grosjean, 2013:133).

The interviewees strongly believe that bilingualism is positive and useful in their everyday lives, not only at home, but also for work purpose. They see it as an advantage and most of them are satisfied with their linguistic background, while 2 participants think

that they could improve their linguistic skills in order to wider their knowledge or to not be confused between the two or more languages. The positive impact that bilingualism has on a human's life is perceived by every participant, but not all of them thought the same thing in their childhood. According to N., people used to see bilingualism as a negative feature when he was a child and this made him feel “wrong and inadequate” with bad consequences on his self-esteem. Instead, Ma. argued that was difficult to her to speak one language exclusively (Italian in Italy, for example at school, French when she stayed at her grandmother's house in France).

The cases of N. and Ma. are in some ways similar. In fact, people seem to be afraid of the ability of bilinguals of speaking two languages, creating mixed utterances. Code-switching and code-mixing are not always appreciated by monolinguals (Grosjean, 2013:133-134), and for this reason not all bilinguals use them or they restrict them to situations in which they will not be teased or mocked. In particular, teachers may not approve them and there have been created some strategies that Lanza (2004:260-268) has identified as “parental discourse strategies”. The aim is helping children to avoid code-mixing and code-switching and some examples can be asking for clarification, repeating the question or rephrasing the statement. On the other hand, the respondents who considered bilingualism positively in their childhood affirmed that they felt special because everyone understood what they were saying or because they could communicate with more people (questions 8, 16).

Question ten was related to the concept of linguistic identity. All the participants provided different answers; some said that they feel connected to both languages in the same way. Three people argued that they feel closer not to Italian, but to the other language, while another 3 people feel more related to Italian. Mi. said that when she was younger she had an identity crisis because she was not able to find a linguistic identity that could represent her. Now she is proud of her identity, which is a mixture of her languages and she is aware that it represents a compromise among her origins and her current life. I asked the participants if they recognized themselves in one linguistic identity, which contains all the others or in more linguistic identities which are separated one from another. Four people answered that they are more likely to have a single huge identity in which all their

languages are contained. This idea is similar to that of the linguistic repertoire; in fact all the linguistic and cultural identities are mixed together in it, creating a repertoire without borders (Busch, 2012:2-3). On the other hand, six people feel they have more linguistic identities which are similar, but at the same time they are different and *unique*. T. stated that he has more identities in which he feels the same person, but in some way he feels he acquires particular features according to the language that he is using. E. provided a similar answer by saying that she is a different E. in accordance with the language that she is using (questions 10, 12). This feeling of being a different person can be explained thanks to a Czech proverb that says “you live a new life for every language you speak.” In reality, it cannot be defined as a real change; in fact, what it is perceived as a personality change is a shift in behavior and attitude in response to the adaptation to a culture (biculturalism) or a language (bilingualism) (Bialystok, 2001:240).

In questions 13 and 14 the respondents were asked if they notice any change in thinking and personality traits according to the language that are using in a particular moment. Three people answered that they think in the same way regardless of the language that they are using. On the other hand six people think in a different way according to the language used; some affirm that this change is influenced by the different kind of phonetic, intonation and grammatical structures, while others state that it is because of the topic which can be more common used in one of the two languages. This position is shared by researchers such as Bourhis and Genesee (1982:1-5), who argue that bilinguals and multilinguals shift their cognitive behavior and personality responses according to the situation. This process is called cultural switching and, for example, it includes code-switching.

The last respondent said that she does not have a precise answer; she has asked herself this question without being able to provide an answer. The most likely scenario in her view is that she mixes all her languages while thinking, creating a kind of “Universal language” without any border between all the languages that she speaks. This process that she has described can be defined as translanguaging. In fact it is a linguistic phenomenon that enhances and promotes different languages and cultures, allowing people to use in a creative and flexible way all the languages that they know (García, 2013:20-30). It goes beyond code-switching and allows the creation of interconnected discursive practices.

Going back to personality change, the majority of people agree that they change in some way according to the language used. V. affirms that she feels calmer and peaceful when speaking Italian, while she is more aggressive in Romanian. The explanation to this phenomenon is that people adjust to the cultural context and these shifts are a consequence of this process of adaptation; according to the culture and language used bilinguals have different personality responses (Grosjean, 1982:157-162).

Other participants stated the same difference due to the intonation, accents, phonological system and grammatical structures. Some participants say that they adopt some stereotypical behaviors according to the language used. Another thing that changes from one language to another is the sense of humor, which causes a different perception of jokes according to the language used. Only two people do not feel any change and feel they are the same person in each language that they know.

In question 17 respondents were asked if they had a weaker language and if they considered the possibility to turn their weaker language into the stronger one, for example, moving abroad. Only four people are open to this possibility and they are mostly those who have already switched their dominant language with their weaker language during their life. For example T. used to speak only Croatian with his family, while he used French outside the home. Now he remembers only a few sentences and words of Croatian and his most frequently used languages are French and Italian. L. thinks that it is not very probable that his weaker language will become his dominant one. He gives the example of his mother, who has been living in Belgium since 1982, and regardless this, in some situations it is more spontaneous for her to use Italian.

To conclude, in question 18, the majority of interviewees affirmed that it is easy for them to study a new language and they agree that the previous knowledge of other languages can help people to learn a new one. Only two people state the difficulty that they have in learning a new language. While R. finds it boring and difficult to learn every feature of a language, Ma. has problems only with the grammatical structures.

1.3 Discussion Section

The responses to my main research question “What role does bilingualism play in respondents’ lives? Is it perceived positively?” reflect a strong position from the participants who consider it not only positively and useful, but also crucial in the field of work (Bourhis, Genesee, 1982:1-5). Although some participants considered it to be a negative feature when they were children, now everyone considers it as a positive value. Bilingualism allows people to have multiple points of view and to have the ability to communicate with much many people, sharing experiences and traditions from all over the world. These findings confirm what various studies highlight: bilingualism allows people to improve their multitasking skills such as comprehension, problem solving and memory, keeping the brain healthy and active. Bilingualism, together with translanguaging, promotes outside-the-box thinking leading to an improvement of communication skills and creativity (Li Wei, 2013:24-25).

On the other hand, in relation to the second research question “What do respondents think about their linguistic identities?” the participants took different positions and they provided several answers. In fact only half of them feel connected in the same way to both native tongues, while the others feel closer to one than the other. One of the respondents talked about the inner fight that she went through to determine her linguistic identity. It ended when she understood that was impossible to have only one linguistic identity connected to one language because she was influenced by both languages. When I told her about the existence of linguistic repertoires and language portraits she felt represented by them. As a matter of fact, linguistic repertoires are connected to the concept of translanguaging because they are a *trans-space*, and therefore they are flexible, without borders and languages and cultures are mixed together (Busch, 2012:2-3). Instead, the language portrait is made up of a body silhouette, which is the visual representation of the linguistic repertoire and it is used to explore bilingualism and multilingualism (Busch, 2012:8-10).

Mi. agreed that she has an identity which is made up of a mixture of her two languages and cultures.

However, the majority of respondents also affirmed that they feel that they have several linguistic identities according to the language used, which are in some way similar and different at the same time. They feel a different person according to the situation, context and language or culture used. The other four people feel they have a huge identity in which all the linguistic identities are present. These statements are related to the last research question, “Do the participants perceive a personality change according to the language used?”. In fact most of participants agree that they have a different personality, being a distinct people according to the context. This personality change has been studied by researchers and linguists such as Genesee and Grosjean. The former stated that bilinguals and multilinguals switch their cognitive behavior and personality responses according to the situation (Genesee, 1982:1-5), while the second one argued that through the cultural frame switching these people change their perspective of the world in order to adapt to the language or culture that they are using (Grosjean, 1982:279-284). This may cause the activation of different values, behaviors and personality traits, but does not mean that people change completely their way of living.

Surprisingly not all the bilinguals who participated in the interview find it easy to learn a new language. In fact one person affirmed that she is neither interested in learning a new one because she has many difficulties. Another girl stated that she has difficulties only with grammatical structures and not with the parts of speaking and vocabularies.

To sum up, bilingualism now is perceived positively by the participants thanks to its added value and to its positive features, such as the ability of multitasking, open-mindedness and outside-the-box thinking (Li Wei, 2013:24-14). Bilinguals make a language choice according to the context and register (Halliday, 1978, cited in Eggins, 2004:90), but they can choose to use both languages in the same utterance or conversation; in this case we talk about code-mixing, code-switching or borrowings (Malube, 2015: 341-348). These processes used by bilinguals and multilinguals are a crucial part of the development of bilingual competences (Grosjean, 2013:133). These competences can also be developed through translanguaging, a phenomenon that allows people to use in a flexible way all the languages that they know thanks to a linguistic repertoire in which are present all of them (García, 2013:20-30). Linguistic repertoires are flexible and without borders and they can

be represented through language portraits, body silhouettes that are colored by bilinguals and multilinguals (Busch, 2012:8-10). The self-perception of belonging to different languages and cultures contributes to the creation of linguistic and cultural identities which can be more or less closer to the languages (Bourhis, Genesee, 1982:1-5). The participants provided different answers; some are close to both languages and cultures, while others feel closer only to one language or culture. Respondents think that they influence their way of thinking and personality traits. This happens as a consequence of the cultural switching that causes different cognitive behavior and personality responses according to the situation (Bourhis and Genesee, 1982:1-5).

