

Early Childhood Development of Simultaneous Bilingualism: A Case Study on English and Italian

Chiara Dal-Martello Lage
Arizona State University

Introduction

Crawford (1997) states in his article that, according to the Census Bureau (1993a), United State residents now use 325 languages at home, including at least 137 Native American languages. Despite the fact that most of the world population is bilingual or multilingual (Romaine, 1995b), a belief exists, in the North-American society, that raising children as bilingual is problematic. Many discussions of the advantages or disadvantages of early bilingualism are based on the idea that a bilingual environment is something parents choose for their children. This, however, is usually not the case; young children who grow up bilingually are for the most part doing so, because there is no way they can grow up monolingually (De Houwer, 1999).

People believe that hearing two or more languages will confuse the child and lead to grave problems in acquiring language skills (De Houwer, 1999). Therefore, language mixing is seen as problematic. All over the Western world, speech therapists, teachers and medical doctors advise parents of young children growing up with more than one language to use only one language. Typically, the language given up is the one not used in the overall environment. These professionals fail to detect that very young bilingual children are sensitive to the fact of interacting with a monolingual or a bilingual speaker and are able to adapt their language choice to the requirements of their linguistic environment (Köppe, 1996). Children may use language mixing as a temporary relief strategy, especially with respect to the borrowing of lexical items known in only one of the languages (Gawlitzeck-Maiwald & Tracy, 1996). However, no scientific evidence exists to date, that hearing two or more languages leads to delays or disorders in language acquisition (De Houwer, 1999).

It has been shown that the use of two languages in one sentence by mature bilinguals reveals a great deal of linguistic skill (Romaine, 1995b). Young bilingual children are able to produce far more sentences using only one language than monolingual children. This clearly shows they are able to keep their languages separate (De Houwer, 1999).

A prevailing idea is that it is very easy for children to learn a new language, with little effort involved. However, learning even one language is a process that takes many years (De Houwer, 1999). The attainment of age-appropriate levels of performance in the second language can take four to seven years (Hakuta, 1990). While there is some evidence to indicate that longer exposure to a language makes for better proficiency, and that younger children can achieve higher levels of accuracy in pronunciation than older ones, the outcome depends greatly on the circumstances in which acquisition takes place (Romaine, 1995b). Environment plays an important role in learning speech. Children learn speech only when they hear people talk to them in many different circumstances (De Houwer, 1999). Children do not develop linguistically if they are raised in a language-impaired environment; that is, if they do not hear language spoken or have no communication with others.

Description of this Study

The following study is an example of simultaneous bilingualism in English and Italian by a male between the ages of 2.2 and 6.2. Ronjat refers to the situation of this particular study as a 'one person-one language' principle (Ronjat in Romaine 1995) or as 'one language-one environment'. Following Harding and Riley (1986: 47-8 in Romaine 1995), Romaine classified the primary types of bilingualism studied into five categories, depending on factors such as the native language of the parents, the language of the community at large and the parents' strategy in speaking with the child. She describes the first type as the following: Type1: "One person – One language"

Parents: The parents have different native languages, with each having some degree of competence in the other's language.

Community: The language of one of the parents is the dominant language of the community.

Strategy: The parents each speak their own language to the child from birth.

This study presents an example of this Type 1 of bilingualism. The father, Mike (M) is a native of California. He is also always referred to as *papà*, ‘dad’. This word is also one of the so-called wild cards used at home by parents and the child, like *mamma* ‘mom’, *latte* ‘milk’, and *succo* ‘juice’. The mother, Chiara (C) is a native of Italy and an adult formally educated in English and Italian. The mother is also the author of this paper. The child, Enrico (E), was born in Tacoma (WA), and then moved to Tempe (AZ) at the age of 2.1.

Therefore, each parent speaks a different native language. The dominant language of the community is English, as the father’s. Each parent speaks his or her native language to the child from birth.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to shed light on the above-mentioned beliefs about second language acquisition and bilingualism. The following questions will be addressed through the analysis of the data:

Did Enrico choose to be bilingual?

