

**Case Study on Early Second Language Exposure and Its Effects on Children's Second
Language Acquisition Before They Turn Seven**

Dayana Victoria Mafla Vacca

Universidad de Nariño

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

B.A in English and French

San Juan de Pasto

2022

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

**Case Study on Early Second Language Exposure and Its Effects on Children's Second Language
Acquisition Before They Turn Seven**

Dayana Victoria Mafla Vacca

Research Project Submitted to the Faculty of Human Sciences in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of B.A in English and French

Advisor:

Mg. Diana Ibarra Santacruz

Universidad de Nariño

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

B.A in English and French

San Juan de Pasto

2022

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Nota de Responsabilidad

Las ideas y conclusiones aportadas en el siguiente trabajo son responsabilidad exclusiva del autor. Artículo 1ro del Acuerdo No. 324 de octubre 11 de 1966 emanado del Honorable Consejo Directivo de la Universidad de Nariño.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

NOTA DE ACEPTACIÓN

Firma del Presidente del jurado

Firma del jurado

Firma del jurado

San Juan de Pasto ____ de Mayo de 2022

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Acknowledgments

This project is the result of the support and motivation people I love have given me. I want to dedicate this paper primarily to my parents who have made enormous sacrifices, so I could become a happy woman with a profession one day; without them, their love, support, and the good values taught, I would not be the woman I am today. Secondly, my dear husband, who has had more faith in me than I do myself; his love, motivation, and advice helped me focus, concentrate and finally get things done. Also, I want to thank my second family in the USA, who without planning it, allowed me to discover a new topic and start this research. They let me take their only kid and experiment with my language which later became the most exciting topic of investigation for me. They allowed me to see their kid grow and “teach” him Spanish along the process. Thanks to Alexander, who showed me the fascinating world of children and what their brilliant minds are capable of. In the same way, I want to give my gratitude to the other 4 families, who trusted me, opened their doors to me, and collaborated with this idea. Finally, I want to thank my tutor who advocated her time and knowledge to guide me through this process and who made sure I could present a good final report.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Resumen

Durante décadas, muchos niños en todo el mundo han crecido siendo bilingües, esto ha sido principalmente el resultado de la migración, sus padres o cuidadores son bilingües o políglotas, así como la existencia de escuelas de inmersión lingüística o programas de idiomas extranjeros para niños. Este estudio de caso se centra en las experiencias de cinco niños y los procesos que han atravesado para ser considerados bilingües antes de cumplir los siete años. El estudio describe sus contextos y características del entorno, brinda detalles cronológicos de los logros lingüísticos que alcanzaron y también brinda muestras de su producción lingüística en ambos idiomas. Finalmente, se explican las conclusiones y los principales descubrimientos y se dan sugerencias para los cuidadores, padres y / o profesores.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Abstract

For decades, many children around the world have grown up being bilingual, which has mainly been the result of migration, their parents or caregivers being bilinguals or polyglots, as well as the existence of language immersion schools or foreign language programs for children. This case study focuses on five children's experiences and the processes they have gone through to be considered bilinguals before they turned seven years old. The study describes their contexts and setting characteristics, gives chronological details of the language milestones they accomplished, and also gives samples of their language production in both languages. Finally, conclusions and main discoveries are explained and suggestions for caregivers, parents, and/or teachers are given.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Table of contents

Chapter 1

Introduction.....	8
Problem Description.....	9
Statement of Purpose.....	10
Objectives.....	10
General Objective.....	10
Specific Objectives.....	11
Significance.....	11
Limitations.....	11

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Exposure.....	12
Critical Period Hypothesis.....	12
Dual Language Learner.....	14
Bilingualism.....	14

Chapter 3: Methodology

Design and Type of Research.....	16
Context.....	17
Population and Sample.....	17
Data Collection Procedure.....	18

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Techniques.....	18
Chronogram.....	19
Budget.....	19
Chapter 4: Data Analysis	
Procedure.....	20
Data Analysis.....	20
Kid A	27
Kid B & Kid C.....	35
Kid D.....	49
Kid E.....	56
Conclusions.....	64
References.....	68

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Appendices

Appendix A: Online Questionnaire to find participants for the study.....	72
Appendix B: Informed Consent.....	73
Appendix C: Survey Questions for Initial Interviews with parents.....	75
Appendix D: Rubric for observations.....	77
Appendix E: Survey Questions for Interviews with children (English and Spanish)	78

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Introduction

The field of second language acquisition has been deeply explored and analyzed in different contexts and with different participants throughout the last century. Lately, more interest has surged in the processes related to young bilingual development; it means children's ability to speak two languages before they reach puberty. This study aims to bring a better understanding of children's second language acquisition when they have been exposed to it from birth or at least the closest it could be to it. The first study on this topic was developed by French Jules Ronjat in 1913, in which he tried to explain how a child would behave and what he could attain being raised in a bilingual environment and in a time where bilingualism was suspected of deforming languages.

Second language acquisition (SLA) has been a topic that has captured researchers' attention since the 1960s; many of them have focused on age as one factor influencing the way and ultimate level of attainment somebody can reach. Here, a fierce debate has started; some claim that young kids are better at acquiring and learning a new language due to their brains' plasticity and rapid neural formation (Lenneberg, 1967; Bialystok, 2001). On the other hand, others suggest older learners are quicker and more effective at learning a second language (Genesee et al. 1996).

Children growing up with a second language exposure at an early stage have shown the capacity to get native-like proficiency without showing a differentiated accent (Patkowski, 1982; Kuhl, 2000, 2010; Galles, 2010). On the other hand, others believe that older learners are better since they already know one language, and they not only can focus on what they want to learn in a more organized and methodological way but also can use the already known language system to use the new one similarly (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2003; Krashen. et al., 1979; Singleton and Ryan, 2004). The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), first proposed in 1959 by the neurologist Wilder Penfield and then made famous by Eric Lenneberg in 1967, is highly accepted and has attempted to explain why this phenomenon occurs. It states that a person's language acquisition is most efficacious during the first years of life. Then it gets laborious after people reach puberty (Siegler et al, 2005).

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

De Houwer (2009), who has researched bilingual kids, introduces a new concept to the Second Language Acquisition field; it is called: Early Second Language Acquisition (ESLA) that refers to those people who have been exposed and talked to in two different languages from birth. It suggests that people growing up in a bilingual environment do not have a differentiated first or second language, since both languages have been acquired simultaneously. For this purpose, she has established the terms: Language A and Language Alpha. She also supports the idea of studying infants and younger children, and she has limited it to 6 years of age since it is when both languages are still processed naturally and there has not been formal instruction received in either of them.

Problem Description

For years researchers have studied language acquisition from the linguistics, anthropologic, social and psychological standpoint; however, most of the research has focused on monolingual acquisition as the only way this process happens, leaving aside the fact that people can grow up acquiring 2 or more languages. Despite there being no specific numbers or statistics, it is believed that there are as many monolingual as bilingual children (Tucker, 1998). This project aims to explain the possible effects of giving children early and significant exposure to a second language and how it leads to language acquisition. Investigations done by Birdsong (1999), Genesse (1987), Singleton (2005), Asher & Garcia (1969), and Kuhl (2003) have contributed to the second language development field supporting the idea of CPH by doing observations, tests, and brain studies on kids under the age of nine who have been growing up in bilingual environments. According to Kuhl (2011), people can learn a language at any age; however, infants and younger kids, in contrast to older learners, can develop native-like pronunciation and higher proficiency because they go through acquisition and not a learning process. Infants have more time, a larger capacity to remember and internalize, inner curiosity to learn, and fewer inhibitions or fear of making mistakes. The study was done with a group of five children (ages 2-7) who have received second language exposure (Spanish and English) from birth or closer to it. Since children have the extraordinary capacity to acquire an excellent knowledge of what surrounds them while growing up, there

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

is the need to look for ways to understand and later take advantage of such valuable time and use it to help them know and be proficient in a new language or other skill.

There are few initiatives in the world focused on second and foreign language education for younger learners. Nevertheless, there are still different misbeliefs and myths like the fact children might present language delay or speech disorder, or children could not develop a strong personality (Grosjean, 2010). That is why parents or guardians try to wait until they are older enough to start exposing them to a different language, or it is not given at all (Genesee, 2011). In conclusion, this type of study attempts to challenge the current thought about early bilingualism; knowing how it is that children become bilinguals and the effects of it on their lives might be beneficial for other parents and educators as well as other bilinguals of any age.

Statement of Purpose

This case study intends to describe how five children under the age of seven have become bilingual after being effectively and continuously exposed to a second language from a very early age. This study also seeks an understanding of the effects of this phenomenon on their lives. This study is based on the ideals of the Critical Period Hypothesis developed by Lenneberg (1967). This research is not an intervention study since most of the data has been collected through indirect observation trying not to pose any kind of suggestions or changes for the participants.

Objectives

General Objective

To describe the effects of early second language exposure for 5 children under the age of seven

Specific Objectives

To explain how early second language exposure influences children's language development.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

To describe how kids under the age of 7 growing up in bilingual environments acquire both languages and the stages they go through.

To give possible tools to encourage early foreign language exposure for infants and children.

Significance

This research hopes to provide a general observation and description of bilingualism for kids under the age of seven. This case study aims for parents, educators, and, why not, educational policies to find interesting and useful information to determine what needs to be done to improve or encourage early bilingualism. Since nowadays a growing part of the world population speaks two or more languages, encouraging children to be bilingual has become a “norm.” Understanding the basis and theories surrounding early bilingualism could lead to a better and clearer comprehension of how second and foreign language acquisition or learning takes place. The findings of this study will ultimately influence the way we are seeing and conceiving early second and foreign language education. It may also help parents and educators understand the necessity to focus on the younger ones, their abilities, and the need to foster good comprehension and learning of a new language.

Limitations

Due to the characteristics of the research, this study became a long-term one. The researcher needed a considerable amount of time to collect data through observation and interviews with the participants to keep up to date and describe the progress of their first and second language development. This study recognizes that language development is a process that never ends and that might need more and deeper research, (Nikolov, 2009).

The second limitation of this study, given the case study conditions and parameters, is that the number of children being part of the investigation may not be enough to build a strong generalization for a wider population: a reduced number of participants might make it harder to draw general conclusions about the topic.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

The third point of struggle was the participation of 2 kids who, at the beginning of the research, were under the age of 2. The researcher as well as parents could not observe oral performance to determine whether or not kids were assimilating the input they had been receiving since they had not started producing words; however, at the comprehension level, it was evident they knew what people around them were saying to them.

Finally, because of the research methodology and design, the results obtained may be interpreted according to each one of the reader's discretion and perception of reality.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

For this project, four concepts must be described and understood for the study's development and clarity.

Exposure

According to the definition from Cambridge and Oxford dictionaries, it is defined as the set of conditions that brings the opportunity or makes it available to experience or learn new things. In the same way, Benson (2001 as cited in Al-Zoubi, 2018) defined language exposure term as “any kind of learning that takes place outside the classroom and involves self-instruction, naturalistic learning or self-directed naturalistic learning. In 2008, B. Z. Pearson's book “Raising a Bilingual Child” talks about the importance of exposure as the main factor to ensure children learn a second language. She states that without interaction with other people who can provide authentic and meaningful language samples, learning will not happen. If interaction happens but it is not enough, learning can still occur but its quality will decrease, which means children can learn certain words but will not use them to make their logical sentences. In the same way, she affirms that exposure is critical, but the child's age when he starts interacting with and hearing the language is also essential.