To conclude, even though bilinguals and multilinguals in most of cases are not aware of the theories on bilingualism and translanguaging, they experience a emotions and switching that are explained through these theories.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this dissertation was to investigate the importance of bilingualism in bilinguals' and multilinguals' lives, the impact that it has on their linguistic identities and how personality traits and their way of thinking may be influenced by it.

In the first chapter I reviewed the main characteristics and linguistic features of bilingualism. I provided several definitions of bilingualism and the main reasons that push people to become bilingual. Language choice and language acquisition were the other two key points of the first chapter and some questions on these two topics have also been asked in the interview (see appendix). When people participate in a conversation, they make some choices according to topic, participants and mode of communication. Bilinguals have to choose which language they are going to use too. The majority of respondents of my interview argued that they use their foreign language mainly with their parents and relatives, while they use Italian outside in all the other contexts, using code-mixing only if the interlocutor knows both languages.

In the second chapter explored two important topics: biculturalism and translanguaging. The former is not always present in a bilingual's life, but when it may influence personality switching and people's linguistic identities. On the other hand, translanguaging allows flexibility and creativity by using all the languages that a person knows without any limit; it is related to the creation of a single Linguistic Repertoire in which a person's individual languages are embedded.

The third chapter focused on the results of the interviews that I conducted. The respondents answered 20 questions about their linguistic habits, families, personalities and self-perception. I compared the findings that I obtained through the interview with the theories of the previous chapters. Several findings differed from the theoretical patterns. Interviewees agreed that bilingualism is positive in people's lives, not only for work, but also in everyday life. In fact, according to Canagarajah (2011, cited in Lin, 2017:6), bilinguals are not limited by a single language and culture, but instead they may be more open-minded and multicompetent.

Finally, this dissertation has explored the phenomenon of bilingualism, analyzing its cognitive and socio-cultural implications. Bilingualism is not solely a matter of language proficiency, but a dynamic cognitive process that shapes the brain and enhances cognitive abilities. The evidence presented in this dissertation highlights that bilingual individuals possess advantages in executive functions, attentional control, and problem-solving abilities.

In the last century, the linguistic practices in bilinguals' and multilinguals' lives have gained importance. This dynamic practice is called translanguaging and it is based on the idea that people possess a huge linguistic repertoire that they use to communicate. In it are present all the languages that a person knows, highlighting the innate human ability to blend languages for fluid and cohesive expression and comprehension. To sum up, translanguaging challenges the boundaries of linguistic practices and plays an important role for social inclusion, intercultural communication and the celebration of linguistic diversity, promoting empathy and respect. It is crucial also in shaping bilinguals' and multilinguals' linguistic identity. Language identity encompasses both the concepts of individuals' self-perception of their language and culture and the social perceptions. In particular, linguistic identity is related to people's sense of belonging to a linguistic and/or cultural community, causing positive and negative emotions (self-esteem or anxiety and depression). To conclude, this dissertation underlines the importance of linguistic identities as an integral part of people's lives, because of their relationship with language, culture and personal experiences.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONS

1. How old are you?
2. Which is/are your native language/s? Which other languages do you speak?
3. Where were you born?
4. Where did you spend your childhood?
5. Where are you living now?
6. Which languages do you speak at home with family members?
7. In which language do you feel more comfortable talking about your daily life/routine?
What about your studies or job?
8. How would you describe your linguistic background? What about your language usage?
9. What do you notice when people find out that you are bilingual? *
10. Do you feel that your identity is connected to the language that you speak? In what way? To what extent?
11. Do you feel that your identity is connected to your country of birth? In what way? To what extent?
12. Do you recognize yourself more in one of your linguistic identities?
13. Do you think that you think in a different way according to the language that you are using at that moment?
14. Do you change your personality in any way when you switch between languages?
15. How often do you switch from one language to another/others in the same sentence?
Do you do it with everyone or only with people who speak both/all languages fluently?
16. Do you consider bilingualism to be something positive/useful? Has your opinion changed since childhood?
17. In your future, do you think that your weaker language (if you have one) may become your dominant language?
18. How difficult do you find it to learn a new language? Do you feel that your languages are helpful to learn other languages?

19. Do you think that there is any transfer between your languages (syntaxis, lexis, sentence structures)? Are you able to deal with them? Were you able to do so in your childhood too?
20. Do you know what a Cultural Switching is? Can you tell me an example?
21. Do you know what a language portrait is? Can you draw your language portrait?

INTERVIEWS

1) How old are you?

V.: "I am 14 years old"

N.: "I am 21 years old"

R.: "I am 21 years old"

E.: "I am 22 years old"

Ma.: "I am 23 years old"

A.: "I am 24 years old"

L.: "I am 24 years old."

B.: "I am 35 years old"

Mi.: "I am 50 years old"

T.: "I am 68 years old"

2) Which is/are your native language/s? Which other languages do you speak?

V.: "My native languages are Italian and Romanian. I speak also English."

N.: "My native languages are Italian and Arabic. I know French, English and Spanish too."

R.: "My native languages are Spanish and Italian. I understand English, but I have a low level."

E.: "My native languages are Italian and Moroccan. The other languages that I know are Arabic, English, French, Spanish. I have studied German and Dutch too, but I have a lower level.of knowledge."

Ma.: "My native languages are Italian and French. I understand English, but I do not speak it well."

A.: "My native languages are Russian and Italian. I speak also English and French."

L.: “My native languages are French and Italian. I have studied English and Spanish too.”

B.: “My native languages are English and Italian. The other languages that I speak are French, Spanish, German and Swedish”.

Mi.: “My native languages are Spanish and Italian. I have a high level in English and I understand French and the Treviso dialect (anyway, sometimes I mix it with other dialects).”

T.: “My native languages are French and Italian. The other languages that I know are English, Croatian, Dutch.”

3) Where were you born?

V.: “I was born in Italy.”

N.: “I was born in Italy.”

R.: “I was born in Buenos Aires, in Argentina.”

E.: “I was born in Italy.”

Ma.: “I was born in Italy.”

A.: “I was born in Russia.”

L.: “I was born in Belgium.”

B.: “I was born in Italy.”

Mi.: “I was born in Italy.”

T.: “I was born in Belgium.”

4) Where did you spend your childhood?

V.: “I spent my childhood in Italy”

N.: “I spent my childhood until 4 years old in Puglia and the other years in the Veneto.”

R.: “Before turning one year old I moved from Argentina to Italy with my grandparents and I spent there my childhood.”

Asma: “I spent my childhood in Italy, moving across the province of Verona.”

Ma.: “I spent my childhood mostly in Italy (from September to May), while in summer I used to live with my grandmother in France (from June to August).”

A.: “I spent my childhood in Italy.”

L.: “I spent my childhood in Liège, but almost each summer I stayed one month in Italy.”

B.: "I spent my childhood in Italy and sometimes I travelled to Nigeria to meet my relatives."

Mi.: "I spent my childhood in Italy."

T.: "I spent it mainly in Belgium, travelling to Italy at least once a year."

5) Where are you living now?

V.: "Now I am living in Italy."

N.: "I am living in Italy."

R.: "I'm living in Sicily, in Italy."

E.: "Now I am living in Italy."

Ma.: "Now I am living in Paris, in France."

A.: "I am living in Italy."

L.: "I am currently living in Belgium."

B.: "I am living in Italy"

Mi.: "I am currently living in Italy."

T.: "Now I am living in Belgium but I dream to move to Italy one day."

6) Which languages do you speak at home with family members?

V.: "When I am at home with my parents, I speak only Romanian, while if I speak it with my little sisters, they answer me in Italian. If I speak with all my other relatives, I use only Romanian. Sometimes it is spontaneous for me to speak in Romanian with my best friend, who does not know the language."

N.: "I speak almost Arabic at home, but sometimes I speak Italian too, mainly with my little sister. We usually speak Italian only among us, while with our parents we speak Arabic."

R.: "In the last period, at home, we have been talking mainly Spanish to preserve the language and to transmit it to the future generations. We usually mix it up with Italian as well."

E.: "When I am at home, I use Italian with my siblings and sometimes English. We use some words which are from French or Spanish because Moroccan has been influenced by these languages, e. g. we use *sac* or *sac à dos* to say bag. If I talk in Italian to my parents, they answer me using mainly Moroccan (80%), mixed with Italian (20%)."