Did the exposure to two languages cause delays or disorders in Enrico’s language acquisition?

Did Enrico find learning two languages easy?

Did the environment play an essential role in Enrico’s bilingualism development?

Premise

The story began when Mike (M) and Chiara (C) met in Italy in 1988. Mike was enlisted into the U.S. Army and stationed in the town of Vicenza, Italy. Chiara worked for an American Community College on the Army post where she taught Italian to newcomers from the United States. Chiara’s English was already proficient when the two met. Consequently, communication was easier for the couple in English. Mike worked with American personnel. When Mike visited Chiara’s family, she would translate for him. The couple communicated with each other in English from the beginning. After they married in 1990, they both decided that when they had children, they would raise them bilingually.

They had seen examples of children raised with two languages successfully by fellow American soldiers who had also married Italian women. In 1991, they moved to Monterey, California and then in 1993 to Tacoma, Washington, because of changes of assignments in Mike’s Army career. When Chiara got pregnant in 1993, they still agreed they would speak to their child in each of their native languages from birth. Enrico was born May 5 1994. His first visit to Italy occurred at the age of 7 months, the second at 1.5; both visits lasted approximately four weeks. Enrico visited Italy again at the ages of 2.7, 4.2, 5.2, and 6.2. All visits, except the one when he was 2.7, lasted two months and took place during summer months. At the time of this paper, Enrico was 7.

Procedure and Analysis

Discourse analysis was employed to analyze examples of Enrico’s speech at different stages of his bilingual development. The analysis started when he was 2.2. This age was chosen because Enrico only spoke a few monosyllables before that time. The data are from videotaped speech events. Chiara started videotaping Enrico at birth, in order to send films to his grandparents in Italy and California.

Concerning the mixing of two languages, most researchers say that bilingual children mix the two languages until a certain age (Gawlitzeck-Maiwald & Tracy, 1996; Romaine, 1995; Köppe, 1996). Enrico does not show many instances of mixing; at age 2.2, only seldom would he use an English lexical item when speaking Italian with his mom—also a bilingual—. Hence, this is not a very visible feature in Enrico’s linguistic development. He was a late talker and did not go through the same speaking stages as the children in the above-mentioned studies.

At 2.2, Enrico spoke mostly in monosyllables with few exceptions, and preferred speaking English as illustrated in the following examples (1) and (2). He used bilingual synonyms according to the person to whom he was addressing, as illustrated in example (3). Transcription convention 1 (see appendix A) was used in this paper with some additional explanation in cases of utterances in Italian, for which a gloss and a translation are provided below each utterance.

(1) Enrico 2.2

1. M: see your chair over there? (0.2) Enrico's chair (#) Enrico's chair (0.1) you wanna sit down?
(0.2) Enrico's new chair (#) do you like it?
2. E: mm
3. M: it's ok?
4. C: ti piace? Guarda che dondola.
To you pleases 3S? look 3S that rocks 3S
'Do you like it? you know it rocks'
5. M: Enrico (#) can you rock it? Can you rock?
6. C: tell him it swings (0.1) he got his grapes=//eccolo eh eh
7. M: //there you go bravo Enrico!
8. (0.5) C: ti piace?
To you pleases?
'Do you like it'
9. E: mm ((nodding))
10. C: ti piace? ((see 8 above))
11. E: rock
12. M: Enrico's new rocking chair

(2) Enrico 2.2

13. M: what are you doing Enrico?
14. E: m?
15. M: What you doing?
16. E: chair
17. M: chair (#) Enrico's new chair
18. C: la tua sedia
The your 2S chair
'your chair'
19. E: //ah ah
20. C: //ah ah
21. E: ah ((Enrico spills his last grape))
22. M: //oh oh
23. C: //oh oh
24. E: // oh
25. M: //spilling the grapes (#) Enrico spills the grapes
26. E: all gone
27. M: all gone ((0.1))
28. C: vuoi ancora?
You want more?
Do you want more?
29. E: no all gone