In 2013, Bisson et al. conducted a study to determine the importance and the impact of informal language exposure for second language learners. They tested the extent of incidental exposure to learning

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

vocabulary, asking learners to translate words, and creating form-meaning links. The test results demonstrated that people could understand and remember better new words when presented with images. According to them, despite informal foreign language exposure requiring less effort, it offers immense benefits. If learners receive early and accurate disclosure, they can achieve a native-like accent. Exposure also benefits learners since they become more sensitive to words and sounds they are hearing. Singleton (1989) describes exposure as a crucial factor in determining the level of proficiency in a foreign language someone can achieve. Between his findings, one primarily draws attention: after a long-term study, he proved that after five years, people who had received a foreign language exposure since childhood could outperform those who experienced a foreign language at an adult age. Another of his findings was the difference in the experience and exposure between children who received naturalistic language input and those who attended formal classes. He realized early and natural learners received an average of 3650 hours of input versus traditional learners who received a rough estimate of 200 hours a year. All of this had implications in the amount and quality of learning children were receiving.

Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH)

Penfield and Roberts first proposed it in 1959. This theory started as a biological explanation of language learning. These two neurosurgeons tried to understand language development and brain damage, arguing that people could only recover if they were younger and had not passed a “critical” cognitive development stage. Later, Lenneberg (1967) acknowledged Penfield’s idea and suggested that the critical period, where people can acquire a language, ended around puberty age since it is when the brain matures and lateralization ends.

Around the CPH, there are different factors to consider. First, the existence of a critical period does not mean a person cannot get proficient in a foreign language; it only suggests the presence of a period where learners can naturally and effortlessly pick up a new language. There are records of exceptional adult foreign language learners who have native-like proficiency; however, there is not enough information or research to explain this phenomenon.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Second, there is not an established age where the critical period is supposed to end. Lenneberg (1967) argued that it ends around puberty (12 years). However, other authors have suggested different stages and ages of development where the critical period is supposed to end, like age 6, when the phonological component is achieved. For others, there is not such a “critical” but a “sensitive” moment where children or adults are more receptive to learn something. Finally, others believe there is not a critical period (Abello-Contesse, 2008).

Dual Language Learner (DLL)

Early language practitioners use this term to describe children, generally, under five, learning or have learned two languages while growing up (WIDA, 2014). DLLs develop and learn languages in different ways and at different speeds. It is related to exposure, quality or quantity of input, cognitive, and sociolinguistic aspects. There are two different kinds of learners: simultaneous and sequential. The first group defines children who have been surrounded and exposed to two languages from birth. The second one refers to children who had already acquired a tongue and then started learning a new one; it usually happens around 3.

Bilingualism

Since this term is referred to and seen differently depending on the study field like sociolinguistics, linguistics, anthropology, education, or psychology, it is not an easy task to offer a defined and widely generally accepted definition. According to Mackey (1962), bilingualism refers to the ability to use more than one language, this idea is also supported by Weinreich (1968) who states that bilingualism is the practice of interchangeably using two languages. In the same line, Bloomfield (1933) concluded that bilingualism was “native-like control of two languages” which opened discussions on what circumstances and characteristics allow somebody to be called a bilingual. In contrast to the last argument, Haugen (1953) held the idea bilingualism was the capacity to produce understandable utterances in a language different from the mother tongue. That led to think that anybody who could

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

produce simple sentences even when making a lot of mistakes and using the wrong pronunciation should be considered bilingual, which is not correct. For example, people usually learn basic greetings or polite words like “gracias” in Spanish or “merci” in French, they could also know to count from 1 to 10.

However, knowing a few phrases that are grammatically correct and that have a real meaning does not mean somebody can successfully communicate in a different language or should be considered bilingual.

Bilingualism has been classified and divided into small categories, depending on the characteristics of the speaker and the settings where the language acquisition/learning happened. Houston (1972) uses two terms: natural and secondary bilingualism. The first one corresponds to a person's lack of specific and formal instruction in two languages. The most common causes are, growing up in a bilingual environment or moving to a country where the mother tongue is not spoken. Here, the circumstances force people to know and speak a different language without formal training or simply become part of daily life as in the case of children growing up in bilingual or multilingual families. The second term is secondary bilingualism where a second language has been added by choice or need under formal instruction as in the case of foreign language programs.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This investigation has been conducted under the constructivist paradigm guidelines due to its nature and characteristics. According to Creswell (1994), this type of research is descriptive; it intends to draw a clear picture of what is being studied, give the details about the study's subject and the events and processes happening around it. In this research type, the researcher plays a vital role in observation, data collection, and final analysis; it does not entirely rely on sophisticated or elaborated inventories or measure equipment rather than on his own experience and findings. Human development and his ability to learn can change and vary according to their physical and mental context. That is why it is crucial to keep in mind all the factors, like age, living conditions, education, social status, mood, or disabilities, surrounding the people who are being part of the investigation. Finally, qualitative research's primary

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

purpose is the contextualization and interpretation of the information collected. It does not intend to create general rules; instead, it aims to explain how a factor, situation, or element can affect an actor.

Design and Type of Research

This research project corresponds to a qualitative theoretical perspective. Qualitative investigations allow the researcher to describe and look for answers about personal experiences or perspectives based on the participants' standpoint. It corresponds to a more flexible method to use and recover data to study a specific phenomenon in detail and uses more verbal than statistical forms of analysis (Hammersley, 2013). Qualitative research suits the main purpose and goal of this project since it gives importance to what happens to real participants, in real (non-planned or experimental conditions). Also, being human language development part of social science, it cannot be completely measured by numbers or framed under specific rules or characteristics but it needs to be seen from a more flexible and personal angle.

Moreover, this investigation has been designed under the parameters of a case study. This research is useful because it allows the researcher to find answers to questions like what, where, when, or how a specific event happens. Added to it, a case study shows interest in an individual or group of individuals who share a common characteristic and emphasizes what people can learn from it (Stake, 2008). In this case, it fits the investigation's primary purpose since it tries to answer questions about the influence of early exposure to a foreign language over five children's language learning.

Being this a qualitative case study, which allows the research to be more flexible and participant-based, the main methods used to gather data for the study is observation and unstructured interviews of the participants in a natural and safe environment, which avoids provoking changes in the participants' behavior and outcomes.

Research Context

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

This research has been conducted in a small city in the USA, called Wausau, and it is in Marathon County in the north-central part of Wisconsin. The US is a multicultural country, where there are at least 200 languages spoken. According to WorldAtlas (2021), the country does not have an official language, most of the country (300 million) speaks English, and the second-most spoken language is Spanish. There is a growing population of infants and toddlers from different countries living in the US and living in a bilingual environment. In Wausau, as of the census of 2010, the population in the area was 39,106 people, 2.9% were Latin American or Hispanic, and 2.3% were Europeans or from different races compared to more than 87.7% of the white population. Despite the small population of foreign-language speakers in this area, this city still offers the possibility to find linguistically diverse communities where it is easy to observe children actively and naturally use a second or foreign language to communicate.

Population and Sample

The participants for this study are five children between the age of 2 and 7 years; however, these kids had to meet one requirement: being younger than seven years old before they started being exposed to a second language. They were recruited using social media. The five children selected for the study were chosen randomly after receiving more than 20 participation applications. All the kids were born and remain in a healthy condition, none of them has been diagnosed with any kind of physical or cognitive illness or impairment (like hearing) nor a language delay. They are three boys and two girls who live in the USA. All of them have been growing in bilingual-speaking homes. Children come from middle-class families. They currently speak two languages, English and Spanish, although there are differences in the use of each one. They all attend school or childcare where only English is spoken.

Data Collection Procedure

The most suitable tools to collect information for this research were observations and interviews. These techniques were chosen since they are naturalistic and non-intrusive methods. They have been done for a year starting February 2020. These observations were done directly and indirectly. First one having

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

parents, kids, and researcher together in the same place. The second one did not involve the researcher's presence; it was rather a description and report made by parents using video or audio recording as well as written description of events. Interviews with the parents were done before, during, and after the duration of the study. In the beginning, parents were asked to answer a short questionnaire about the amount of language use and the exposure their children received; the children's preferred language to communicate, a brief description of their children's language development, and finally a description of the context where and how the kids use languages. During the observation stage, it was essential to look for different scenarios where children could use their native and second language confidently and in a natural way. Observations allowed the researcher to recognize, describe, and understand the children's capability to communicate in a bilingual environment and also identify the possible variables that influenced the children's communication ability and performance in both languages. Recordings of these interviews were allowed with parents' permission, but the diffusion and public use of them were prohibited.

Techniques

This project is carried out from a qualitative perspective; no specific technique is used to analyze data. However, there were two different working methods: content analysis consists of classifying and organizing verbal or behavioral data. The second one is discourse analysis; it refers to analyzing the spoken and written language in natural settings.

These techniques are intended to look for common and different patterns in language production made by the participant children of this study. These techniques allow the opportunity to categorize the main parts of speech used by children, how and when they are using words, the presence of code-switching, the number of words spoken or written in each language, and time spent talking a determined language.

Administrative Aspect

Chronogram

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

The observations and data collection started February 2020 until February 2021; however, due to the nature of the investigation and the interest of the researcher for future projects, it has become an ongoing process that does not have a specific closure date. The organization of data recovered has been done while still collecting it.

Budget

This research does not require a high money investment since there is no need to buy materials and the participation is voluntary so no payment needs to be done to the participants.

Data Analysis

For this research, three main steps are going to be followed. First, organizing and preparing the information, here the interviews and observation details must be transcribed. Second, reading and doing a quick analysis of the main topics of the observations, trying to delimit areas and getting rid of irrelevant information. Third, starting coding of data, after the interviews have been revised, it is intended to find small chunks of discourse to be analyzed separately. In this case, vocabulary, use of nouns, pronouns, code-mixing, and pronunciation. Fourth, since this is a case study, the “codes” and similarities or differences between the participants’ data are going to be compared and described. Finally, a last interpretation will be written trying to answer the study’s main question and the different questions and doubts that might have appeared before, during, and after the project.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

In this chapter, the recovered findings and all the relevant information obtained will be described to finally be able to draw some conclusions and answer the investigation's main question.

Procedure

Data collection was done between February 2020 and February 2021. Five children aged between 1 and 7 started to be observed at their homes and other places to acknowledge how it has been possible for

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

them to understand and speak two languages (English and Spanish) at such a young age. These children are 3 boys and 2 girls, from 4 different bilingual families where one or both parents speak one or more languages besides English, which is the dominant social language in the area where they live. The direct observations were done once a month for about an hour; moreover, videos, notes, and recordings of the kids were collected by parents and later used as relevant information in the research.

As part of the data gathering techniques, observations and interviews with parents and kids were performed; the use of charts will be indispensable as a means to keep information organized and differentiated for each one of the kids and them as a group to finally be able to establish general conclusions. For ethical issues and respect of privacy, no names will be used in this project, instead, letters will be assigned to the participants.

Data Analysis

To facilitate data analysis, the main units of speech used by the children were separated into categories. This technique will help to understand language acquisition and comprehension starting from the smaller components of language like sounds or words to larger compositions like sentences and more complex utterances. This will help the readers to understand how children comprehend and produce a language from the minimal and basic units to longer and more complex discourses. The categories this research will focus on are vocabulary and pronunciation, sentence formation, and comprehension.

Antecedents

To begin describing the data, it is important to show how much exposure these kids have had to two the two languages already mentioned. The following table will summarize the current age of the children, age at which second language exposure started, amount of first and second language input they receive, and finally additional information related to their families language use.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Name	Current Age	First time of Exposure	Input Received (Exposure time)	Additional Information
A	2 yo	4 mo	English 45 h/w Spanish 30 h/w	Dad speaks Spanish and mom English. Moreover, there is a foreign live-in babysitter who speaks Spanish.
B	4 yo	Birth	English 48 h/w Spanish 32 h/w	Twins, mom, and dad are both bilingual (Dad is American with Hispanic origin and mom speaks English as a second language). Kids attend daycare where only English is spoken.
C	4 yo	Birth	English 48 h/w Spanish 32 h/w	

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

D	5 yo	Birth	English 55 h/w Spanish 40 h/w	Mom is a native Spanish speaker; dad is an English speaker. This kid was born and lived in Puerto Rico until the age of 2.
E	7 yo	4 mo	English 45 h/w Spanish 45 h/w	Mom and dad are bilingual. Maternal grandmother, whose main language is Spanish, takes primary care of her.