Since my birth, my parents have imposed on me the rule of speaking only Moroccan at home to learn it better. My mother graduated in law in Casablanca, so she taught us to read and write the official Arabic. I am able to read the Koran too, which is written in a classical Arabic.”

Ma.: “I speak French with my mother and Italian with my father and my sister at home.

There are some words and sounds that I prefer in French or in Italian, so for example if I am speaking French and there is a word in Italian that I think is more appropriate, I switch to that language and then I switch back to French.”

A.: “I speak mainly Italian, sometimes I switch to Russian to express some concepts and ideas that do not have the same meaning in Italian.”

L.: “I think that I speak 80% of time French and 20% of time Italian at home. Sometimes I mix these languages.”

B.: “I speak Italian with my family at home. During the first years of my daughter's life, my wife and I used English too. When I was a child, until the first years of school, my parents used to speak only in English and sometimes they used the Nigerian dialect, which I understood, but I did not speak it. Since I started school, they have been using only Italian to communicate at home to help me improve my skills.”

Mi.: “When I am at home, I speak Italian with my husband and both languages (Italian and Spanish) with my children.”

T.: “When I was a child, I spoke most of time Croatian at home, while now I speak French and Italian at home.”

7) In which language do you feel more comfortable talking about your daily life/routine? What about your studies or job?

V.: “I feel comfortable talking about my daily routine in both languages, it depends by the interlocutor's bilingualism or monolingualism. If a person understands Romanian it comes naturally to me to use that language. At school I prefer Italian also if there is another person that knows Romanian. It is the same for sports.”

N.: “If I talk about my everyday life, I feel more comfortable speaking in Arabic, it works in the same way with my work or studies. If I talk about football, my big passion, I tend to do it in Italian. I use Arabic only with my parents and my grandmother.”

R.: “If I have to talk about my daily life, I feel that for me it is more spontaneous to speak Italian both at home and outside. I use some specific words in Spanish, but I do not have any topic in which I use only Spanish.”

E.: “I use always Italian to talk about these things because it comes naturally to me”.

Ma.: “If I speak about my daily routine, it comes naturally to me to speak in Italian. If I speak with French people I usually think in French. My friends and my brother speak Italian in Paris, therefore I use mainly this language.”

A.: “If I think about my daily life, I feel more comfortable in Italian. If I speak at work or about work, I use English. If I am speaking with my mother about my family, we usually use Russian. “

L.: “I feel more comfortable when I speak French, especially if I talk about my job or my daily life. On the other hand, I use Italian at home when the topic is related to my Italian relatives.“

B.: “ I feel more comfortable speaking English in almost every field, especially at work or when I speak about it. It is the same thing at the church because I translate the pastor’s sermons from English to Italian because most of people are bilinguals. Although I usually use Italian at home, there may be some words and phrases that come to my mind first in English.”

Mi.: “When I speak about my daily routine at home or at work I tend to speak in Spanish, sometimes in Italian too, especially with my bilingual colleagues. With the other members of my working team I use Italian, or English with those who belong to other countries.”

T.: “I use mostly French while I am talking about my daily life routine. It just feels natural to me to speak in Italian only if I am in Italy or if I have to say something that should not be understood by other people. I use French also if I have to talk about work.”

8) How would you describe your linguistic background? What about your language usage?

V.: “I do not feel completely satisfied with my linguistic background. I get confused among languages and I am not always able to express what I want. This happens especially when the speech is deep and long because there are terms in Romanian that do not have a correspondence in Italian.”

- N.: “I consider my linguistic background almost complete. I am proud of my native speaker level of Arabic and I am also quite satisfied with the levels that I have achieved in English, French and Spanish.”
- R.: “I was born in a bilingual context and thanks to school I improved my linguistic skills. I am satisfied with the languages that I know, but not with my accent. I would like it to be better and stronger. I would like to write in Spanish better too.”
- E.: “I am very satisfied with my linguistic background. I would like to have a higher level in Dutch.”
- Ma.: “I would describe my educational background as funny and complicated. I am absolutely satisfied with my linguistic background.”
- A.: “I am not completely satisfied with my linguistic background because I could have improved French, which I have studied for 3 years, and Russian. I feel that I could have studied other languages like German. In the future I would like to study other languages.”
- L.: “My linguistic background is varied. I have studied English since I was six, while I was attending the Elementary school. However, I started to use English before that moment. Since I was a child, I have always had a keen interest in videogames, but they were all in English so I can say that I started to learn it by myself. I have studied Spanish only at university, therefore I think that it is the language in which I have the lowest level among those that I speak. I use French every day to speak to my friends and to my parents. On the other hand, I utilize English whether I am at work or in my free time to read or watch television. I use Italian to talk with my family members in Italy and sometimes at home.”
- B.: “I am satisfied with my linguistic background. I am proud of my parents’ choices because they have allowed me to mediate the world in an easier way. When you talk with native speakers, you can communicate with them more deeply and break down linguistic barriers if you speak their language.”
- Mi.: “I am satisfied with my linguistic background. I feel it as an added value.”
- T.: “I am satisfied with my linguistic background. If I think about this expression, I think about my English studies. This language is really important to me as a *lingua franca*, because of its importance in the working field.”

9) **What do you notice when people find out that you are bilingual? ***

V.: “When people discover that I am bilingual, they are shocked on both sides. When I say that I have Italian origins in Romania, no one expects it, and happens the same thing in Italy.”

N.: “I don’t notice any change.”

R.: “When people know that I am bilingual, they expect clarity in expression or specific words that are difficult to understand for Italians (e. g. *valigia* vs *maleta*, *gafas* vs *anteojos*). Until elementary school, everyone mispronounced my name, forgetting to pronounce the accent and this made me feel uncomfortable. In the last year the situation has changed, maybe people have learnt to read the accent.”

E.: “If I am in Morocco people usually compliment me. In Italy is totally different because in some cases Italians are annoyed by the fact that I know many languages and they try to diminish me by saying that I am probably not fluent in all of them. There also some people that ask me for advices to learn a new language.”

Ma.: “When people know that I am bilingual, most of times they say to me that I am lucky and they are usually invidious. I have not noticed anything else.”

A.: “When I switch from a language to another, people are surprised, they ask me if it is Ukrainian or Moldavian and they get more surprised when I tell them that it is Russian.”

L.: “I have to be careful when I switch language because of the different cultural expectations. Sometimes sounds are similar, but the meanings are different or a word in one language does not have a correspondence in another one. People expect me to use the correct structures and vocabularies. Most of them expect me to not make mistakes in pronunciation. Other people get surprised when they hear me speaking my dominant languages.”

B.: “I have noticed only that people usually are astonished by the ability of bilingual or trilingual speakers.”

Mi.: “When I am in Italy and people see me for the first time, they don’t expect me to speak Italian very fluently. When I start talking, they get surprised because of my native speaker level. When I go to Argentina, they recognize me as Italian, while If I travel to Spain, they recognize me as Bolivian.”

T.: “In Belgium, when people discover that I am bilingual, they expect me to speak better Italian than French. In Italy I do not know.”

10) Do you feel that your identity is connected to the language that you speak? In what way? To what extent?

V.: “My identity is connected to both languages, but more to Italian.”

N.: “I feel more Arabic than Italian, I am connected with my roots that build my identity. However, I am born in Italy, so I feel that my identity is connected to Italian, but not at all.”

R.: “Yes, I feel that my identity is connected to both languages.”

E.: “Yes, my identity is absolutely connected to all the languages that I speak, but the language of my heart is Italian because it allows me to express in the best way my feelings and myself and to think without having any linguistic gap.”

Ma.: “I associate my identity with both Italian and French. I feel French inside, while, for example, my sister does not. When we were children, she spent less time in France and she was with me, so she could use Italian, without being forced to use always French. I feel distant from Italian culture, I am closer to the French one.”

A.: “I feel that my identity is connected to both languages, but more to Italian.”

L.: “I do not feel connected to French or that my identity is in any way related to it. Even though I don't speak Italian as often as I speak French or English, I feel that it is a crucial part of my identity.”

B.: “I feel my identity more linked to English and Italian, with less connection to French. The other languages that I have studied are part of my identity, however my skills are lower due to the lack of practice in the last years.”

Mi.: “Yes, my identity in some ways is connected to both languages, but in the past, I have had problems in looking for an identity that could represent me. There is a kind of compromise among my languages, my origins and the life that I am currently living.”

T.: “Despite the fact that my native tongue is Croatian, I feel French to be my native language because of its use in the school and in the work context. I feel to be only partially connected to Italian because I do not practice it enough. I use English only for work at a written level. Now I do not use Croatian anymore, so I do not consider

it to be part of my identity. I still understand it and even a few phrases or words from the countries of the former Yugoslavia”

11) Do you feel that your identity is connected to your country of birth? In what way? To what extent?