(3) Enrico 2.2

30. E: camion grosso ((addressing mom with the videocamera))
truck big
'big truck'
31. C: hai fatto un bel camion grosso!?
Have 2S made a beautiful truck big
'did you make a beautiful big truck!?'
31. E: mm ((nodding)) ah ah (xxx)
32. C: cosa stai facendo?
What stay 2S doing?
'What are you doing?'
33. E: camion grosso
33. C: camion grosso
34. E: camion grosso

35. [...]
 36. E: papà?
 Da?
 ‘daddy?’
 37. C: dov’è papà?
 ‘where is daddy?’ ((Enrico points at daddy))
 eh cosa sta facendo papà?
 eh what stay 3S doing daddy?
 ‘eh what is daddy doing?’
 38. E: eh-heh-heh ((gets up and go to daddy)) (0.3) big truck
 39. M: big truck what’s that?
 40. E: //car
 41. M: //what’s this?
 42. E: //trailer
 43. M: trailer (#) bravo!
 44. E: car w trailer
 45. M: car with a trailer

It is interesting to note in the previous speech sample (3) how Enrico switched between the two languages with each parent. The switch occurred when he became familiar with the same vocabulary in both languages, i.e., if he did not know a word—usually an Italian word—he would use English. When he mixed languages, he did so as a temporary relief strategy. The knowledge of synonyms shows he may have had two separate language systems. However, this has not been proven and is still quite controversial.

The next recording presents Enrico’s Italian at age 2.4 (4). This is an interesting example because his use of Italian shows a relation to the frequency of utterances used by his mom. Sometimes she explained to Enrico where dad had gone. Usually dad rode his motorcycle. Also, it is interesting how Chiara is interpreting Enrico’s utterances each time, Enrico started repeating those speech expansions in the future, mirroring his mom.

(4) Enrico 2.4 ((Enrico wore his father’s cowboy boots))

46. E: bye bye (xxxx) giro in moto
 ‘ride on motorcycle’
 47. C: un giro in moto?
 ‘A ride on motorcycle?’
 48. E: giro in moto
 49. M: vai a fare un giro in moto?
 go 2S do a ride on motorcycle?
 ‘Are you going for a ride on the bike?’

The next utterances (5) were recorded when Enrico was 2.7. His transference of an English structure into Italian is interesting. He used the correct Italian structure at the beginning but then transferred a construction from English at the end. In this example, Enrico and his mother are in Italy. They had been there for a couple of weeks in an environment of total Italian immersion.

(5) Enrico 2.7 ((in Italy, at grandpa’s farm))

50. E: trattore di Sergio
 tractor of Sergio ((uncle’s name))
 ‘Sergio’s tractor’
 51. C: trattore di Sergio sì::: (0.2) ((then Enrico looks at his little tractor))
 52. E: Rico trattore
 Rico tractor
 ‘Enrico’s tractor’
 53. C: il trattore di Enrico
 The tractor of Enrico
 ‘Enrico’s tractor’

54. //((the rooster sings in the background))
 55. E: (xxx)
 56. C: //come fa il gallo Enrico?
 How do 3S the rooster Enrico?
 ‘How does the rooster do Enrico?’
 57. E: chicchirichi:..... [pronounce: keekerekee]

In the following examples (6), (7) and (8) Enrico is 3.7. He answered in English to both parents, Mike and Chiara, independently from the fact that he was addressed in both languages simultaneously. He understood both languages, but preferred the use of English. In example (8), Enrico was interacting with his mom without the presence of dad, and still preferred the use of English even if mom used Italian exclusively.

(6) Enrico 3.7

57. C: Enrico cosa fai?
 Enrico what do 2S?
 ‘Enrico what are you doing?’
 58. E: I’m cleaning up
 59. C: stai aiutando papà?
 Stay helping dad?
 ‘Are you helping dad?’
 60. E: mmmm ((nodding)) (ah,ah..)