To assess and understand better the stages that these children growing up in bilingual environments have gone through and the current results of such processes, it is fundamental to order and categorize the data in such a way the reader can see the effects on time of first and second language exposure.

There were different common characteristics found among the children that are part of this study, their families, and the processes they have been through consciously and unconsciously. For the parents in this study, it was crucial to decide if their children were going to be raised as bilinguals or not, this under the precepts of what was going to be more beneficial for their kids in the long-term and with the understanding that the methods listed and described in some books or internet might or not work for every family, (Pearson, 2008). For them, it was necessary to ask pediatricians and inform themselves about the

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

benefits or disadvantages of encouraging the use of two languages at home since there are different misbeliefs regarding early bilingualism. Two families had decided they were going to do their best to create the best bilingual environment for their children; on the other side, the other two families had considered speaking only the majority or community language to their children since it was going to be the most important and useful one. The decision made by the last two families had to do with the belief that children who grow up in a bilingual household show signs of language delay or that it could create confusion as well as the idea that children will not be able to speak either language properly (Steiner & Hayes, 2008). However, after some reading about the benefits of bilingualism, asking other parents in the same situation and also professionals, they decided to encourage and create a bilingual home for their children.

This last misbelief is one of the parent's main concerns and worries. However, there is evidence and literature which shows that children receiving very early bilingual exposure do not show a significant difference in language and cognitive development compared to their monolingual peers. According to Grosjean (2010), bilingual children face the same cognitive challenges as a monolingual; he also remarks that language development is different for every kid (whether it is monolingual or bilingual). Ones start speaking sooner than others but that does not imply there is psychological, cognitive or physical impediment unless it is diagnosed by a professional.

There were other interesting and common facts found among these children and their families. One of them was the decision parents made about what language they were going to use to address their children. Each one of the parents chose to use only or mainly his or her native language for two main reasons. First, they felt more confident speaking their native tongue, so they knew the pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary used were not going to make mistakes; therefore, they would not teach the incorrect way of saying something to their children. Second, they also felt the need to give their children as many opportunities to experience both languages as they could. They understood it was going to be a challenge to offer equal or balanced exposure to both languages due to different reasons and mainly

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

because they were living in a community where only English was considered the majority one; therefore, most of the social interactions which occupy a large percentage of the children's awake time were going to happen in that language.

The primary method used by the families to try to offer balanced, effective, substantial, and continuous exposure to English and Spanish corresponds in fact to an approach used in bilingual education called one person- one language (OPOL). This approach suggests that each one of the parents or caregivers in bilingual or multilingual families should exclusively use one language, especially their native one, to communicate with children (Grammont, 1902); however, according to some studies (De Houwer, 2007; Grosjean, 2014), it has shown to be less effective since in the majority of the cases both parents do not spend the same amount of time with their children due to work schedules, the amount of time spent with one single caregiver, and the fact that when children grow older are exposed mostly to the majority community language. This leads to different amounts of language exposure that might result in the children having a "main" and a "weak" or a "receptive" and "expressive" language. As it was seen before in the chart, it is evident that despite these children receiving English and Spanish exposure, there is a potential difference in the amount of time spent listening to or speaking each one of the languages which will influence the later language(s) outcome.

For these parents, choosing the type of approach and methods to use to help their children successfully understand and speak a language has not been an easy task. One of the main common challenges found after the use of the One Person- One Language method is its inoperability in certain situations. Families have found it to be difficult to "stick" to one single language, for the OPOL approach it is necessary that the parent who speaks the minority language uses it the whole time but there are situations outside the house where it is necessary to switch the language to be understood.

The second common aspect found corresponds to the cultural value of language. In each family one or both parents decided they wanted to use language as a way to share and enhance their native culture with their children, that way kids would be able to stay in touch with the family that lives abroad,

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

and at the same time, they could positively appropriate of some of the customs and beliefs they do not have in the current setting. Kid A's mom and Kid D's dad think that their children should not "need" to worry about learning a second language since they are already privileged for being native English speakers that is considered to be the World's Lingua Franca. However, they do not oppose the idea of raising them bilingual and showing them part of their predecessors' cultural inheritance. This kind of belief is a very "normal" conception for many Americans who support and maintain a monolingual lifestyle. Most of them see English as the language that allows them to know and travel the world, it is the language of science, entertainment, and technology, so speaking another language is not important or necessary. That type of reasoning is perhaps the reason why in the USA, foreign language education is not enforced at the elementary or high school. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2015): "Research from outside the federal government suggests that only about 10% of the U.S. population speaks a language other than English proficiently. Most are heritage language speakers. Of those who speak a language other than English at home, 57% were foreign born and 43% were born in the United States".

In the same way, there is a social and political reaction towards people who speak a foreign language, in this case, Spanish, parents did not feel completely comfortable speaking Spanish in public or trying to join Spanish programs because in some places showing a characteristic of another ethnicity is frowned upon and associated with a low socioeconomic status. As one of the mothers explained:

"I want my children to grow up in a safe place where they can meet people from both sides of their culture. I want them to expand their possibilities and options but we are not sure if it is the right or better choice for them. Hispanic people have been victims of discrimination because of their race, all we have tried to do is to blend into society and accommodate to what this society wants. I would love to go to the store and talk to my kids in Spanish but you can see how some people start giving you the devil eye and that is why we still chose to keep Spanish as part of our lives but mostly to use at home"

According to Hinkel (1999), culture is undeniably tied to language, they noted that culture is a derivation of the daily experiences of an individual and the setting where they occur, it has to do with the

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

individual beliefs and constructs that build a society. Linguists are aware that second and foreign language learning/acquisition are connected to culture. Language is one of the principal characteristics that differentiate one culture or society from the other and despite different countries speaking the same language like in the case of Hispanic countries, they all have different cultures because each territory differs on its needs, history, weather, food, religion, music, political beliefs and so on.

The participating families in this study started being conformed by two culturally different individuals. Anderson (1994), describes this specific situation as an intercultural marriage that derives into a bicultural family. Biculturalism refers to the condition of people who have a heritage cultural background and a foreign cultural context. This kind of experience is most likely to happen to migrants and their children. These people have experienced different perspectives of reality, know the differences between them, and have consciously or unconsciously shaped their actions and preferences according to the context where they live. For example, the type of music or tv programs chosen has to meet certain criteria according to what they feel better represented with. English television and Spanish television are different, they address different topics and the stories develop in different backgrounds; music is different too, the sounds, lyrics, and genres differ because they talk about different people in different spaces.

The five children involved in this study have been exposed not only to 2 different codes of sounds and words but also to two completely different worlds. However, despite the efforts taken by their parents to show them the variety of places, music, or food they could try being raised in a bicultural and bilingual home there is a major disposition to only focus on the American culture and the prolonged use of the English language. Along with the study and supported by literature it can be inferred that this is the result of the different times of exposure to each language/culture. Since they live in the USA and are surrounded by American content and the English language, it is easier for them to feel more identified and related to it than to a foreign culture.

The next part of the data collection procedure was based on the vocabulary used by each one of the children and pronunciation. Several differences were found in the number of words used, the time

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

when they started saying their first words, and the type of vocabulary used. Moreover, some of the characteristics of pronunciation will be described. Charts and graphics will be used to describe vocabulary development through time for each one of the children.

Kid A: This kid has been exposed for 2 years to a second language, he started being talked to by his dad in Spanish when he was about 4 months old, and he has been talked to in English from birth by his mom. His vocabulary is not large but his comprehension level is really good. Around the age of 7-8 months old, this kid was introduced to the use of baby sign language as an early means to communicate his basic needs. These signs were used for asking for milk, saying he was done, asking for more food, saying please and thank you, or explaining if something hurt. Although the use of the signs was useful for the kid to communicate basic needs it became a problem when he refused to speak even when he knew what to say. For the parents, it was not only clear that the boy knew and recognized words such as “milk” and “Leche” or “mas” and “more” but they also knew he was able to pronounce them; however, he only tried to use the correspondent sign or give up and start crying.

Later, around the age of 10-12 months, the kid started saying real and audible words like “mama”, “papa”, “milk”, “bye”, “yes” and “no” on his own but sometimes without consistency or actual meaning. For example, he was asked yes or no questions and he would answer differently to the same question. After he turned 1 and at least until he was 1 and a half years old, there was not much improvement in the amount of vocabulary or the clarity of his words. In fact, after his 18-month doctor appointment, it was suggested for him to go to visit a speech therapist because his verbal development was behind kids of the same age. Parents thought that this was a bad consequence of the bilingual environment he was living in but when they went to see the doctor, they were told that all children develop differently, and as far as he showed he could hear, repeat and understand what he was being told it was a matter of time until he started to talk more actively. Very few sessions were needed just to make sure there was not a physiological or neural problem with him, suggestions like talking to him all the

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

time, “forcing” him to talk whenever he needed or wanted something, playing games where he had to talk, singing and getting him to meet new people were made to ensure he had to speak.

By 21 months old, his vocabulary had grown from 6-10 words (mix of English and Spanish) to 30-40 words. At this point, it started to be clear his preference to use English over Spanish. Despite having dad and child care provider speak to him in Spanish, he had more exposure to English by talking and staying with his mom and also going to play outside or take lessons with English speakers. To encourage him to also say words in Spanish, his dad made him repeat any word but in Spanish. For example, when he wanted milk and said: “milk, please” his dad told him “Ahora en español” and he answered back: “Leche, please favor.”

Parents pointed out that sometimes when he was told or asked something he would answer in the other language. For example, mom would ask him, in English, what he had eaten and he answered “fresa y sandia” or sometimes his dad asked him, in Spanish, what he did that day and he answered “play golf or play outside.” This event has continued happening very often and in different contexts, parents said that it seemed that he did it when certain word was easier to pronounce in the other language; for example, while learning body parts and telling the name to each one in English, he started saying “manos” when he referred to hands, or “boca” when pointing his mouth. Parents noticed that for him, it was difficult to imitate the English sounds of “h” and “th” so he chose to use the easier words to pronounce.

According to Genesee (1989) and Meisel (1994), the information presented above corresponds to code-mixing and code-switching which are very common traits between early bilingual children. They correspond to the simultaneous use of 2 or more languages within the same conversation. It was represented by the mixing of words of the two different languages within the same utterance, for example:

M: What do you want?

K: Leche, please!

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

and also, in the use of a full sentence or conversation in the opposite language they were talking before or the interlocutor speaks, for example:

D: ¿Qué hiciste hoy?

K: Play outside, eat cheese and go water (referring to going to the lake)

For parents, it has been a bit challenging whether to “correct” their kid when these situations happen or just let him talk as his preference is. This might be caused by the lack of knowledge or information about code-mixing for children and how this is not a bad sign of language development. They commonly used the term “wrong” language when they described how he mixed languages while talking and have opted to make him repeat what he said but in the “right” language. For example, while learning the colors:

D: ¿Qué color es este? (using a green feather)

K: Green

D: ¿En español?

K: Verde

According to Genesee (2001) children under the age of three cannot independently differentiate the two sets of codes they are learning, for them all the words, sounds, and expressions they hear are part of a single language. However, it was amazing to see how this kid has been able to recognize that two words corresponded to a different language but referred to the same thing.

By the age of 24 months, after his little sister was born, parents could notice a huge improvement in his speaking, he had a wider vocabulary length counting an average of 200-250 words from which 60% were English words and 40% were Spanish words. His pronunciation was really good, almost all of the words he said were easily understood, and by this time he did not have a differentiated accent in Spanish that was his second language. Around this age, he has been imitating and repeating everything he hears,

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

and parents can tell he comprehends most of what he hears. During this period, it is more noticeable that he favors English over Spanish and the amount of exposure to English has been prolonged since his mom stayed at home during parental leave while his dad has been less time at home due to a change in his job. Moreover, since his baby sister arrived, there have been daily visits from relatives who speak to him 90% in English and only 10% in Spanish.