V.: “I feel my identity connected in the same way to both nations and cultures.”

N.: “I am feeling closer to Morocco than Italy. Anyway, my Italian culture has developed more, while my Arabic culture is still present, but in a minor way.”

R.: “I feel that there is a connection between Argentinian Culture and Italian culture, especially with that of the South. However, I feel to be more connected to the Italian one.”

E.: “I have experienced more the Italian nation and culture so I am closer to this one rather than to the Moroccan one.”

Ma.: “If I think about culture and nation, I associate more my identity with France. I feel closer to it in many ways and this pushed me to leave Italy for France.”

A.: “I feel my identity connected mainly to the Italian nation and culture, while I am not really connected to the Russian one. I have never come back to Russia since I was born, I am connected to the nation only through my relatives.”

L.: “I feel connected to Italy and its culture and not to the Belgian one. It is the same thing for the nation”

B.: “I feel to be more connected to the Italian culture. My belonging to the Nigerian culture is limited to the way of thinking and to the cuisine.”

Mi.: “My identity is strongly connected to the South American culture, but during my life I have assimilated a strong Italian culture too. However, I feel in the middle, I feel to be a child of the world, without a defined cultural and national identity which cannot be recognized by the others.”

T.: “I feel to be connected to San Felice, in the south of Italy (the place of birth of my parents). Compared to Belgium, where I was born, it was the opposite from a climate, culture and landscape point of view. My grandparents lived there and it still a part of me because of my great memories. On the other hand, I feel more connected to Belgium, because I have lived my whole life there. My identity is more connected to

Venice, than to San Felice because it is bigger, closer to the sea and people are friendlier.”

12) Do you recognize yourself more in one of your linguistic identities?

V.: “I feel I only one Identity which contains all the others.”

N.: “I recognize myself 60% of the time in Arabic and 40% of the time in Italian. The other languages that I speak are not part of my identity because I do not use them in my everyday life. I feel them to be part of my identity only while I am speaking with natives.”

R.: “I recognize myself in one linguistic identity, which includes all the languages that I speak.”

E.: “I have more linguistic identities which are nearly tied to one another. I feel to be a different E. according to the language that I am using.”

Ma.: “I recognize myself in more than one linguistic identity. I am not able to choose among France and Italy because they are both part of my identity, even though in my future I imagine myself living in France.”

A.: “I recognize myself in more than one linguistic Identity which are separated one from another. I have one Italian identity, one Russian Identity and in the middle there is English.”

L.: “Yes, I recognize myself in more than one Linguistic Identity. I have a Spanish and an Italian Linguistic Identity, but not a French or an English one.“

B.: “Yes, I recognize myself in a variety of linguistic identities that are distinct from one another. When I change my language, I also change my identity. The linguistic identities of English and Italian are more closely related than those of the other languages.”

Mi.: “I recognize myself in one linguistic identity in which are present more identities (Spanish, Italian and so on). All the cultures are part of one big culture. I think that the cuisine is an element that brings together all the cultures. According to my mood I cook dishes of different cultures, sometimes I mix dishes too. I may easily cook an Italian first course and a Spanish second course.”

T.: “I feel to have more identities in which I always remain the same. At the same time these identities are in some ways different. I do not consider Croatian as a strong identity because it is fading as the years pass.”

13) Do you think that you think in a different way according to the language that you are using at that moment?

V.: “I think in the same way in both languages. Sometimes, while I am watching films in English or I am in a situation in which a person is talking in English, I tend to think in English too.”

N.: “Yes, I think in a different way according to the language. When I speak Italian, I do not feel complete, I feel that is much more difficult to express my thoughts clearly and that others do not understand me at 100% because of some linguistic limits. On the other hand, when I speak Arabic, I am complete and I feel I am being myself. I feel limited in Italian from a linguistic point of view. When I have an idea and I express it, there are some differences between what I am thinking and what I am saying; these gaps are filled by Arabic. I usually think in Arabic because it is more spontaneous, but if I speak another language, I use to think in that language. I dream only in Italian, especially if it is something related to football because I think that I can have some chances of became an important player of football only in Italy.”

R.: “I feel to think always in the same way, both in Spanish and Italian. I tend to think mainly in Italian, but sometimes I dream or I get angry in Spanish.”

E.: “People have already asked me this question, but I do not know how to answer because when I think I do not focus on the language that I am using. I use all the languages that I know when I am thinking, I mix them together. My thoughts are in a “universal language” that is the “E.’s language” without borders between all languages that I know. In some way I can say that I think in every language or in a sort of no language because it is a mixture of them.”

Ma.: “Yes, if I think in French, I feel that I have different ideas and thoughts. I use only Italian if I have to talk or think about topic such as economics or politics. In other cases, I use to mix languages while I am thinking. There are some topics in which I am more likely to think in French, such as work and university’s exams, while happens the same in Italian if I think about my family or Italy.”

A.: “Yes, I think in a more serious and balanced way in Italian. It is more spontaneous for me to think in Italian, sometimes I think in Russian or in English, which is becoming very important in my life. If I have to think about a Russian word, I translate it from Italian. While I was studying Greek, I used to structure the sentences by using the Russian grammatical cases.”

L.: “I think in both languages, I feel that I am a different person according to the language that I am speaking. I also think in a different way according to the language that I am using.”

B.: “If I think in Italian or English I do it in the same way. When I move to another language, the process is more mnemonical and mechanical, therefore I think in a different way.”

Mi.: “ Yes, I absolutely think in a different way according to the language that I am using. Intonation, phonetic and grammatical structures change too and this contributes to a change in the way of thinking.”

T.: “I usually think in French, while, when I am in Italy, I think in Italian. I think in the same way in whenever language I use.”

14) Do you change your personality in any way when you switch between languages?

V.: “Yes, in Italian I feel calmer and more peaceful, while in Romanian I am more aggressive. I believe that we might put it down to the different intonation and accents.”

N.: “When I speak another language, I am a different person from a phonological and personality point of view. In Arabic words have a “sweet” and smooth sound, while in Italian words are more rigid. In Arabic I am able to give several shades to the speech, while in Italian I am more monotone and monochrome.”

R.: “Yes, I feel a different person when I speak Spanish, I adopt Argentinian behaviors, for example, my intonation becomes I have a higher and cheerful.”

E.: “Yes, I change my personality from one language to another. My mother has taught me a Moroccan typical of Casablanca, so when I start speaking it, I seem to be a person that has grown up there and I adopt the personality traits of that community. I acquire a harsh and aggressive way of speaking. On the contrary, when I speak Spanish I have a cuter intonation. In Italian I feel myself and I can use all these kinds of personalities.”

Ma.: “Yes, I have noticed that when I speak with my Italian friends I judge people more and I feel I am much funnier. In French I do not feel completely French and I feel to be much serious. In France, people do not have a great sense of humor and consequently I feel better If I do not make jokes.”

A.: “Yes, I change also my intonation and my way of talking, in Russian I feel more relaxed because only a few people can understand me. In English and Italian I feel more balanced and serious.”

L.: “Yes, for example I have a different sense of humour according to the language I am speaking. I feel more introvert in Italian and Spanish because I feel that I do not know them well and I feel insecure.”

B.: “I feel to be a different person if I speak French, while if I use Italian or English I do not notice any change in personality traits. Another thing that usually changes from a language to another is my sense of humour.”

Mi.: “I do not notice any changes in my personality. The only thing that I have noticed is that if I am angry with my children I switch to Spanish because I feel more incisive.”

T.: “I have never thought about this. I do not think to have personality changes.”

15) How often do you switch from one language to another/others in the same sentence? Do you do it with everyone or only with people who speak both/all languages fluently?

V.: “I usually mix languages, especially Romanian and Italian, but with one of my sisters I switch also to English.”

N.: “When I speak with my family, I switch language several times in the same speech and this happens if I am speaking on the phone too. If I speak with Italian people, I tend to use only Italian, but if those people know both languages, I tend to use both by mixing them. With the other languages, this does not happen because I focus on those languages which I speak only in certain situations.”

R.: “When I speak with my grandparents, we switch language three or four times in the same speech according to the topic. I do this only with them. There are some words that come most naturally to me in Spanish, such as *servilleta*, *mantel* or other verbs that are mostly used at home.”

E.: "I often change language in the same sentence, but I do it only with people that know both languages. For example in a sentence in Italian, the 3% or 4% is in another language.

Ma.: "I switch language according to the interlocutor, when I speak with my mother I usually switch quickly from a language to another, we mix Italian, French and the Venetian dialect. I use code-mixing also if I prefer a word in French while I am speaking Italian with my friends."

A.: "I usually switch from a language to another in the sentences. I use Russian only with people who know both languages, while I use the others independently if the person knows all the languages that I am using. I use Italian the 75% of time and Russian the 25%. At home my brother understands Russian, but he does not use it. In my free time I enjoy watching tv series in Russian with my mother."