(7) Enrico 3.7

61. M: put it down ((playing with radio control car))
 62. E: ehi papà. I want my sword
 63. M: ok (.) come here you wanna try it? (.) Come here (.) the other way stop! stop!
 64. C: eh-heh-heh Enrico!
 65. M: Enrico
 66. E: //let me go get the car (#) ok?
 67. M: ok
 68. E: //that’s your car!
 69. C: ((imitating)) that’s *your* car! (.) è del papà quella macchina lì Enrico?
 is of dad that car there Enrico?
 ‘is daddy’s that car over there Enrico’
 70. E: yes it’s papà’s car (0.1) ah papà? that’s your car
 71. E: ((Enrico gets his sword and chases the car around the yard talking intelligibly until he accidentally stops the car with his feet)) I got your car
 72. M: yea you got papà’s car (0.1) [oops
 73. C: [oops (#) it always gets stuck there

(8) Enrico 3.7

74. C: cosa fai?
 what do 2S?
 ‘what are you doing?’
 75. E: am going to go to cook
 76. C: stai cucinando?
 Stay 2S cooking?
 ‘are you cooking?’
 77. E: go cook (.) I’m gonna cook your birthday
 78. C: mi fai il dolce per il mio compleanno?
 me do 2S the cake for the my birthday?
 ‘are you making me a cake for my birthday?’
 79. E: ye:..... no
 80. C: no?
 81. E: ye

82. C: sì?
83. (.....) E: put it away
84. C: questo? metto via? non vuoi che usi la videocamera?
 this? put 1S away? Not want 2S that use 1S the videocamera?
 'this? I put it away? You do not want that I use the videocamera?'
85. E: no
86. C: fai vedere il pigiama (.) cos'hai? che pigiama hai?
 make 2S see the pajama (.) what have 2S? what pajama have 2S?
 'Show your pajama (.) what do you have? Which pajama do you have?'
87. E: pigiama
 'pajama'
88. C: cos'hai sul pigiama? cos'è?
 what have 2S on the pigjama? what is?
 'what do you have on your pijama? what is it?'
89. E: Mister Freeze
90. C: e poi chi c'è?
 and then who there is?
 'and then who is there?'
91. E: batman!
92. C: fammi vedere
 do IMP2S me see
 'let me see'
91. E: ((he gets up to show)) right here (#) see? batman?

Rearing children as bilingual in a culture overwhelmingly monolingual is a formidable task (Caldas & Caron-Caldas, 1998). Enrico preferred English because of the higher percentage of English exposure in his daily life. Enrico had been going to an American day care since the age of 3 months. His exposure to Italian was limited to when his mom was present. In addition, when other people were in the environment, they mainly spoke English and Enrico experienced his mom as a bilingual speaker. At this age (3.7), Enrico started asking questions about language and realized his mom spoke English. Therefore, he did not need to code switch anymore. Occasionally Chiara would ask Enrico to repeat something or pretend she did not understand, so that he would speak Italian. At times, Enrico would comply, as in the next examples (9) and (10). When he was older, he used Italian in his requests only if he really wanted something. Other times he became frustrated and mom stopped being insistent about the issue. She thought that listening and understanding Italian would be enough until the next visit to Italy the following summer.

(9) Enrico 2.8

93. E: water! water!
94. C: cos'è?
 What is?
 'what is it?'
95. E: water
96. C: cos'è? ((see 92 above))
97. E: acqua
 'water'
98. C: acqua
99. E: acqua

(10) Enrico 4.2

- 100.E: over here:::
- 101.C: come?
 how?
 'what?'
- 102.E: over here
- 103.C: come?

104.E: sono qui!
To be 1S here
'I am here!'