Whenever his dad is at home he ensures he talks 100% of the time in Spanish, he teaches him colors, numbers, food, animals, clothing vocabulary using flashcards or simply by showing him stuff in the house. Kid A, recognizes the name of most of the stuff in the house using both languages. When dad gets back home after 2-3 days or sometimes a week, he has the feeling his kid has “forgotten” Spanish because he answers the whole time in English. It took them a few minutes or hours to start using mostly Spanish to talk. He has learned short phrases that he uses very often during the day like:

- May I get down, please?
- Más “x” por favor.
- -Gracias por el “desayuno”, “almuerzo”.
- -Tengo que ir al baño or I have to go pee
- -I am sorry mami!
- My name is “x” and I am 2.
- Can I ...?
- Te amo mucho.

By his two years of age, kid A could only give short answers for questions, generally one or two words in English or just one word in Spanish. However, a few weeks after his birthday he started making up his own conversations and it was frequent to listen to him talking to himself or a screen, usually

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

talking fast, using English and Spanish words together, or simply making noises that did not have a meaning or corresponded to any word he knew. This helped to get him more involved in actual conversations with his parents and caregiver. Two of the phrases parents were using for getting him to talk were: “tell me a story” in English or “cuéntame un cuento” in Spanish to which he answered mostly in English. This was a stage that did not last very long because Kid A started doing a lot of non-stop talking the whole time on his own.

For Kid A, it has been easy to remember and build up a “double” vocabulary, parents have been working closely together to make sure he knows the 2 different ways to call something or express an idea. However, his grammar differs in both languages. It is noticeable that he can express himself better when talking in English; even though he cannot use certain pronouns or verbs, people can understand what he means. For example, he says phrases like: “Me want ice cream” or “pick you up” asking somebody to pick him up. He also had an idea of what the time and day of the week was but could not use expressions to talk about events that happened or were going to happen for example: “I will see you yesterday” or “I had it tomorrow.” When he attempted to talk to his dad and caregiver in Spanish, he used mostly short phrases that he had memorized such as “te amo mucho,” “vamos afuera,” “tengo hambre,” or courtesy phrases. In other cases, he just said words that needed to be connected or that needed some kind of context, for example, “comer” when he felt hungry, “yo golf” to say he wanted to go and play golf, or “bano” to say he needed to go to the bathroom.

By the end of this case study, he was able to say longer phrases usually consisting of 6-10 words, most of them polite forms to ask for something like: “May I have “x”, por favor? He continued mixing up languages in a repetitive way even when he had been corrected, for example: “Gracias por el dinner” or “Go afuera.” In those cases, he was told that he should say “cena” instead because that is the Spanish word for dinner and he repeated the whole phrase. This has seemed to work after several tries and parents did not even need to ask him to say something again he would simply “recognize” the language they were talking into and switch to the “right” word. For example, during dinner time and speaking in Spanish, he

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

requested a “spoon;” soon after he said it he changed the word for “cuchara” or sometimes he was talking in English and said “gracias” he smirked or shook his head and said, “thank you.”

To better represent some of the characteristics of Kid’s A speech and language development there were 2 selected samples, one in English and one in Spanish, where it can be appreciated how he has developed both languages and used them to communicate.

Sample 1 (English) Conversation with mom. Age: 26 Months old

Mom: It's time to leave, get ready buddy!

Kid A: Where going?

Mom: We are going to grandma’s house. Put your shoes and socks on!

Kid A: (Goes to the closet for shoes) Patos green! Need “yuda”

Mom: Do you need HELP? You know how to do it! Sit on the bench and give me your foot.

Kid A: Me can’t. I need jacket. I want a kit kat.

Mom: I have your jacket and you don't need any candy. Hurry up! We are late.

Kid A: I wanna grandma, she have horsy and gives me candy

Mom: I know she does! So put your jacket on and get in the car

Kid A: Go, fast mom, fast highway.

Mom: I won't go fast because I can get a ticket. Say bye to your dad and Toya.

Kid A: Adiós papa, te amo mucho. Bye Toya.

Sample 2 (Spanish) Conversation with dad and caregiver. Age: 28 months old

Dad: ¿A qué quieres jugar hoy?

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Kid A: Golf afuera

Caregiver: Pero no has acabado de comer, termina la fruta y te vas.

Kid A: Almost done!

Dad: Seguro? Si no acabas de comer no podemos ir. ¿Dónde tienes los zapatos?

Kid A: En closet. Aquí!

Caregiver: Ya casi acabas, te falta un pedazo de piña y un poco de pollo.

Kid A: Only pollo. Kiwi was good. pina is icky.

Caregiver: La pina sabe rico, último pedazo, te limpias la boca y nos vamos.

Kid A: Gracias por el yu... muerzo! Gracias por el juice.

Caregiver: ¡De nada!

Dad: Ve al baño, haces pipi y te pones medias

Kid A: Me don't have to ir.

Dad: Entonces siéntate allí, ¿quieres jugar también en la piscina?

Kid A: No, no today! nana. Yo play golf afuera, lota verde y driver (referring to a green ball and the name of one of his golf clubs)

Dad: Bueno, me vas a escuchar afuera y sólo puedes usar el palo de golf en el césped.

Kid A: Bueno.

It is necessary to recognize that as part of the language evolution process, phonological, lexicological, or grammar development take time to master and some are not completely achieved until a mature age. In the case of phonological development, studies suggest that there are sounds like “r,” “s,”

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

“l,” or “th” in English that can be challenging for children to pronounce correctly. Speech therapists have said that just about the age of 5-6 children’s speech gets clearer and easier to understand.

Parents have described that Kid’s A pronunciation has always been good and that they have understood most of the time what he was saying. They said that he did not speak at all before he turned 2 but when he started talking he did it very clearly. It was a few times problematic for them to decipher a word he was saying just because they were not sure if that was a word in the other language they spoke to him. For example, he used to say “yones” for “mayonesa” and his mom, who only understands English, did not know what he meant. When each one of the parents did not recognize a word he was saying they asked each other if they knew the meaning of it, most of the time they were words they were teaching him but sometimes there were made-up words or gibberish without actual meaning.

Regarding pronunciation, parents have said that their kid had issues trying to pronounce the sounds of “r,” “l,” “rr,” and “ll” in both English and Spanish but that it is more noticeable in Spanish. They explained that he has a bit of difficulty saying words that contained the sounds mentioned above. For example, words like “rabbit” or “rojo” sounded like [ˈwæbət] or [ˈjæbət] and [ˈwojo] or [drojo]. The sound of “l” was a bit less difficult to make; in English words starting with “l” like: “lemon, like, Loki, lettuce, etc” did not seem to be any hard to say and were completely easy to understand, but words having this sound in the middle as in “child, clown, Alexander, etc” were hard to pronounce.

Parents said that he said the words without the sound of “l” for example: “[ʃaɪd],” “[kaʊn],” “[.ægˈzændər].” In Spanish, things were a bit different because he pronounced “l” but not in the way a native speaker would (putting the tongue at the top of the roof of his mouth), he pronounced it as the way it sounds in English (just putting the tip of his tongue behind his teeth and usually lowering the jaw). For example, hearing him saying words like “hola” or “pelota” was like hearing a foreign speaker saying them. The characteristics described above correspond to very common phonological patterns called gliding and rhotacism which happen quite frequently between monolingual and bilingual or multilingual children. According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), gliding is one of

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

the processes children go through when they replace a liquid consonant (“l,” “r”) for a liquid (“w” or “j”) as in the case of “rojo” for “wojo” or “red” for “wed.” The association suggests that this process is likely to be eliminated by the age of 6-7. Rhotacism is the difficulty some children or adults have to pronounce the sound of “r” or “rr”. It is also a common pattern for English and Spanish speakers or other languages that have a thrilled r. This is one of the last sounds children master and some adults have never been able to pronounce it correctly. In the particular case of Kid A, it is not possible to determine if there is a bigger issue that would need some kind of professional intervention since he is still very young and is satisfactorily going along with each of the milestones in vocabulary and speech for his age.

Kids B and C:

For analyzing these 2 children's language development data, the researcher chose to unify the information due to the participants being identical twins, living in the same house, and spending the same amount of time with each one of the parents. However, despite the similar conditions they lived in there were some contrasts between them that will be explained later.

Kids B and C, were 4 years and 2 months old by the time the study started. Parents have been monitoring their children's language development through the use of journals because as first-time parents they were interested in documenting each one of the milestones accomplished by their kids. These kids were born in Florida, lived in the Miami area until they were 2 years old, and attended a bilingual immersion daycare program where they were exposed to English and Spanish. It was important for their parents to give their children the opportunity to live in a bilingual household because they believed bilingual people have more chances to succeed in life.

Kids B and C, have been exposed to English and Spanish from birth, they have native and foreign speaker parents of both English and Spanish. The twins' parents decided not to use the OPOL method because they were both fluent in English and Spanish and they also felt they could not give their children the same amount of exposure to each language; moreover, they felt their kids were going to feel more

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

comfortable if they saw their parents speaking both languages too. Parents planned to make Spanish the priority language because they considered that outside the house and a few classes at school or daycare there was not much opportunity for them to practice it. They both agreed that their children were not going to need as much help with English because that was their mother tongue and that it was the majority language they were going to learn and use later in their lives. They also added that it was particularly challenging for them to give their kids the same amount of attention and language exposure because their attention then was divided for two kids.

Both children hit milestones around the same age; however, parents said Kid C was the first to start and then Kid B imitated or copied what his brother did (including mistakes). Their first distinguishable words appeared around the age of 15 months which is a typical or expected age, those words were “mama” and “dada”. Before that, they used to babble and use gibberish to communicate. Parents explained that it seemed they had a “secret” language. In fact, (Lewis & Thompson, 1992) conducted a study where they found out this kind of “twin language” is present amongst 40% of pairs of twins. They explained that this phenomenon is not a real language, it is the result of mimicking and copying the other’s twin babbling and sounds. This pattern usually lasts until the school-age where each kid has developed his/her language skills or started to socialize with more people.

Both children attended bilingual childcare from the time they were 6 months old until they were 2 years old and moved to a different location where only English was spoken. According to the bilingual institution, children were given as much comprehensible and real input in both languages as it was possible. Teachers and workers were fluent in both languages, this was due to the location of the area where almost 70% of the population was Hispanic. Some of the activities provided for them were story-telling, music, games, and daily-life role-play activities. The two kids seemed to enjoy the place and had a hard time leaving the facility. Parents said that their kids did not do a lot of comprehensible talking until they were almost 2 years old but they did not have any problem with comprehension in both languages,

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

they were able to follow commands and basic instructions like bringing something from somewhere, choosing a specific color or toy, finding certain clothes or leaving something in a specific location.

Parents were amazed at how much larger their vocabulary had grown from their second birthday until they were close to being 3 years old. Their children were able to properly describe people, places, or situations, talk about their days, play pretend games and narrate their own stories, watch movies and almost memorize the dialogues, they could answer basic questions about their families, names, jobs, and the place where they lived.

As it was mentioned before with the description of Kid A's case, code-switching was another factor that happened repeatedly with these twins. They would use words in both languages interchangeably during conversations, for example:

1. Dad: ¿cuántos pedazos de mango quieren?

Kid C: five, por favor!

Kid B: me don't quiere mango.

1. Mom: What time is it now?

Kid B: ¡comer time!

Mom: And what about you?

Kid C: Time libro!

There were also cases in which they did not only mix content words within utterances but also mixed some syntactic forms of language, for example?

Dad: ¿Qué es eso?

Kid B: Míos blancos zapatos

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

In this example, it is identifiable the way he is using adjectives in Spanish is similar to the way adjectives are used in English.

Dad: ¿De quién es esto?

Kid C: Es Camila's pelota.

In the last example, kid C is using an English possessive structure to talk in Spanish.