L.: "It depends on the context. If I am with my friends, I often switch to English. With my girlfriend I usually switch from Spanish to Italian and vice versa because I do not know many vocabularies or because I do not know how to express a concept. I hardly ever do it a lot at home. I switch language only with people that speak both languages."

B.: "I switch language in the same sentence about three or four times, but I do it only with people who know both languages."

Mi.: "I switch language in an easy way, I do it most of times without notice it. I do it only with bilinguals."

T.: "I often switch language at home, but only if the interlocutor knows both languages. If I talk with a monolingual, I use only one language."

16) Do you consider bilingualism to be something positive/useful? Has your opinion changed since childhood?

V.: "Now I consider it to be positive, while when I was a child I used to feel that it was important because it made me feel special. It is useful in several field and it opens up new perspectives from a cultural point of view."

N.: "I feel bilingualism to be an advantage, but it has also some negative effects: monolingual people actually have a higher linguistic knowledge of the only language that he/she uses. Bilingual people like me have a social and cultural level much more developed together with a higher awareness and consciousness of the world. In my

childhood I consider bilingualism as a disadvantage because other people considered it as a negative thing. My family's Moroccan background has been seen as a disadvantage by the community and these made me feel wrong and inadequate. During my studies I have understood that I am in the right place and that I have a big advantage thanks to bilingualism. It helps me to get in touch with the world and with different cultures. This helps me to have a more precise image of the world. I see monolingualism as a single point of view, while bilingualism allows people to have a multiple point of view."

R.: "Yes, I consider it as a positive thing and I considered it more positive when I was a child because anyone understood what I was saying. It is useful both in daily life and in the work field. You are more open-minded and you can use this advantage to understand people better."

E.: "I have always considered bilingualism positively. At school I was the only one to be able to speak two languages and thanks to this and to the fact that my parents have taught me Moroccan since I was born, I realized that it was a huge advantage. I can communicate with twice as many people and these languages support me in the study of other languages."

Ma.: "Now I see bilingualism as a positive thing, but when I was a child I did not see it in the same way because it was too difficult to me to speak exclusively French with my grandmother. In French I had an Italian accent and for this reason I did not see bilingualism as a positive thing. My teachers at elementary school did not see bilingualism as a good thing too and they suggested that my mother shouldn't teach me written French. This is the main reason that causes me some linguistic gaps today in it. In my opinion, bilingualism is useful at a work level. I can communicate with more people and this makes me happy. Thanks to the knowledge of two languages I have two ways of thinking and two different cultures and cuisines in my soul."

A.: "Yes, absolutely. I have always seen bilingualism as a positive thing. It is helpful not only for work, but also to express ideas that you cannot describe by using only one language."

L.: "Yes, I consider it positive. I think that it can make life better. I did not consider bilingualism in any way when I was a child, but I have never felt as a disadvantage. I think that it is useful especially in the work field. Belgium is a trilingual country

(French, German, Flemish), so being able to speak more languages is crucial to get a job.”

B.: “Yes, I consider bilingualism to be a link between languages and cultures. It is both positive and useful. I do not remember how I considered it when I was a child. At the beginning I suffered from the decision of my parents to speak only Italian when I was 7, but I adjusted to the changes.”

Mi.: “I consider bilingualism as a positive thing. I do not think I have ever thought about it as a child because it was so quick and natural to switch from one language to another. It is useful, especially in language learning.”

T.: “Yes, I consider bilingualism as an asset. If you limit yourself to only one language, you limit your possibility to discover the world too. I consider bilingualism to be useful in every field.”

17) In your future, do you think that your weaker language (if you have one) may become your dominant language?

V.: “No, I do not think so. I do not want to move to another country in the future”

N.: “I think that my dominant language would become my weaker language only if I isolate from my origins and my roots and if I move to another country, which is something impossible. I strongly believe that the bond with my origins will be never cut or eliminated, because the Arabic language and the culture are in my heart.”

R.: “I do not know, I do not think to move anyway, but to live in Treviso. I hope to improve my Spanish in the future, but I do not think that it will become my dominant language.”

E.: “I consider Moroccan to be my weaker language and I do not think that it will become my dominant language because I do not want to move to Morocco”

Ma.: “Yes, in my future I believe that I will speak French the most of time, so I think that it will become my dominant language.”

A.: “I feel that English is my weaker language. In the future, I think that my dominant language may be English, I think that I will speak it in more than my 50% of time, while Italian the 35% and Russian the 15% of time.”

L.: “I have already thought about this in the past, but I do not think so. My mother had learnt French at 24 years old and she has been living in Belgium since 1982 and I see

that there are some situations in which for her is more spontaneous to speak in Italian. I think that Spanish or Italian will never become my dominant languages, neither if I will move to Spain or Italy.”

B.: “Yes, this has partially happened when I was a child, so I am opened to this possibility in the future.”

Mi.: “I feel that I do not have a dominant language as Italian and Spanish are on a level. However, I cannot picture myself speaking another language the most of time. The most important language to me will always be Spanish.”

T.: “I think Croatian cannot become my dominant language again; I would love to visit Croatia but I would not live there. Maybe, in the future, I may move to Italy, so Italian could become more relevant in my linguistic knowledge.”

18) How difficult do you find it to learn a new language? Do you feel that your languages are helpful to learn other languages?

V.: “It is not that difficult to learn a new language, I think that the languages that I already know are helpful to acquire others in the future.”

N.: “I do not find difficult to learn a new language, it is spontaneous and natural. I think that the languages that I already know are precious to acquire other languages. In my opinion exists only a single linguistic repertoire in which we find all the languages that we know.”

R.: “I find very difficult to learn a new language and I am not interested in learning a it. I do not think that the languages that I already know can be helpful to learn other languages.”

E.: “It is not very difficult to study languages and they are one of my big passions. The languages that I already know helps me to learn others. For example, German, which I studied at high school, is helping me to study Dutch at university.”

Ma.: “I do not find difficult to pick up a new language, but I do have some problems with grammatical structures. Speaking activities are much easier for me, for example in English. If I think about studying another language, I feel insecure because I know that I will never reach the same level that I have in French. Since I have been living in France, I have developed a stronger French accent and I feel that it influences more my pronunciation in English which is a disadvantage to me.”

A.: “I do not find difficult to learn a new language. The languages that I already know are helpful to study other languages, for example when I was studying Greek, I use to think about Russian grammatical cases.”

L.: “I do not have any difficulty in learning a new language. At the beginning I learnt English in a spontaneous way and I have improved it at school. Spanish has been more difficult to learn, especially vocabularies. Italian and its sounds have helped me while I was learning Spanish, I think that the languages that you already know can be helpful to learn other languages, but only if they belong to the same linguistic family.”

B.: “Yes, I feel comfortable with acquiring new languages. I am currently ‘studying’ Portuguese with a friend of mine and I find it easy. My desire to communicate with people belonging to a variety of cultures, pushes me to learn more and more languages. I feel that my languages are helpful to acquire other languages, in fact, English has helped me to learn German thanks to their belonging to the same linguistic family.”

Mi.: “The languages that I already know are useful to learn other languages, but only to learn those who are part of the same linguistic family. For example, I understand Portuguese, especially the written one for his similarities with Spanish. I have never studied languages part of other linguistic families.”

T.: “I do not have any difficulty in learning a new language. At the beginning I have learnt English in a spontaneous way and I have improved it at school. Spanish has been more difficult to learn, especially vocabularies. Italian and its sounds have helped me while I was learning Spanish, I think that the languages that you already know can be helpful to learn other languages, but only if they belong to the same linguistic family.”

19) Do you think that there is any transfer between your languages (syntaxis, lexis, sentence structures)? Are you able to deal with them? Were you able to do so in your childhood too?

V.: “I think there is interference in all areas (grammatical structures, lexis and so on). Sometimes I put adjectives before the name in Italian because they are used like that in Romanian and in English. If I am quiet and relaxed I can handle it, if I am anxious or in a hurry I have more difficulty. In the childhood, I could keep my languages separate, maybe because I spoke less Romanian.”

N.: “Yes, when I speak in Arabic I experience less cases of transfer, while when I speak Italian, I feel to be influenced by linguistic limits that does not allow me to produce long sentences. I prefer to use short sentences to express my thoughts in a better way and this works in the same way for written texts. I often use English terms while I am writing in Italian to fill linguistic gaps. This happens also while I am speaking.”

R.: “Yes, there are transfers between my languages, for example with vocabularies. I am able to deal them now and I was able to do it in the past too.”