It is difficult to say if Enrico had two complete separate language systems at the age of 2.7, since he did not speak very much. However, it is also difficult to corroborate if he had two systems at age 3.7. Enrico understood both languages, but preferred English. He switched to Italian only when he knew the lexical item in Italian, for example, when we would discuss something that happened in Italy. He also spoke Italian on the telephone with his Italian aunts and cousins, probably following the principle of one language-one environment. When Enrico knew that one person only spoke and understood one language, he spoke that language exclusively. If he did not know or remember a specific word, he asked his mom to translate it for him before using it with one of his relatives.

The following example (11) is very interesting because Enrico and his mother just returned from Italy where they spent four weeks. Enrico used more Italian with his mom than in the previous examples (8), (9), and (10). In addition, he tried to translate/explain what happened to his dad as illustrated on line 120.

(11) Enrico 2.8

((radio in the background))

105.E: ciao papà ((cleaning the motorcycle))

106.M: ciao Enrico

107.(xxx)

108.C: Enrico! (.) cosa fai?

what do 2S?

'what are you doing?'

109.E: (tataxxx)

110.C: aiuti il papà?

help 2S the dad?

'are you helping dad?'

111.E: (xx) aiuto

help 1S

'I am helping'

112.C: aiuto (#) aiuti il papà ad asciugare la moto?

help 1S help 2S the dad to dry the bike?

'I am helping are you helping dad to dry the bike?'

113.E: ..are a moto mm ((nodding))

To (t)he bike

'dry the bike'

114.C: la moto? sì eh-heh sai dire ciao nonno Piero?

the bike? Yes eh-heh know 2S to say hi grampa Piero?

'the bike? Yes eh-heh do you know how to say ciao grampa Piero?'

115.E: ciao nonno pero

116.C: gurdami! Di' ciao nonno Piero

Look2SIMPme say2SIMP hi grampa Piero

'Look at me! Say hi grampa Piero'

117.E: ciao nonno pero

118.M: //say ciao nonno Piero

119.C: //ma guarda la mamma

but look the mom

'but look at mom'

120.E: ciao nonno pero

121.C: //forte

'loud'

122.E: //ciao //nonno-

- 123.C: // come fa il gallo // Enrico?
 how do3S the rooster Enrico?
 ‘how does the rooster do Enrico?’
- 124.E: //chicchirichi!
- 125.E: ((looking at daddy)) chicken
- 126.M: the chicken

Enrico’s use of both languages depending on if he was talking to his dad or his mom, supports in this way the one language-one environment’s argument. When in Italy, however, he would also interact with everyone else in English at age 2.7 and in Italian only to his mom. He still had not realized that Italian was not just spoken by mommy. He started to understand that different languages existed at age 3.7. At that point, he refused to mix the two languages. When he did not know a word, he would not switch language but suddenly stop and ask for that word’s translation in the language he was using. He did not do this at age three when occasionally he interspersed Italian words in English sentences, or vice versa.

In the next example, Enrico was talking with himself, as adults conversed in the background. It is interesting to note that he was speaking Italian because just prior he had answered his mother in English.

(12) Enrico 4.2

- 127.E: (guarda) gallo mangia (#) che grande il gallo del nonno
 (look) rooster eats (#) what big the rooster of the grandpa
 ‘(look) the rooster is eating (#) how big is grandpa’s rooster’

Enrico, beginning at age 4, used Italian when playing by himself upon returning from Italy. He would speak Italian for about two weeks. He would make up imaginary stories with his Italian cousins as co-players or characters. After a couple of weeks, he would switch to English or just use both languages in different playing situations. This return to English occurred because of his immersion into the American day care and the home environment in which English is the dominant language of communication.

The next two recordings were taken two years later when Enrico was 6.2. In the first one, (11) Enrico, his mom, an Italian aunt and an Italian cousin were in Florence, Italy. We had been in Italy for a month. Enrico visited Italy the summer before at age 5.2. At that time he had become proficient in Italian. His vocabulary was extensive, but his grammar and sentence structure were that of a four-year-old monolingual Italian child. Upon his return to the United States, he continued using Italian with his mom for about six months, but then he stopped. At the time of the next recording (11), he had not spoken Italian for about six months. He seemed to remember the language, once we arrived and had no problems communicating with his cousins. He went to two Italian preschools during the two months of our stay. The teacher from the first day care, told me that he seemed perfectly comfortable at school after the first couple of days. Only once did she ask him to explain one of his drawings to me in English. The teacher was not sure if she had understood his explanations. The teacher felt Enrico lacked the vocabulary necessary to explain his drawing, but in fact, he had actually told her in Italian what he told me in English about his art.