From their first 12 months up to their 2 years, the kids started to be more curious about the world and wanted to explore their surroundings. Their parents always made sure to show them and correctly pronounce the word for any new things they were experiencing, they first did it in Spanish and then in English. For example, on the family's first vacation to the sea and zoo, the kids learned vocabulary about sea life and wild animals. The parents noticed that the language their kids were receiving had to be meaningful in some way so the kids could memorize it better. They tried to have some time at home to “teach” the kids new words but those hours or attempts were not as successful as real-life situations where kids discovered words and new things by themselves.

Before they turned 3 years old, their parents had to change their residence from the southeast coast to the Midwest due to job requirements. This event had an important repercussion in these twins' lives because they lost an important part of community language immersion. The new area where they moved did not have a bilingual daycare option available at the time and the Hispanic community was more reduced. The majority of community language was English and it was difficult to find opportunities outside the home to speak Spanish. Parents then had to make a bigger effort to continue exposing them to Spanish. They both decided that it was going to be the only language spoken at home and that they were going to try and find alternative childcare that offered some Spanish language help.

Around the age of 3, both children had a vocabulary of about 300 words (mix of English and Spanish) and were using 2 and 3-word phrases. Both kids started trying to pronounce words in a particular way, for example, one of them used to say “titty ” instead of kitty, “neyo” for mayonnaise,

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

“salmo” for almonds, “baboon” for balloons. Kid C used to say “boobie” for blueberries, “chicken” instead of kitchen or “kiss” for cheese. Although this is common for children, parents often took several days to figure out what their children were trying to say. The parents could also notice their kids started to develop a Caribbean Spanish accent which they attributed to their dad who had Cuban origin and the daycare workers who were Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Mexican.

When they were 3 and a half years old, parents started to notice that their Spanish vocabulary was not getting any larger and that they preferred to use English with their parents rather than Spanish. Parents were getting discouraged and regretted the idea of moving because they felt they had lost all the progress they had made before. One of the things that called their attention was that the kids started to say: “don't say those words” or “it is wrong” when their parents spoke in Spanish so they asked them why they said it. The response the kids gave was that at school their teacher corrected them and said it was wrong when they spoke in Spanish. Parents discovered then that their children were getting discouraged to use Spanish where the majority were English speakers and went to talk to the teachers and director. They asked them to avoid using the word “wrong” or to tell the kids to stop speaking Spanish because the children were getting the idea that was not right to do and that the only language they are allowed to speak was English. That talk to the teachers worked and the children were again using Spanish to communicate at home. Close to their fourth birthday, these 2 kids had a large vocabulary. Parents estimated their children knew about 600-700 words, some English and some Spanish ones. Their vocabulary included common nouns, verbs, and adverbs. They started creating five- and six-word sentences. They could engage in complex conversations and were very interested in specific topics.

Kid C had a more bubbly and extroverted personality, he liked talking to people and showing off he could speak two languages. He started taking swimming and baseball lessons and enjoyed teaching his peers how to say things in Spanish. He started to be more consistent while speaking a language, he rarely code-switched and knew when and how to address somebody in a specific language. Kid B was more introverted and shier, for him it was difficult to start or follow conversations, and was more passive

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

during conversations. He preferred to use English outside and inside his home, he also spoke faster in English. He did a lot more code-switching.

Some samples of the type of language they used when they were 4 years old were:

1. Kid C: ¡Quiero jugar fuera!

Mom: Ahora no porque está acabando de llover.

Kid C: Amos al charco, tengo rain botas.

Mom: Tienes que?

Kid C: Botas de lluvia y queta (word used for chaqueta).

Mom: No voy a salir a mojarme ahora, vamos en 10 minutos

Kid C: ¿Prometes?

Mom: Si!

Kid C: Gracias mami.

2. Dad: Do you know who is coming today?

Kid B: Auntie Lala

Dad: Yes, what is she going to bring you?

Kid B: some coins and candy.

Dad: Candy maybe but no coins, that is not nice to ask.

Kid B: I'm sorry!

* The transcription of the dialogues and samples of language attempt to be as close to the actual pronunciation as possible.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

After they turned 4 years old, their communication skills were more mature. They used to repeat after their parents even when they were not asked to. Both kids talked to each other a lot mostly during the nights. Parents let them sleep in the same bedroom and they used bedtime to talk about animals, tell stories or just say random words and laugh at each other. At home Kid C was using 70% to 80% of Spanish while Kid B was using about 50% to 60%. Kid B's vocabulary and grammar in Spanish were still a bit weak and he claimed he did not like talking in Spanish because he could not pronounce some words. He said that his best friend spoke only English and he wanted to do the same. Parents then decided to avoid forcing him to speak in Spanish because in the long run that might have caused their kid to hate the language. However, they still read books, listened to music, watched tv in Spanish at home so they continued receiving input even when the production was little.

Due to the global pandemic, the kids and parents were forced to stay at home, they found a Spanish speaker live-in babysitter who helped with some hours of childcare at home while they worked. This situation caused a big impact on the children's life because then they were exposed to Spanish more than 90% of the day. Kid B who used to struggle a lot with Spanish seemed more engaged and comfortable speaking it. He mentioned that he liked Sophia, who was the nanny, to talk to him in Spanish. Their vocabulary grew even more within the last 6 months of being around the Spanish speaker childcare worker. They still code-switched during conversations, this happened mostly while speaking Spanish. This phenomenon is still considered very common for their age and context and parents were not concerned about it. Samples of language used after they turned 4 years old are:

Spanish- Conversation between themselves:

Kid B: Ven, see libro! Los planets.

Kid C: Mio, yo quielo ver. Mami compó para us.

Kid B: Aquí! (Showing his brother where to sit). Compartir para dos.

Kid C: Pasa la page, look! That's the sol grande y mayito. La luna y "trellas".

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Kid B: Mercurio, qui! Terra, upiter, yuruno... mmm... mami, como llama ese?

Mom: Saturno

Kid C: Turno... (while pointing at the drawings) Uno, dos, cuatro, cuatro...

Mom: ¿qué sigue después del cuatro?

Kid C: Ses.

Mom: ¿cual?

Kid B: Cinco

Kid C: Cinco. Otra page.

English Conversation:

Dad: Okay kids, we have to practice our numbers and letters today!

Kid B: a, b, c, d, "aich," "ye," v, z.

Kid C: Noo, is a, b, c, d, e, f, l, m, o, r, v, y, and z.

Kid B: I'll do it "gain"! a, b, c, d, e, f, g, i, j, m, n, p, s, u, v, y, and z.

Dad: You're almost there!

Kid C: me want do my letters, ask me. I know it.

Dad: Okay, come here. Come here! I will write them down and you're going to tell me which one it is. (Then writes the letters b, l, s, q, and x on a whiteboard). Now tell me which letter is this. (Asks Kid B first).

Kid B: b, b!

Dad: Very good, now which letter is this (pointing to the letter "l" and asking Kid C)

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Kid C: It's l, dada.

Kid B: This is s, and this is q.

Kid C: last one x. I did real good.

Kid B: me too.

As reported by the parents, the twins have done well and followed a relatively normal curve regarding pronunciation. In the beginning, around the age of 12 months, the thing they did the most was babbling and making some particular noises that almost sounded like made-up words that only they could understand and reply to each other. This was the phase when parents thought their kids were developing a secret language. Around the age of 15 months, they were able to pronounce the words “mama” and “dada” when they were asked by their parents. They also started pronouncing 2 syllable words like “nene” or “bebe”. Most of these words were the result of constant repetition and attempts with their parents, it rarely came out to be a voluntary wish from the kids. When they were 18 months old they were getting better at calling their parents “mom” or “dad” and also said words like “hambre” pronounced like [amb'e], “milk”, “comida” pronounced like [mida], bye, and hi. Both children pronounced words the same way but Kid C used to talk very quietly so his parents had to ask him again what he had said. The only problem the kids seemed to have was trying to pronounce longer words of 3 or 4 syllables. For example, with the word “hamburguesa” kid B said something like [bubu] and kid C said [bues].

When they turned 2 years old, the children started saying more words and speaking more clearly. They got better at learning polite phrases like: “thanks,” “gracias,” “lo siento,” “por favor,” “please” among others. In the same way, they were able to answer questions with one or two words. Sometimes, the children used their version of some words but the parents knew what they were referring to. For instance, Kid B said “wiwi” for kiwi, or “kichen or chicken” for kitchen, and Kid C said “belly” for blueberry or “cone” for cellphone. The interesting thing with the twins was that they used to make and repeat the same mistakes in pronunciation the other one did. So, the parents first made sure one of them

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

had the right pronunciation so the other one was going to learn the “right” way to pronounce. They usually tried first with kid C, because he was in a way the leader or the one that liked to step up. Kid B was most passive and usually did things at a slower pace.

At this age, they struggled with the “rr” and “y” sounds in Spanish. For instance, Kid B could not pronounce the word “yo” or “ayer” he said [io] or [o] and [ier] or [aer]. Kid C used to replace the sound of “rr” for “j” or “w,” for example in words like “arroz,” he said [woz] or “perro” that sounded like [pejo]. As it was mentioned before in kid a’s description, this is a very common phenomenon to happen with native and foreign speakers of Spanish and it usually does not affect the meaning or sense of a conversation.

Since these kids were older than Kid A at the beginning of the study, more findings were discovered regarding the different patterns of pronunciation. It was easier to identify aspects like developmental errors that are related to the mispronunciation of words for the lack of mature articulation that gets better when kids get older; for example, saying things like [amal] instead of “animal.” Parents struggled in some way in the beginning because there were words and expressions said by their kids, they did not completely understand. However, the more time the parents spent with their kids and listening to their expressions, the better they did at comprehending what they were referring to. Findings showed the kids were not articulating clearly enough to correctly pronounce a 3-syllable word but that they were following the idea and attempting to say the right word. In the same way, the substitution of some consonant sound as in the case of gliding, also described before, where children change one consonant sound for another one. For example, kid B used to say: [wʊk æt ðə waɪt] that meant: “look at the light.” Finally, deletion corresponds to the omission of letters or sounds in a word. For example, Kid C used to say [ˈkɛəp] instead of “ketchup.”

While speaking Spanish, the two children also had some pronunciation mistakes and difficulties that according to research are normal for kids younger than 8 years old. It was the same that happened while developing their English-speaking skills. The lack of maturity and inability to articulate

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

some words could make it difficult for them to produce some sounds and at the same time, it could make it difficult for them to be understood and cause some kind of frustration for children and parents. The children had some omission mistakes where they did not pronounce one or more phonemes of a word. For example, Kid C used to say [‘kane] instead of “carne” or [lota] instead of “pelota” or [platos] instead of “lavaplatos.” There were also substitution mistakes, as it happened in English where one sound was replaced by another one. For example, Kid B used to say [pego] and kid C said [‘pewo] instead of “perro.” As can be noticed here, the sound “rr” was replaced by different consonants.

By age 3 and as they grew older, some of the phonetic mistakes they used to make started to vanish little by little. The twins were able to say 3- or 4-word sentences where most of what they said was understandable not only by the parents or caregiver but also by people who did not see the kids often. It is important to explain this last statement because when children are little and just starting to talk, only parents or people who stay for long periods with them can understand what they are saying. If a stranger or a non-common visitor attempts to start a conversation with a kid under 2 or 3 years old it will probably be hard to understand due to mispronunciation and lack of context.

At the age of 3 and a half years, the twins showed that they favored English over Spanish. Their grammar and pronunciation in English were a lot better than in Spanish. They could form long sentences, answer more complex questions and understand almost any command given in English. For example, they were asked how they liked to go to a fair for the first time.

Kid B said: I loved it, I got in [w]rides, saw goats, and eat cheese curds.

Kid C said: I see goats, ride cars, and had fries.