E.: “To answer to this question, I will provide an example from Italian to Moroccan . In my family we have invented a ‘hybrid language’ in order to translate words from Moroccan that do not have a correspondence in Italian. So for example, in the religious field there are a lot of words that in Italian are translated with only one common term that do not correspond to all the meanings. If I say that I have to *salat* in Italian, which is a particular prayer, we take the root ‘sal’ and we add the verb suffix ‘are’, so I say that I have to *sallare*, creating a mixture between the two languages. On the other hand, we use some Italian words in Moroccan or sentences to indicate words such as bank or fine and we change the grammatical structure to add these terms to the speech. To conclude the answer is yes, sometimes these interferences are spontaneous and sometimes we create them to fill in a linguistic gap or need.”

Ma.: “Yes, I think that there are some specific terms that came to my mind in Italian and not in French, for example those related to topics such as politics or economics. Sometimes I mix French and Italian structures, I make mistakes in collocations and I realize it only after pronouncing them. When I was a child, when I made a mistake there was always someone ready to correct me.”

A.: “Yes, I have several interferences between English and Italian, especially for grammatical structures, because I tend to use Italian structures in English. My Italian background influences Russian structures too. When I notice them, I stop and I restructure sentences. This does not happen with Italian, but only with the other languages. I had interferences also when I was a child, but I was able to run them.”

L.: “Yes, I think that there are some transfers between my languages and sometimes I switch some words or grammatical structures, such as *hay* instead of *hai* or *no problema* instead of *nessun problema*. The original meaning of a word or a sentence may be lost if I translate something literally. However, I have studied translation, so

in most cases I notice these interferences in my head, before saying them. Hardly ever I do not notice it and I feel ashamed. When I was a child, it happened very frequently and my parents used to correct me.”

B.: “Yes, there are some transfers between my languages, now I am able to handle them, before pronouncing them. When I was younger was more difficult to deal with them.”

Mi.: “I feel I have some interference, but I am able to handle it. I do not remember if this happened when I was a child. I often have interference in the same language, in Spanish. American Spanish and Spanish of Spain are similar, but there are some words and expression that have a different meaning according to the country. Once in Spain I said a word that in Spain had a vulgar meaning while in American Spanish it does not. I did not know what I had said wrong, but then the people that were with me explained this difference in meaning and I corrected myself.”

T.: “I do not feel I have many linguistic interferences. I find it easier to write than to speak a language. While I am speaking, I have some transfers but I am able to deal with them. When I was a child, I did not have them, but I felt my languages divided in blocks.”

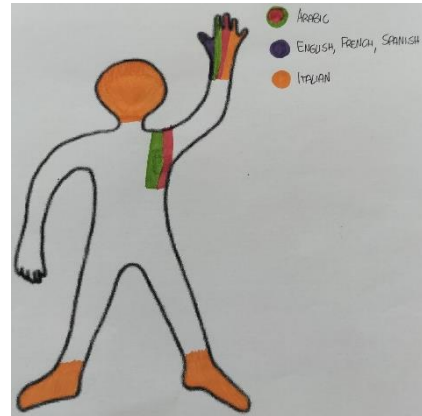
20) Do you know what a language portrait ³is? Can you draw your language portrait?



V.: V.’s heart is half Romanian and half Italian because even though she has always lived in Italy, her parents have allowed her to get in touch with the Romanian culture and to ‘live Romania’ at home. Her head is half Italian and half Romanian since she thinks in both languages. At the center of the head, that brown circle indicates English because sometimes she thinks in that language, but happens with a lower frequency.

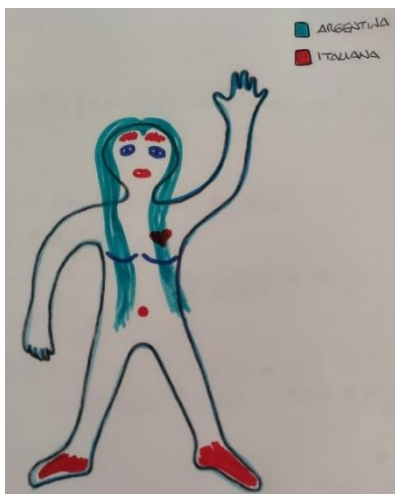
³ visual representation of the linguistic repertoire; it has been used in schools to handle bilingualism and multilingualism

N.: He has colored his heart green and red, symbolizing Morocco's flag, because he feels closer to Morocco. He has colored every finger by using a different color (green, red, orange and violet to symbolize English, French and Spanish) because he uses these languages daily in his work, at university or at home. Last, but not least, his head is orange to show the Italian that he speaks daily. His feet are orange too, because of his passion, which is football; feet are the first part of his body that he connects to this sport. If he thinks about football, he does it only in Italian.



R.: Light Blue recalls the Argentinian flag. She has colored with this color some physical features that are a heritage from her Bolivian and Argentinian family. Some examples are her dark, long hair and her eyes that together with her skin and her breast are typical elements of her family.

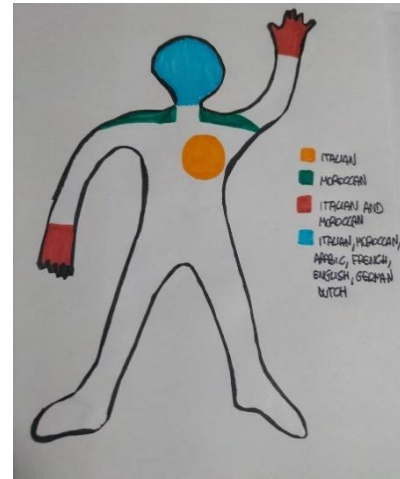
R. has chosen red for Italian and she has used it to colour the brain because she has done



all her studies in Italy and for this reason she tends to think in Italian. The red mouth indicates the speaking activity, because she feels comfortable to speak in Italian. Her heart is in Italy, her friendships, her boyfriend and most of relatives are here in Italy. The red point in the belly indicates the future and the procreation; she would like to grow her children in Italy, but she wants them to inherit her Argentinian and Bolivian heritage too. To conclude, her feet symbolize a saying:

“before judging someone, you should put his/her shoes on”. This means that you cannot judge someone if you do not try his/her life. She has done this thing only with Italian people, so she thinks that she knows better the Italian people, rather than the Argentinian ones.

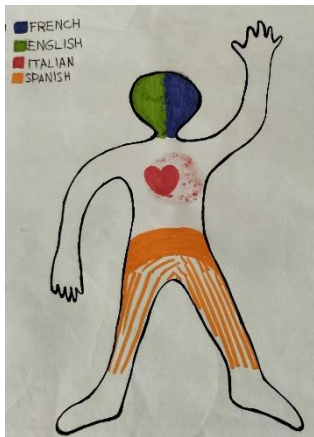
E.: She has painted the picture by using different colors that indicate Moroccan and Italian. She has chosen red for the hands because in both culture they are used to gesticulate and every gesture has a different meaning (also from a language to another). She has used green for the shoulders because in Moroccan they are used to brag (like a kind of gesticulation). The heart is orange and it indicates Italian because when she uses it, she feels herself. The head is light blue because she thinks by using all the languages that she knows.



Ma.: Ma. has decided to colour her heart blue, representing France, because she feels strongly bounded to this country. She has colored the raised hand in blue too, because French makes her feel strong and powerful. The other hand is colored in green, which symbolizes Italian, because it is her native language and it is very important to her. Her feet are in blue because the knowledge of another language gives her self-confidence and stability. To conclude, she has colored her body and her head by using both colors because she feels half Italian and half French.

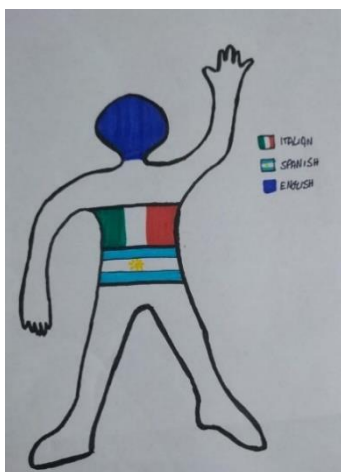
A.: She has chosen green, her favourite colour, for Italian, maybe because it is the language that she has studied more or the one that she uses the most. She feels to have a better control in Italian. Red is used for Russian, which is her weakness, but also her root. She has colored light blue her right hand, because she uses it more (in a symbolic and real way during work). She recognize this hand as the one of control and power, while the other (red and light blue) symbolizes her weaknesses because she does not feel comfortable enough in some situations. French is violet, it is her *tallone d'achille*, she knows that she can use it, but she is not able to express thoughts as she would like to do.





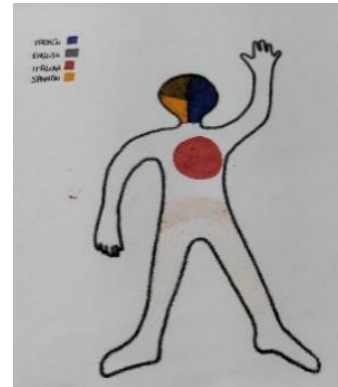
L.: He says that he feels English and French in his head, because they are languages that he uses in his work, but he uses them also to think and to reflect. Italian is in his heart because of his strong connection with the language and the culture (in fact he cheers for Italian football and for Ferrari). He feels Spanish in his belly and in his legs because he loves Spanish music and when he listens to it, he tends to dance with his legs and his belly.