Enrico, in example number (11), showed the ability to construct a grammatical sentence in Italian. In addition, his sentence structure at that point was more like that of Italian children of his age. This is remarkable since he did not speak much Italian before we arrived in Italy. He seemed able to retrieve his Italian knowledge very quickly from previous exposures. The rich supportive environment in Italy was a major factor in the process. Enrico was in Italy accompanied by his mom who spoke only Italian to him. He was attending a preschool where only Italian was spoken. During his visit, he was exposed to vendors, taxi-drivers, children, teachers, and relatives—all speaking Italian to him with different accents and different registers.

(11) Enrico 6.2

- 128.E: voglio provare anch’io
 Want 1S to try also I
 ‘I want to try also’

Enrico's English language development at this point is very good. Enrico was a late talker and did not speak very much until the age of 3. When he began speaking, his language exploded. In kindergarten, his teacher often reprimanded him for talking too much or when it was not appropriate. English is definitely Enrico's first language. It is very well developed at this point. His first-grade-report card shows that he expresses ideas orally and in writing at grade level. His reading is above grade level. This supports the fact that native language proficiency is a powerful predictor of the rapidity of second language development (Hakuta, 1990). The better his English, the better his Italian becomes.

In the recording that follows (12), we had just returned from Italy and Enrico interacted in Italian with his mom.

(12) Enrico 6.3

129.C: come fa a partire?

How does to start?

'how does it start?'

130.E: cosa?

131.(...)

132.E: ah:: perché c'è questo!

ah because there's this MS

'ah because there's this one!'

Discussion

The development of Enrico's Italian language skills is interesting. He does not use Italian very much in the United States, only when he returns from Italy and then for a short time. However, he has little difficulty retrieving information he needs to communicate with his Italian relatives, either on the phone or when in Italy. His Italian is not only well pronounced, but grammatically correct. My sister, Mariacristina Dal Martello has been teaching elementary children in Italy for 24 years. When we arrived in Italy in June 2001, Enrico was 7 and had just finished first grade in Arizona, I asked her if a tool to assess Enrico's Italian existed. At first, the task seemed quite difficult since standardized exams are not used in Italian schools. My sister decided first to interview Enrico, and then suggested two working booklets for him to complete. She uses this material at school with her first graders. During the interview she asked Enrico to syllabi some words for her, which, he did successfully. She stated Enrico showed the language proficiency of any Italian 6-year old entering her first grade class. This took place a few days after our arrival in Italy. During the next 8 weeks in Italy, Enrico performed most of the work in the two booklets. He accomplished it with very little difficulty. He learned to read simple sentences in Italian as an average native Italian child his age might do.

At age seven, Enrico also answered some of his mom's questions about using and learning Italian.

C: Do you like speaking Italian?

E: yes

C: why?

E: I don't know

C: do you like better Italian or English?

E: English

C: why?

E: Because it's easier for me

He added that he would like everyone in Italy to learn English so it would be easier for him to communicate when he arrives there. This could mean he considers English a better language, but again, his reasoning is always practical and circumstantial. He said he likes to speak Italian while in Italy. When Enrico and I first arrive in Italy, he wants to go and play with his cousins right away and does not need me for language support. When he sees me at the end of the day, during the first two weeks, he requests that we speak English because he states he is tired. Since this happens only during the first two weeks, it can be explained by the fact that he is not yet fluent in Italian. When you try to

speak a language in which you are not fluent, it is an effort. This supports the fact that it is difficult to learn a second language, no matter how old you are (Hakuta, 1990; McLaughlin, 1992).