They still had some trouble using the correct conjugation of some verbs in past tense but people could understand they were talking about a past experience and were properly describing the things they did at the fair. They pronounced words clearly and well-articulated for their age; however, the mispronunciation of the phonemes ‘rr’ and “th” was still present.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

On the other hand, they could answer with one or two words to questions made in Spanish and they attempted to tell short stories or simply communicate needs mainly using content words; for example: -Kid B: “ayer, mamá y me ir parque. Ella got helado and furta”

Kid C: Papi... música... los patos. Favor papi, en your “lar”. Yo siento qui silla.

In the last example, Kid C was asking his dad to give him his phone and play some videos and music on it, he also said he was going to stay sitting in his chair. According to their parents' perspectives and experiences, it was more complicated for the two children to speak Spanish. They usually took longer times and pauses while speaking it, they were slower at pronouncing some sounds or saying full words, they sometimes seemed a bit hesitant about what they were going to say, for example:

Kid B: Yo... Por favor, want kiwi. Yo quiero... en fridge. Some fruta... kiwi o banana. That might be bueno. Yo busca plato.

In this sentence the kid tried to ask for some kiwi or fruit to eat, he still showed some difficulty with the order of the words and the use of code-mixing. Moreover, he constantly used content words only when he was asked to speak in Spanish and used connectors from English. In the same way, he was hesitant and paused to think before speaking.

Kid C: Va... rain. Yo quiero... go... ir... en los puddles. Mis botas son wet. Yo blancos za... sh... patos. Fuera por favor.

Similar to the example above, Kid C made longer pauses

They also showed difficulty conjugating verbs in all of the tenses, especially past tense. In the same way, they used to code-switch more often while they were speaking Spanish than when they spoke English. Nonetheless, they did not have a hard time understanding Spanish, they could follow specific orders, for example, “vayan a poner la ropa sucia en la canasta,” answer any type of questions (even when they did it in English or a mix of Spanish and English) like: - Donde esta mi paraguas? and they answered

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

“in the garage” and they also knew a large amount of vocabulary. Parents felt the children were making progress in both languages and were not worried about any type of language delay or speech issues; however, they felt they needed to do more to reinforce the use of Spanish.

Still, around the age of 3 and a half, the whole family plus the caregiver continuously watched movies in Spanish, read books in Spanish at night, or tried to look for playdates with other children or families who spoke the language. In the same way, the parents wanted their kids to have conversations fully in Spanish, so when they answered with words or phrases in English they were asked to repeat and say it in Spanish the next time. In the beginning, this process was annoying and frustrating for the kids and the parents because of the time and patience it required; kid C was the most stubborn and posed a bigger challenge for the parents. He did not want to repeat what he had said, he threw tantrums when he did not get what he wanted and he was not listening to his parents very well, the parents told him that they could not do what he wanted because they did not understand English. He would walk away and just stay in silence without trying at least to say a word in Spanish. This made the parents upset but they did not force him or yell at him for not wanting to try, they rather tried to address the issue of discipline and behavior before language use. An example of this situation was:

(While teaching the kids animals and the sounds they make)

Mom: (Pointing to a lion) ¿Cómo se llama este animal?

Kid C: That's a lion!

Mom: Muy bien. Ahora, ¿Cómo se dice en español?

Kid C: (starts getting upset) I don't know

Mom: Claro que sabes, el otro día me lo dijiste. Es fácil, empieza con “le”. Intenta.

Kid C: (Shouting) I don't know. I don't want it

Mom: Se dice león. Repite conmigo. Le-on.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Kid C: (Gets up and walks away)

Mom: (a bit mad) Me haces el favor y te sientas aquí, yo no te di permiso de irte porque todavía no acabamos. Estamos aprendiendo los nombres de animales y tú ya sabes cómo decirlos.

Kid C: (Walks back and sits by his mom). Sorry.

Mom: Otra vez... ¿Cómo se llama esto?

Kid C: León.

Mom: Ves que si podías, y ¿cómo hace el león?

Kid C: (Imitates a lion's sound).

On the contrary, Kid B was more open to the possibility of trying, he seemed more interested in practicing with his mom and he usually did not fight her or throw big tantrums. He also seemed more curious overall, he opened books around the house or watched tv and asked questions like: what it? or ¿que eso? He understood the idea of reward and when he was supposed to receive one, he used to call it a “surprise” and asked for one after he spoke in Spanish; as an example:

Mom: Vamos a limpiar la habitación.

Kid B: Amos! I'll have solplesa.

Mom: No te puedo dar sorpresas siempre, pero si me contestas bien te doy tu venom.

Kid B: Yes!

Mom: Me tienes que decir todo en español. entendido?

Kid B: Si, I puede.

Mom: (grabbing some toys in her hands) Donde va esto?

Kid C: En closet, pero ese one va en caja blanca. Mio negros zapatos go bajo cama.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Mom: ¡Muy bien! ¿Me puedes traer la escoba y un trapito? Ya sabes donde están.

Kid C: Si mami, yo sabe dónde.

The mom who spent more time with them and who was a native Spanish speaker thought that giving rewards could be a good way to get their children to be more confident in the use of Spanish; it was not that the children did not know the language it was mostly a matter of will and need. It was evident that the children knew Spanish and that they could understand every word but for them, it was not necessary to speak it because everybody in the surroundings spoke English.

After analyzing the samples of language from kids B and C, the researcher could find some specific characteristics related to pronunciation and grammar. The first finding was the continuous mispronunciation of phoneme “r” in English and Spanish, as it was described before this sound was replaced for different phonemes like [w] or [j], according to Bedsole & Johnson, this phenomenon is normal and children are expected to pronounce it correctly by age 5 or 6. This issue is also common in the Spanish language and children are also expected to correctly pronounce it by preschool age. The second finding was the use of phoneme [θ] or (th) which in this case is present only in English pronunciation. The kids used to pronounce it as a [f] for example in words like think [tiθ] that sounded like [tif], think [θɪŋk] pronounced like [fɪŋk], or birthday [ˈbɜrθˌdeɪ] [ˈbɜrfˌdeɪ]. This sound is one of the most difficult ones for children to master, specialists, say it is only until children turn 8 when they pronounce it correctly. The third finding was the mispronunciation of the sound “ñ” from Spanish. In this case, Kid C had already mastered the use of said phoneme; however, kid B still had problems pronouncing it. For example, in the word “cumpleaños,” kid B said [pumplenos] while kid C said [cuplaños]. According to studies, children learn this sound around age 4, so in this case, parents are not concerned but trying to help their kid with the sound. Finally, symphons like bl, br, pl, fl or tr were difficult to achieve only for Spanish. Although these combinations of consonants are common in both languages, it seemed children had more difficulty in one language. For example, words like broom, black, place, or floor were pronounced correctly since they were 3 years old; however, words like blanco, brazo, plano, or flor were

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

not pronounced completely, they sounded like *bianco*, *blazo*, *pano* or *fior*. In several cases, the sound “r” was replaced by “l” or “i.”

Kid D: This kid is a girl who lives with her mom who is a native Spanish speaker and her dad who only speaks English, but knows a few words and expressions in Spanish. By the time the study started she was 5 years and 4 months old. She attends preschool and has an older sister who is 10 years old. She has been raised bilingual since she was born, her dad talked to her in English while her mom only in Spanish.

Kid D and her sister were both born in Puerto Rico, her mom stayed at home and took care of them the whole time. The kids used to be exposed to Spanish for about 60-70 hours a week. The dad used to travel a lot for work so the exposure to English was a bit limited. The older sister was fluently bilingual, she natively spoke English and Spanish. Kid C started talking around 13 months old, her first word was *mama*. Although she could pronounce one or three words she could recognize several words, her mom asked her to point objects after she named them and kid D could recognize them easily. The words she knew included: *hermana*, *luz*, *mesa*, *mamá*, *gato*, *ventana*, *ventilador*, etc. When her dad was at home he tried to talk to her, read her books, and play music in English, her vocabulary in English also started to grow, she learned words like *sister*, *food*, *mom*, *kitty*, or *fan*. Same as in Spanish, she recognized words even before she could pronounce them.

After turning 2 years old, she already pronounced around 100-200 words (more in Spanish than in English). Her parents described her as an early talker, she spent the whole day playing games and talking to her mom and sister. Most of the vocabulary she knew was about household items, toys, animals or words learned from books. Parents say that her pronunciation was amazing and the way she addressed other people was like if she was older. Parents attributed it to her sister’s influence and the decision parents took of minimizing baby talk. Around 18 months, kid C’s mom established a “learning time”, it was about 2 hours a day to teach her child something new like colors, names of places, names of animals, how to do something, numbers, or any kind of vocabulary. Her mom was a primary school teacher so she

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

used some pedagogic strategies like the use of flashcards, rewards, use of different materials, games, etc.

Kid D had a really good attitude towards learning and never refused to do anything. She used to talk the whole time in Spanish even to her dad, when this happened the dad said “daddy does not know Spanish, so I want you to talk in English like your sister,” then she started to talk in English and talk to him about her day.

At this age she did not have full conversations in one single language, she switched words a lot in between sentences, a sample of this was:

Mom: Ven para acá, te voy a mostrar una cosa

Kid D: Where?

Mom: Estoy aquí en la cocina

Kid D: Hola mami!

Mom: ¡Hola mi niña! ¿Sabes que tengo para ti? te va a gustar.

Kid D: new Legos?

Mom: No, ya tienes muchos de esos

Kid D: I know... new “tetes” (word used to say juguetes)

Mom: Si, por fin llegó la caja que estaba esperando

Kid D: I see... para mi and sisi. Me will share

Mom: Claro que vas a compartir, tengo una muñeca para ti y otra para tu hermana

Kid D: Gracias mami, I very so feliz.

A few months before she turned 3, her parents had to move to the USA. This was a big transition in their lives; the mom had to start working half time, dad was at home for longer periods and the two

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

kids started going to school and daycare. For Kid D, the first 5 months were difficult because there was a big change in her environment, she started attending a place where almost nobody spoke Spanish, she stopped spending the same amount of time with her mom and even the weather was different and got her sick. After that time, kid D started to be more comfortable in the new place, she started to talk more in English than in Spanish, she was more talkative and her vocabulary grew significantly: before turning 4, she already knew 600-700 words in both languages.

Samples of languages in English and Spanish are the following:

English:

Dad: Do you like the new house?

Kid D: Yes, I like outside

Dad: Why? What do you like the most?

Kid D: The trees and el park

Dad: That's nice babe, I like it here too. I miss the sunny days tho

Kid D: Me too, it's very pretty windy here. very windy and cloudy, sometimes rains.

Dad: It is not too bad, you will love the snow

Kid D: Yes, I like

Spanish:

Mom: Hoy nos vamos a cortar el cabello y las uñas

Kid D: I like largo

Mom: Pero está muy largo y no te gusta peinarte

Kid D: I measure it... 26... 5... very largo... 16...

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Mom: ¿Estás midiendo cuánto te quieres cortar?

Kid D: Si mami, I'll do it myself. Tirefras, por favor.

Mom: No te voy a dar las tijeras, es peligroso... Solo las mamás podemos cortar el cabello

Kid D: It's okay. yo entiende. Lo siento

After she turned 4, she was able to keep long and coherent conversations in English and Spanish with her family. Her sister and she used to talk in Spanish the whole time, the older sister was more aware of the environment and understood she needed to practice her Spanish. The mom was always encouraging her children to use Spanish in daily communication at home, the dad seemed also interested in learning with them so they did not have a broken communication and felt motivated too to share the same language. According to him, listening to her family talking in Spanish the whole or majority part of the time helped him to learn more words, improve his pronunciation and improve his listening ability; however, he felt he could not maintain a conversation or even create sentences that made sense. He said, "I have tried to learn with them and I can understand their conversations; however I cannot say I speak Spanish."