B.: He has decided to represent his Nigerian heritage (and the Nigerian dialect) by designing his African hair, which are a distinctive feature thanks to his hardness and his curliness. He has colored his heart yellow and light blue to represent both Italian and English, which co-exist here. He has colored in the same way eyes, because he looks at the word by using these two languages. To conclude, while drawing the brain he has represented all the other languages that he knows because he reflects and reasons by using all of them (French, Spanish, German, Swedish).



Mi.: She pictures herself having both Spanish and Italian in the belly and she has represented them by using the two flags. She has put them in the belly because they are “instinctive” languages, both while she is speaking and talking. According to her, in the belly we feel instinctive feelings and it is where different kinds of cultures and culinary traditions meet (flavors, scents, ideas and thoughts). She has drawn English in the head because she thinks also in that language, especially at work.

T.: T. has chosen red to indicate Italian, which is the language of his heart. French, English and Spanish are present in his head because he uses them every day to work or to speak with his family.



ITALIAN SUMMARY

Il bilinguismo è un fenomeno presente in tutto il mondo, dalle piccole società ai grandi paesi industrializzati, che coinvolge un numero considerevole di individui di tutte le fasce d'età. Nel corso degli anni è stato studiato e valutato da numerosi ricercatori e linguisti che hanno assunto posizioni differenti, in ottiche sia positive che negative. Molteplici sono state le definizioni attribuite a questo termine. Bloomfield (1933:56) lo definiva come il controllo di due lingue al livello di un nativo, ma in questo modo presupponeva la stessa fluidità e conoscenza in entrambe le lingue, cosa molto rara. Qualche anno dopo viene creata una definizione più ampia da parte di Haugen (1969:1-17). Secondo lui il bilinguismo aveva luogo nel momento in cui un parlante era in grado di produrre enunciati completi e con significato in entrambe le lingue. Arriviamo così a una definizione più completa e moderna che include parte delle due precedenti, inserendo per la prima volta i concetti di uso della lingua e di padronanza e competenza della lingua. Nel 2013 Grosjean (2013:7) definisce il bilinguismo come “l'uso di due o più lingue (o dialetti) nella vita quotidiana”. Questa definizione non esclude il livello di padronanza della lingua in quanto, affinché una persona utilizzi una lingua quotidianamente, deve presentare un certo livello di conoscenza di quest'ultima.

Le ragioni che spingono una persona a diventare bilingue sono svariate; dalle migrazioni, colonizzazioni, persecuzioni politico-sociali, all'utilizzo di una lingua franca per motivi commerciali e economici. Cultura e istruzione sono altri due fattori da prendere in considerazione; fin dai tempi dei Romani le materie erano insegnate in due lingue (greco e latino) per consentire scambi commerciali e culturali. Allo stesso modo oggi molti studenti studiano una lingua che non è la loro e che viene definita come lingua franca che ha una rilevanza economica e commerciale. Il fattore comune in queste motivazioni è l'acquisizione da parte di un soggetto di una lingua (L2) ulteriore diversa dalla lingua nativa (L1). A questo punto si può compiere una doppia scelta, mantenere entrambe le lingue all'interno del proprio repertorio linguistico o mantenerne solo una.

Le persone bilingue possono decidere di usare una lingua piuttosto che un'altra rispetto al contesto in cui si trovano. All'interno di una stessa frase è anche possibile mischiare

entrambe le lingue dando origine a un enunciato composto da due lingue (*code-mixing*, *code-switching*, *borrowings*). Ervin-Tripp (1968:8-9) sostiene che siano fondamentalmente quattro le variabili che influenzano la scelta linguistica: situazione, ruolo dei partecipanti, argomento e funzione.

Quando una lingua influenza in qualche modo un'altra lingua, parliamo di influenza linguistica e in particolare del *transfer*. Infatti, durante l'apprendimento di una lingua si utilizzano termini della L1 per esprimere idee che non si sarebbe in grado di spiegare in altro modo. Durante l'acquisizione di una seconda lingua entrano in gioco fattori interni ed esterni; i primi riguardano le attitudini, motivazione e strategie linguistiche, mentre nel secondo troviamo la qualità e la quantità di esposizione alla lingua.

Nel produrre enunciati nei quali sono presenti due o più lingue parliamo di diverse strategie chiamate *code-mixing*, *code-switching* e i prestiti linguistici. Il primo si usa quando si inserisce una parola appartenente a una lingua in una frase formulata in un'ulteriore lingua. Non è sempre indicativo di una mancanza di controllo in una delle due lingue, ma può essere usato per aggiungere fluidità o rendere un significato che altrimenti non sarebbe espresso allo stesso modo. Per questo motivo sono state create ulteriori strategie usate da parte di genitori e insegnanti per evitare questo utilizzo che non è ben visto da tutti. Degli esempi sono: richiedere spiegazioni, ricostruire l'enunciato usando una sola lingua, cambiare lingua per rispondere alla domanda o continuare la conversazione come se nulla fosse.

Il secondo processo invece, il *code-switching*, è l'uso alternato di due lingue, può riguardare una parola, una frase o più frasi ed è un metodo utilizzato per bisogni linguistici, includere o escludere qualcuno da una conversazione, enfatizzare una affermazione e così via. Non tutte le persone utilizzano queste strategie perché vengono percepite come una mancanza di conoscenza dell'utilizzo della lingua stessa.

Infine i prestiti linguistici sono costituiti dall'integrazione di alcune parole che fanno parte di una lingua diversa. Ne esistono di due tipi, quelli che sono usati solo da persone bilingue e quelli che sono entrati a fare parte della comunità linguistica ufficialmente.

Il processo di acquisizione di una seconda lingua è lo stesso che si vive nel momento dell'acquisizione della prima. Possiamo assistere a una acquisizione simultanea delle due lingue o a un'acquisizione sequenziale. Nel primo caso la doppia acquisizione avviene

contemporaneamente, con una quantità di esposizione linguistica simile in entrambi i casi, così come il livello di conoscenza. In questo caso è impossibile distinguere tra una L1 e una L2, infatti si ricorre ai simboli alfa e beta. In realtà però è molto difficile che le conoscenze linguistiche siano perfettamente bilanciate. Nel secondo caso invece il bambino apprende una lingua e in un altro momento acquisisce la seconda. C'è chi pensa che in giovane età sia più semplice acquisire una seconda lingua in quanto i due emisferi non sono completamente formati, e c'è invece chi sostiene che sia più efficiente e rapido studiare una lingua in età adulta grazie all'abilità di processare gli argomenti in maniera più efficiente. Proprio per questa disputa si è insistito molto sulla teoria del periodo sensibile per l'acquisizione linguistica. Studiosi come Snow e Hoefnagel-Höhle (2017:166) sostengono l'esistenza di questo periodo e analizzano lo sviluppo delle abilità linguistiche in bambini e ragazzi tra i 3 e gli 11 anni e tra i 12 e i 15. Da questo studio individuano nel secondo gruppo di età il periodo sensibile all'interno del quale l'acquisizione di una lingua risulta essere più semplice e veloce.

Non tutte le persone bilingue possono essere considerate biculturali. Esistono persone solamente bilingue, bilingue e biculturali e persone monolingue e biculturali. Nel secondo caso viene mantenuta una cultura già preesistente e se ne aggiunge un'ulteriore del paese di arrivo. La misura in cui le due culture coesistono è determinata da fattori interni, autostima, ansia, depressione, e esterni, carriera e elementi socioculturali.

La lingua che viene acquisita dal singolo individuo gli permette di capire il funzionamento della società legando assieme l'identità sociale e personale (Riley, 2007:86-90). L'identità sociale è attribuita dal gruppo e non può essere determinata solo dal repertorio linguistico; al contrario l'identità personale è determinata dal singolo. L'identità linguistica invece non è altro che la sensazione di appartenenza che vive l'individuo nei confronti di un sistema sociale strutturato grazie a una lingua e/o cultura. Chi nasce in un contesto biculturale può faticare nel riuscire a bilanciare l'identità linguistica e culturale a causa dell'influenza da parte di entrambe le culture, però si contano numerosi effetti positivi che si riflettono sulla persona. L'apertura culturale e una più ampia conoscenza del mondo sono solo una minima parte di questi.

Un individuo per adattarsi al meglio a un contesto cambia la sua prospettiva a seconda della cultura che entra in gioco in quel determinato momento. Questo vuol dire che a

seconda della situazione si attivano differenti valori e a volte diversi tratti della personalità (Grosjean, 1982:279-284). Spesso le persone bilingue acquisiscono le loro lingue in differenti situazioni associando sentimenti, azioni e valori a contesti determinati e quindi reagendo in maniera diversa rispetto a queste.