Enrico's interest in languages does not stop at Italian. He says he wants to visit China when he is a grown-up and learn Chinese. He also pretends he is speaking Japanese when he is playing with his toys by himself. A few nights ago, he asked if I wanted to hear some Japanese and I complied. He began making these very distinguishable sounds and at the end, translated the whole story in English. Learning a second language makes children aware of metalinguistic features earlier in life. It expands their minds and prepares them for the multicultural/multilingual world in which we live.

Learning another language for Enrico was not a choice. His parents decided. The reasoning behind it is two-fold. First, they thought he needed to learn Italian to communicate with his Italian relatives. Second, they both struggled learning a second language as adults. They believed it would be to Enrico's advantage to grow up with two languages.

Enrico is seven-years old at the time of this paper. His language development at this time has not been impaired by the exposure to two languages. His awareness of cultural and language diversity is unique in a child of his age. Bilingualism is also associated with greater cognitive flexibility and awareness of language. Enrico is now in second grade, he is not in English as a second language program. His results in school are excellent, in particular in math and logic. He reads in Italian by himself without help from his mother. This also supports that fact that content knowledge transfers from first language to second language (Hakuta, 1990).

Learning 2 languages did not appear easy for Enrico. It did not appear easier for him than it was for me to learn English as an adult. The requirements to communicate as a child are quite different from the requirements to communicate as an adult (McLaughlin, 1992). His relatives in Italy were quite amazed at how easy it was for Enrico (4.2) to form sentences and remember vocabulary. Children appear to have an advantage in learning native-like pronunciation. This very noticeable characteristic gives the impression of language fluency. Enrico has a very good memory, not just with language. This could have made it easier for him to remember lexical items.

Enrico seemed to do very well with Italian once he was in Italy. A supportive and rich environment plays an important role in learning speech (De Houwer, 1999). Second language learners need to hear people talk to them in many different circumstances. This supports the belief that a language is learned better and easier in the native environment than in the formal classroom.

One other interesting issue that surfaced during this analysis pertains Enrico's errors. He made occasional errors caused by transfer between the two languages, in particular when speaking Italian because of the dominance of English. Most of his grammatical errors were similar to first language learners', even in Italian. Some are comparable to second-language-adult college students of Italian from Arizona State University where I teach, for example, the use of auxiliary verbs in compound past tenses in Italian. Most Italian children go through a phase in which they generalize the use of the auxiliary *avere* 'to have' instead of the correct *essere* 'to be'. For example **io ho andato* (I to have 1S gone) instead of *io sono andato* (I to be 1S gone) 'I went'. The English genitive construction for possession is transferred incorrectly to Italian, as illustrative by example number 5. In addition, Italian idiomatic expressions requiring the use of the verb 'to have', are constructed incorrectly by second learners with the verb 'to be'. For example: **io sono 5 anni* (I to be 1S 5 years) instead of *io ho 5 anni* (I to have 1S 5 years) 'I am 5 years old'. All these are examples of mistakes made by both Enrico and Arizona State University students of Italian. Italian children and youth, in general, are dropping the use of the subjunctive for the "easier" indicative forms. Enrico is also doing this, as well as my students.

Enrico's development of simultaneous bilingualism is unique. His exposure to Italian was and is very limited, and therefore, his dominant language at this point is English. This study can only be regarded as a case study to give further light into some second language acquisition issues. These need further exploration. Enrico's English language proficiency is not delayed. His Italian language proficiency is that of an Italian child his age. His Italian vocabulary, however, weakens as time elapses from his previous visit to Italy. In addition, these results must be compared to other second-language case studies on simultaneous bilingualism.

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ISB4: Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium on Bilingualism

edited by James Cohen, Kara T. McAlister,
Kellie Rolstad, and Jeff MacSwan

Cascadilla Press Somerville, MA 2005

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ISBN 978-1-57473-210-8 CD-ROM
ISBN 978-1-57473-107-1 library binding (5-volume set)

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