Kid D started some Spanish classes as a complement for her language development where she had the opportunity to learn more with another native speaker and with other children. She said she loved going there not only because she learned and did new things but also because she could meet other people besides her family. The classes helped her to work on some basic and normal mistakes children make while talking; for instance, the right way to conjugate some verbs like "ir" or "ser" in the different verb tenses. She was a very fast learner and a very curious one too, her parents commented that she used to ask about the differences in sounds in the way how her mom and dad talked, she understood broadly that English and Spanish were different languages but she could not make a clear differentiation on what words and sounds belonged to each language, for her it was just natural to talk to her mom in the way mom spoke or talk to dad in the way he spoke and could understand. She knew when, how and who to

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

talk to in each language. For instance, on vacation to Puerto Rico, she visited her grandparents and automatically started speaking in Spanish so that they could understand her, in the same way when she met people in the USA she started responding in English. It was rare when she initiated talking in Spanish or English with somebody who did not understand the language so if she realized they could not understand, she apologized and switched to the other language.

The following are two samples of conversations in English and Spanish with her family:

1.

Sister: ¿Sabes dónde está mi bolso?

Kid D: Estaba en la cocina, mami lo puso in the closet.

Sister: Pero yo lo estaba usando, necesito marcadores

Kid D: ¿por qué no lo llevaste a tu bedroom?

Sister: Se me olvido, me estaba cepillando los dientes

Kid D: Mami dijo que eras desorganizada

Sister: ¡Solo fui al baño por un momento!

Kid D: ¿Quieres ir afuera conmigo?

Sister: No, tengo que hacer la homework.

2.

Dad: Who wants to go to the store with me?

Kid D: I wanna go

Dad: Go get ready then, where is your jacket?

Kid D: Mom put it in laundry room

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Dad: Is it dirty or clean?

Kid D: Clean now, mommy cleaned it

Dad: Mom is so nice to you, she helps with your dirty clothes

Kid D: Yes, she is very nice.

Dad: Bring your tablet too, we might have to wait in the car for a little while

Kid D: Better a book! Tablet have not battery

Dad: Okay, can you put your shoes on?

Kid D: Yes daddy, I might need a little bit of help

Dad: You can already do that alone

Kid D: But I need help with laces

When she turned five years old she was ready to start pre-k. Her parents attempted to find a school where she had some Spanish classes or an immersion school, but their options were very limited. She started school already knowing letters and knew how to read single short words in English, she was one of the advanced kids in her class. By this time, she spent most of her day speaking in English, her pronunciation became better, her vocabulary was growing, even more, she used language in a very proper way, she could talk about her emotions, expectations, likes, and dislikes, she has very effective communication with her peers and was an innate leader. Her teachers said she sometimes code-switched between conversations but that it was an unconscious thing and they did not have a problem understanding. For example, saying the numbers, she started counting in English and then a number in Spanish like “one, two, three, four, cinco, seis....” They were told by the parents at the beginning of the year that she might do that daily but it was because they were raising her as a bilingual. They asked them

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

to be patient and avoid using the words “wrong” or “bad” when that happened so that she did not have a negative view of language or thought that speaking Spanish was not tight.

At school, they were very supportive and understanding with her, she usually received extra material in Spanish like books or audiobooks to take home or to use at school during her free time. Six months after starting school, her parents started to realize that her dominant and more used language was English, while speaking Spanish at home she was doing a lot more code-switching. She used phrases like “Tengo que hacer mi homework for tomorrow” or “Que tengo de lunch to eat?.” Her parents did not seem to be concerned, they thought it was a normal stage for her after starting school. They saw their kids could still maintain conversations in Spanish at home, they video called their relatives living in Puerto Rico, read books, and watched Tv in Spanish. One of the anecdotes their mom told is that she loved Mexican telenovelas, so the three of them would watch one at night after eating. Her kids loved it and they learned about a different accent or words just while watching tv.

Regarding grammar and pronunciation, Kid D’s pronunciation was not much different from previous descriptions; however, she did better pronouncing certain sounds or words. According to her parents, she was described as an early talker, she knew several words in both languages before turning 2. Some of the complicated sounds in English were “r,” “th,” or “sh.” For her, those sounds were difficult to make and replaced for a different sound or omitted in a word. For example, the word “arrive” sounded like [alaiv], think [sink], or measure [mejur]. Despite those words sounding like two other actual words in English, “alive” and “sink,” it was not confusing for anybody to understand what she was referring to. In this regard, it was also important to notice that the mom had a Caribbean accent and the girls had a similar accent, so the sound “r” was already pronounced less strongly or vibrantly in both languages.

Her vocal development went just as expected, their parents attribute it to the fact that she spent her first 2 years of life spending almost the entire time with her mom and her sister who helped her to correct early and normal mistakes of grammar and pronunciation. One of the aspects her parents noticed was that she was transferring patterns or structures from one language to the other; for instance, the

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

placement of the adjective + noun form from English became also a rule in Spanish. She said things like: “grande mesa,” “cafe silla” or “amarillo saco.” Her parents could not find the way to explain to her why saying things in that way was not right but they could not use grammar words to explain it because she did not understand those terms, and also, they considered it important for her to be understood and make sense not to have a perfect grammar; instead, they only repeated what she said but in the right order of words. Eventually, she started to make sentences and put words in the right order.

Kid E

At the beginning of the study kid E was 6 years and 10 months old. She was born to a bilingual and bicultural family. She had an older sister who was 9 years old. Both girls have been attending a public primary school near their house. Their parents have been living in the USA since they were very young but the mom came from Colombia and the dad from Spain. Kid E’s main source of childcare has been her maternal grandmother who has helped raise her since she was a newborn. Her parents were bilingual themselves, their knowledge and command of both languages are native levels, they learned it from school and daily use at the place where they lived. They claimed they did not remember how the process was for them. The dad said: “I knew I had to learn so I could go to school and to help my parents who knew little of the language.” The schools usually offered assistance to go over the problems the language barrier could cause but most of it was a natural process. Because of their experiences and knowledge of bilingual development, the parents decided that the method that was going to work best for their children to grow bilingual was the minority language at home (MLAT). Kid E and her sister were now in different conditions, they were growing up in a place where Spanish was the foreign language and the one their parents wanted them to learn. They decided that only Spanish was going to be spoken at home and English elsewhere.

MLAT, as well as OPOL, are methods used to help or increase bilingual exposure for children who are growing up in bilingual environments. Both methods have their pros and cons which will depend on the family’s needs and settings, the two approaches try to provide an equal balance of exposure of the

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

two languages the child is growing up with, Dolean (2021). The MLAT method has worked well for this family, they described how important it was for them to keep their minority language not only from a linguistic view but also from a cultural perspective. They knew no matter how and when their children were going to be exposed to English and learn it because that is the majority language in the place where they lived.

From day one, kid E has been in contact and listening to two languages. Her first word was at 11 months old, it was Mami. From there she gained a lot of vocabulary and became a fluent speaker. By her first birthday, she already knew 4 words (Mami, Papi, mana (Hermana), and Abu (abuela). She has very little to no contact with English speakers besides her parents' friends and their children who came over to her house for playdates. Between 12 and 24 months old, she became more communicative and interested in her surroundings and people. She was very attached to her grandmother and sister; they said that she liked to bring her toys around them and listen to their conversations. She would usually try to repeat all the words and phrases they were saying. She learned their family names, addresses, names of some countries, alphabet, greetings and polite words, numbers from one to 5, and started to memorize some songs like Los pollitos, la vaca Lola or la vaca lechera, etc, in Spanish. She was able to understand and have simple conversations with adults and with other children. When she turned 18 months old, her parents decided she needed to attend daycare occasionally so she started to receive more English input, she attended a facility 5 hours a day 2 or 3 days a week.

A sample of a conversation (extracted from a homemade video) was:

Kid E: Zuzu quiere agua

Grandmother: ¿Cómo se pide?

Kid E: Por favor

Grandmother: Segura quieres agua y no jugo?

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Kid E: Jugo es mejor, gracias

Grandmother: Quieres algo más?

Kid E: No, solo eso abu

Grandmother: Vaya a sentarse al banquito

Kid E: Bueno, Zuzu no va a regar

Grandmother: ¡Eso espero!

Between 2 and 3 years old, she was able to communicate verbally, she asked for things she wanted to play with, food, activities she wanted to try, quiet time, mood changes, or any other thing. One interesting thing about her is the fact she spoke in the third person most of the time, for example, she did not say I want “x” but: “her name” wants...

She was very social, she liked to play with other kids and was good at following rules or instructions. She started to notice the difference between the two languages and started to address each person according to the language they spoke to her. Teachers at daycare told her parents that at the beginning of classes, she wanted to speak in Spanish to the kids but she started talking to them in English a couple of days later. The parents tried to teach her a couple of phrases or words that might be useful while she got used to the new place. The teachers and parents described that her pronunciation was surprising for everybody, she had some trouble pronouncing words that contained syllables like cr, pl, pr, br or bl in English and Spanish, For example, words like broma [bioma], broom [boom], brazo [bazo], sometimes the sound was replaced by another consonant and sometimes it was omitted. As it was explained before with the other cases, those pronunciation patterns are expected for kids of the same age. Specialists agree that if those sounds are not mastered completely during the first five years of life there should be no concern because it is due to vocal maturity.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Between 3 and 4 years old, her family described her as a “talking machine”, she spent most of her time awake talking to somebody or talking to herself, telling stories, or creating dialogues with her toys. They said it was very common for her to wake up in the morning on weekends and see her grabbing her toys telling them what they were going to do during the day, she also read books or sang for them. They started to notice that in between her dialogues she was mixing words of English and Spanish in the same sentences, for example: “Amigos, hoy vamos a la grocery store, mami va a comprar snacks para mi lunch.” Her pronunciation was getting more and more clear, it was very rare on the occasion when she was asked to repeat something because she was not understood. She was still attending a daycare facility, where she continued being exposed to English, at this point she was receiving 50/50 exposure to both languages.

Samples of language production: English:

Kid E: Can you send mami a video of this?

Caregiver: Of course! Show her what you did

Kid E: I drew my family here. See! Mami, papi, abu and nana.

Caregiver: She will love it! Good job!

Kid E: Do you like it too? I can make one for you

Caregiver: That's very nice of you Zu. Do you wanna say bye to mom and see you later?

Kid E: Bye mom, see you later alligator. Love you.

Spanish:

Mom: Que le ibas a decir a tu papi?

Kid E: Que lo quiero mucho y que espero que vuelva pronto

Mom: Que más?

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Kid E: Que quiero una bolsita de palomitas de la tienda

Mom: Yo sabía que solo llamabas por eso

Kid E: También quería mandarle un beso. Chao papi te quiero mucho mucho.

By the time she turned 5, she was enrolled in a pre-K school, she was attending a public school where she had about 25 other classmates from whom the majority spoke English, 3 spoke Spanish or came from a Spanish-speaking background, and other 4 students spoke Hmong. Apparently, the Spanish-speaking children formed a small group to play and work with at school and they spent most of their time together. This aspect was addressed by the teachers and school administrator due to complaints from some teachers and parents because the children were not blending in with the rest of the group, they had rather chosen to “exclude” themselves and had been using Spanish to backtalk to their teachers or bully other classmates. Kid E’s parents talked to her and asked her to join other kids and play with other classmates whenever it was possible; moreover, they told her to address her teachers in English and be mindful of the others remarking that knowing two languages was intended for her to facilitate communication with other people and know about culture and not for mocking others or create bad behavior. After the talk, things seemed to be getting better. Kid E started bringing English-speaking classmates to her house and some of them even demonstrated an innate interest in learning Spanish too.