Negli ultimi mesi ho intervistato dieci persone bilingue tra i 14 e i 68 anni. Solo due su dieci affermano di mantenere gli stessi valori e personalità col cambiare del contesto. Gli altri 8 sostengono di sentirsi persone diverse a seconda della lingua che parlano. Inoltre non cambia solo il modo di reagire al contesto, ma sentono un cambiamento anche a livello fonetico, di intonazione e di articolazione delle frasi che influenzano a loro volta il modo di pensare e le attitudini.

Nell'ultimo secolo è stata creata una tecnica linguistica, chiamata *translanguaging*, che permette a persone bilingue di usare in modo creativo e flessibile tutte le lingue che conoscono (García, 2013:20-30). All'interno del contesto educativo vengono usate le due lingue per migliorare la comprensione e le altre attività dello studente in entrambe le sfere linguistiche. Questa pratica va al di là del *code-switching* e descrive come la persona crea e usa pratiche discorsive interconnesse; queste non possono essere categorizzate in una o più definizioni tradizionali di lingua in quanto al suo interno si trovano più lingue. Si può dire quindi che le persone bilingue hanno un singolo grande repertorio linguistico in cui sono presenti tutte le loro lingue. Il concetto di repertorio linguistico è legato al *trans-space*, ossia uno spazio all'interno del quale le identità linguistiche e culturali sono legati e mescolati assieme, creando un repertorio senza confini.

Qualche anno fa un gruppo di ricerca dell'Università di Vienna ha iniziato ad usare un approccio particolare per la rappresentazione grafica dei repertori linguistici. Hanno fornito agli alunni di una scuola elementare degli omini stilizzati da colorare a seconda delle lingue che parlano e le parti del corpo che sentono connesse a queste (Busch, 2018:2-10). Dopo aver colorato l'omino dovevano fornire una spiegazione sulle correlazioni fatte tra lingua, colore e parte del corpo.

Ho deciso di prendere spunto da questo esperimento e di inserire una domanda sulla rappresentazione del repertorio linguistico anche nella mia intervista. Ho fornito ai dieci intervistati l'omino da colorare e dopo avergli dato del tempo per realizzarlo, mi hanno spiegato i loro collegamenti tra il colore usato e le parti del corpo. C'è chi ha realizzato i

capelli, considerati l'eredità di una delle loro due culture, e chi ha usato i colori delle bandiere per sottolineare la loro stretta relazione con una delle due nazioni.

Le altre domande dell'intervista vertono invece sul contesto linguistico nel corso degli anni, identità linguistica e culturale, utilizzo delle lingue e cambiamenti nei tratti della personalità e nel modo di pensare a seconda della situazione. E' possibile trovare la trascrizione di tutte le interviste all'interno dell'appendice.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baker, C., Garcia, O. (2017). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism*. Bristol: Multilingual matters.
- Barth, F., (1969). *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 9-38 (introduction).
- Bialystok, E. (2001). *Bilingualism in development: Language, literacy and cognition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bialystok, E. (2009). Bilingualism: The good, the bad, and the indifferent. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 12(01), 3–11.
- Bialystok, E. (2017). The bilingual adaptation: How minds accommodate experience. *Psychological Bulletin*, 143(3), 233–262.
- Broadbent, J. T., Zhanna V., (2015). Bilingual Identity: Issues of Self-Identification of Bilinguals in Malaysia and Tatarstan. *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, Vol. 21 (3), 141-150.
- Busch, B., (2012). The Linguistic Repertoire Revisited. *Applied Linguistics*, Volume 33, Issue 5, 503-523.
- Cummins, J. (1984). *Bilingualism and special education: issue in assessment and pedagogy*. Avon: Multilingual matters.
- Cummins, J., Swain, M. (1986). *Bilingual: aspects of theory, research and practice*. London and New York: Longman.
- Eggings S., (2004). *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. London; New York: Continuum.
- Ellis R., (1997). *Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ervin-Tripp, S., (1968). *Becoming a Bilingual*. Berkeley: California University.
- García, O., Wei, L. (2013). *Translanguaging – language, bilingualism and education*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- García, O., Wright, W. (2015). *the handbook of bilingual and multilingual education*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell.
- Genesee F., 1982. The Social Psychological Significance of Code Switching in Cross-Cultural Communication. *Sage Pub Journal*, Volume 1, Issue 1.

- Grosjean, F. (1982). *Life with two languages: an introduction to bilingualism*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Grosjean, F., Ping, L. (2013). *The psycholinguistics of bilingualism*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Grosjean, F., Byers-Heinlein, K. (2018). *The listening Bilingual*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Gumperz, J., (1982). *Language and social identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hamers, J. F. & Blanc, M. H. A. (2000). *Bilinguality and Bilingualism*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kim, E. (2006). Reasons and Motivations for Code-Mixing and Code-Switching. *Issues in EFL Vol.4 No.1*. 43-57.
- Lanza, E. (2004). *Language Mixing in Infant Bilingualism, A Sociolinguistic Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lightbown P., Spada, N., (1993). *How Languages are Learned*. Oxford: Oxford University press.
- Lin, A., (2017). Translanguaging in Bilingual Education. *Bilingual and Multilingual Education*, 117-130.
- Mabule, D. R. (2015). What is this? Is it Code Switching, Code Mixing or Language Alternating? *Journal of Educational and Social Research, Vol. 5 No. 1*, 339-348.
- McLaughlin B., (1978). *Second-language acquisition in childhood: Volume 1*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 46-47.
- Nguyen A., Benet-Martínez V., (2012). Biculturalism and Adjustment: A Meta-Analysis. *Sage Pub Journals, Volume 44, Issue 1*.
- Nicoladis, E. (1998). First clues to the existence of two input languages: Pragmatic and lexical differentiation in a bilingual child. *Journal of Child Language, Volume 5, Issue 2*, 311 – 326.
- Riley, P., (2007). *Language, Culture and Identity: an ethnolinguistic perspective*. London: Continuum.
- Snow, E., Hoefnagel- Höhle, M. (1978). The Critical Period for Language Acquisition: Evidence from Second Language Learning. *Child Development, Vol. 49, No. 4*, 1114-1128.

- Volterra, V., Taeschner, T. (1978). The acquisition and development of language by bilingual children. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, Volume 1, Issue 2, 105-116.
- Wang H. L., (2018). Definitions of Bilingualism and their Applications to the Japanese Society. *Journal of the University of Morioka* 35, 13-26.
- Wei, L. (2007). *The Bilingualism Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Wei, L., Auer, P., Paradis, J (2007). *Handbook of Multilingualism and Multilingual Communication*. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter, 15-44.
- Wei, L., (2017). Translanguaging as a Practical Theory of Language. *Applied Linguistics, Volume 39, Issue 1*, 9-30

WEBOGRAPHY

- Baxter, S., Clause, C., Chapel, L. 2022. Noam Chomsky's Language Theory. <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiPp7azyff-AhVJq6QKHbLJDqUQFnoECBoQAw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fstudy.com%2Flearn%2Flesson%2Fnoam-chomskys-language-theory-overview-explanation-examples.html%23%3A~%3Atext%3DChomsky%27s%2520theory%2520of%2520language%2520acquisition%2520argues%2520that%2520human%2520brain%2520structures%2C%2520humans%2520grow%2520and%2520develop.&usg=AOvVaw2kUHg15POXUWkrjGAoS6EZ>.
- Busch, B., 2018. The language portrait in multilingualism research: Theoretical and methodological considerations https://heteroglossia.net/fileadmin/user_upload/publication/busch18._The_language_portrait_copy.pdf
- Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary* (online edition), <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>
- Chen, S. X., 2015. Toward a social psychology of bilingualism and biculturalism <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/ajsp.12088>.
- Hooper, O., 2022. Does your Personality change Depending on the Language You Speak? <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2022/12/353209/does-your-personality-change-depending-on-the-language-you-speak>.
- Lavigne, T., Romero, F., Worthy, L. D., 2020. Cultural Switching. https://open.maricopa.edu/culturepsychology/chapter/switching/#:~:text=Cultural%20frame%20switching%20refers%20to,%2C%20%26%20Kung%2C%201997)).
- Welsh, P., 2019. Language and Identity: an interview with staff. <https://www.colorado.edu/flatironsforum/2019/06/03/language-and-identity-interview-staff>.
- Zhang, Z., 2020. Linguistic Identity and Language Portrait. <https://termcoord.eu/2020/02/linguistic-identity-and-language-portrait/#:~:text=There%20are%20different%20kinds%20of,about%20is%20%E2%80%9Clinguistic%20identity%E2%80%9D>.

Dev, H., 2010. Biculturalism and Context: What Is Biculturalism, and When Is It Adaptive?

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2840244/>.