During summer vacation in 2019, some family members who knew little English came over to stay for two months in the states. During that time, Kid E did not have to attend school or daycare, so she stayed at home and hung out with her extended family. During that time, or at least during the first month, she was the main translator between her relatives and other people; for instance, if they wanted to go out to the grocery store or restaurant, she was the person in charge of making the questions or clarifying confusing information when they did not understand. Kid E did not have a problem understanding most of the conversations the relatives had, but she sometimes asked for clarifications or explanations about slang phrases she did not understand; for example, the Colombian phrase “no dar papaya” was used in a context

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

where they went to Chicago city and they were advised to be careful with their belongings. Kid E, was confused because she knew what all of the words in the phrase were but the whole combination did not make sense for her. She asked about how and why people use it, understood the meaning but the parents have never heard her saying it to somebody else after that. The same happened to other phrases like “Hacer una vaca,” to which she thought there was no possible way for people “to make cows” or “chino/a” when they talked about people who were not from China. The time with her Colombian extended family was useful for her because she could learn new expressions and practice her Spanish 100% of the time. After the relatives went back to Colombia, she asked her parents to go there for Christmas or visit during spring break, she seemed really interested in visiting that place her mother and family continuously talked about.

A transcript of part of the conversation is the following:

Kid E: Mama, ¿por qué no podemos ir en navidad?

Mom: Porque Tita y los demás apenas estuvieron aquí, es mejor que esperemos un tiempo, además tenemos que pedir vacaciones

Kid E: ¿Y el próximo año?, para “spring break”?

Mom: Podemos pensarlo, pero no prometemos nada, viajar con ustedes es muy caro, no tienen pasaportes y además tenemos que buscar quien cuide a los gatos

Kid E: ¿Qué es un pasaporte?, ¿Para qué sirve? ¡Nani puede cuidar a Missy!

Mom: Un pasaporte es un documento, parece un libro chiquito y tiene tu foto y tu información, sirve para que te dejen entrar en otro país. Y no sé, le puedo preguntar, de todas maneras aún hay tiempo.

Kid E: Pero yo quiero ir pronto, quiero ver el café, quiero ver las casitas y comer deliciosas frutas, también quiero ir al parque donde hay café, ese que dijo Nati.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Mom: Ese se llama parque del café. Yo nací muy cerca de ese lugar, y ellos viven en un pueblo cerca.

Kid E: ¿Es muy lejos de aquí?

Mom: Muy, muy lejos

After vacation, she started a new grade at school and she was separated from the group she was used to being with. It was not a big deal for her because she could still see the older classmates during recess and moreover, she liked to have the separation between English and Spanish because she felt like she lived in “two worlds,” and in some way, she felt like it gave her a different status. There was a student in her class who was 8 years old but was placed in first grade because of her language skills and lack of basic knowledge to be promoted. This student had recently moved from Venezuela and needed emotional and academic support. The school did not have the resources or the appropriate personnel to help with language and content; therefore, Kid E voluntarily offered to help her with homework and clarify as much as she could. This was a kind gesture from her side and 4 or 5 months later, the teachers could notice the big difference her help had made.

By 6 years of age, kid E was completely fluent in both languages. She was considered to be a native speaker of both languages and was classified in the BFLA category. For her, using languages interchangeably was not an issue, she very rarely code-switched or mispronounced words. However, most of the efforts made were focused on her speaking and reading and writing in Spanish were her weak abilities. She was just starting to read and write one and two-syllable words in English but was struggling in Spanish. Most of the confusion was with the letters c, s, z, v, and b. Also, diphthongs and triphthongs were lessons she needed to take more than two or three times. The parents found somebody who could professionally teach her and this greatly improved her ability. Sometimes she misplaced e by i because of the similar sound but that stopped a couple of weeks later.

An example of a conversation in English is the following:

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Neighbor: I see you're having fun

Kid E: Yes, I love the pool, and dad taught me to swim

Mom: well... actually, we are still working on that

Kid E: but I can float

Mom: not swim, tho

Neighbor: That will not take too long. You seemed to be good at it

Kid E: Just like a mermaid we saw the other day

Neighbor: That was funny. Where did you see it?

Kid E: In a movie. It was on Netflix

Neighbor: That makes more sense. Did you like it?

Kid E: I loved it; I want to be like her

After turning 7, in 2020, her family decided to take a trip to Colombia in February. They were there for two weeks when the COVID-19 outbreak hit and the airports were closed. They were supposed to stay in that country for 5 weeks; however, due to the emergency, their stay became 5 weeks longer. During that time, During that time, she was trying to stay up to date with classes and homework. However, her main activity was being outdoors and playing with her cousins at the farm where they were staying. She learned new words like “bacano”, “chevere”, “maduro”, “tinto” that she did not know before and she started to acknowledge and love the her mother’s country.

In the end, having a conversation with her, she said that she loves knowing how to talk English and Spanish, that she would like to learn more languages in the future so she can travel to more places around the world and talk to and understand the people who live there. Moreover, she said she would like to work as a translator in the future or find a job where to help people who do not know a language.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This research resulted in different conclusions and aspects to consider for teachers, parents, and caregivers of bilingual and monolingual children. This study started under the idea that people have more possibilities to become bilingual and achieve an excellent command of the second/foreign language when exposed to it from an early age, this idea was supported by descriptions of 5 children who were exposed to a second language from as early as birth and that were considered bilingual before they turned 7 years old. However, this study does not belittle or dismiss the capability of older children and adults to become bilingual and reach a high level of language proficiency when they start learning a language later in their lives.

The study was based on the idea of a Critical Period Hypothesis that claims children's brains are more likely to acquire a language or information organically and naturally. CPH was conceived in the first place under the idea of children acquiring a language before puberty that coincided with the time when lateralization of the brain occurred. For Lenneberg (1967) this lateralization was considered to happen before 14 years old. However, different researchers have created their own time frames like 9,12, 15, 16, 18 (Johnson & New Port,1989; Krashen,1973; Vanhove, 2013) it all depends on the perception of each researcher and the aspect of the language they focused on like grammar or phonetics. As it was said before, the limit age chosen for the selected group was 7 years old, because that was around the time they started primary school and spent plenty of time near their parents or caregivers, who in most cases were the first and main resource of language exposure. In the same way, the parents trusted this age was the best for their kids to learn a second language because they were doing it naturally and with zero inhibitions.

Another main conclusion of the study is the importance and great significance of bilingualism for the pluricultural society we live in and the fact that it has become more and more popular around the whole world due to factors like migration, intermarriages, school and travel opportunities (Grosjean, 1982). There is no consensus about a definition for this term; however, for the nature of this study the

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

definition given by Weinreich (1957) was considered: bilingualism is the capability of using two languages alternatively and fluently. This was one of the hardest steps of the research, it was difficult to evaluate qualitatively if a kid was an authentic and functional bilingual or not if the quantitative factor was not favorable. Some authors have said that every person is bilingual because they know at least one word in a foreign language to which this research profoundly disagrees. Each child who was part of this study showed how language acquisition whether it is monolingual or bilingual takes time and a series of steps that lead to proper and voluntary use of language for communication. The fact that some children or adults can say a few words or sentences in a foreign language does not mean they have the competence in it. Here, it is also important to notice the case of Kid E's dad who is a bilingual himself but who does not have a complete proficiency in Spanish. He learned the language later in his life; therefore pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar were still the ones of a foreign learner; however, he could keep conversations, understand the whole meaning of a text or audio and make his own written compositions with the help of tools like dictionaries.

In this study, children went through a bilingual first language acquisition process which differs from first language acquisition and second language acquisition. The main difference is that first bilingual acquisition refers to the phenomenon of growing up exposed to two (or more) languages simultaneously and not consecutively. In the same way, depending on the context, quality and quantity of the exposure they receive some children develop a weak and dominant language. That is mainly perceived in the amount and frequency of language used but it does not affect the quality of it. Although children can understand both languages they might prefer one over the other or be better at one of them, Müller & Kupisch (2003). In the study, this pattern was observed in Kid A's performance where he was able to understand everything he was said in Spanish but his responses most of the time were in English. One of the possible explanations for this pattern is the "need" of language: for him, it was not necessary to talk in Spanish because his parents understood English and because most of the people he knew were English speakers.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Another important and very determining aspect of the success of raising bilingual children is the caregivers, parents, or teachers' role. It is already known that children learn from what they see or hear, it can be words, behaviors or actions. Parents of bilingual children have to make decisions about the way they want to continue and foster their children's language skills. For most of the parents involved in this research, it was not an easy task. The first thing they had to clarify was if they wanted their children to be bilingual and agree on the method to be used as well as the amount of language each one would speak or everybody was going to speak in a determined situation. As it was mentioned before, not all parents were completely on board about the idea of exposing their children to two languages early, some people still had concerns about the risks or cons of early bilingualism. Some myths like language delay are still persistent and common nowadays, despite there is evidence that second language exposure does not affect children's language development. The myth about language confusion can be "dangerous" and misleading, less informed parents can fall under the impression exposing their kids to an L1 or L2 can affect their normal development (Guiberson, 2013); bilingual children, like the ones in this research, have shown the ability to differentiate the two languages and address appropriately in each depending on the interlocutor or setting. Here, code-mixing also plays a very important role, (Paradis et al, 2000) is a source of concern and is seen as proof of language delay. Code-mixing refers to the occurrence of mixing and using words of two languages within the same speech. However, Petito et al (2001) and Yow et al (2017) assure that code-mixing or code-switching is proof of language competence in both languages. The authors did similar research with children in different group ages and locations and saw that to be able to code-mix or code-switch they had to be proficient in both languages, they also saw that the mixes were made in a "logical" way meaning the words used correspond to the same category, for example, verbs for verbs or adjectives for adjectives. In the research this phenomenon was observed on multiple occasions; the children did not even notice at times when it happened, for them it might have made plenty of sense and since the meaning or idea did not change it did not pose any confusion/ Nevertheless, it changed when the children grew older, for the 5 and 7-year-old participants, it was more noticeable when

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

it happened and they corrected themselves, on the contrary, the younger children were more unaware of the words they were using interchangeably.

Finally, for the parents or interested people in fostering the use of a second language the method chosen for such purpose plays an important role. For most families, the one-person-one language method is easier or more successful; however, it depends on the context of each child and the environment where the family lives. In some scenarios both parents or caregivers do not spend the same amount of time with their children which means there will be an unbalanced language exposure; therefore, unbalanced language acquisition can happen. It can get even more tricky when only one parent or caregiver is the only means of exposure a child has because the kid will have more access to only one of the languages and the need to speak the other one is almost non-existent. So, as in the case of Kid E, other parents choose the Minority Language at Home method where only one language is spoken at home (minority) while the kid receives exposure to the other one from society (majority). I must say that there is no right or wrong method or less or more successful one, it will depend on each child's needs and whatever he/she can receive from the environment and household.

References

- Abello-Contesse, C. (2008) "Age and the Critical Period Hypothesis." *ELT Journal*, vol. 63, no. 2, pp. 170–172
- American academy of arts and sciences. (2015). The state of languages in the US. A statistical portrait. <https://www.amacad.org/sites/default/files/publication/downloads/State-of-Languages-in-US.pdf>
- Anderson, R. (1994). Cultural and linguistic diversity and language impairment in preschool children. *Seminars in Speech and Language*, 15, 120-124.
- Al Zoubi, S. (2018). The Impact of Exposure to English Language on Language Acquisition. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, vol. 5, issue 4, pp 151-162.
- Asher, J., & Garcia, G. (1969). The optimal age to learn a foreign language. *Modern Language Journal*, 38, 334-350.
- Birdsong, D. (1999). *Second language acquisition and the Critical Period Hypothesis*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Bloomfield, L. (1933). "Native-like control of two languages," p.56.
- Bialystok, E. (2001). *Bilingualism in Development: Language, Literacy, and Cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511605963
- Creswell, J. W. (1994). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- De Houwer, A. (2007). Parental language input patterns and children's bilingual use. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 28(3), 411-424. doi:10.1017/S0142716407070221
- De Houwer, A. (2009). *Bilingual First Language Acquisition*. Bristol, Blue Ridge Summit: Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847691507>
- Dolean, D. (2021). Home literacy practices that support language and literacy development in bilingual children: a longitudinal case study. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2021.1943304>

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

- Galles, N. (2010). Bilingual Language Acquisition: Where Does the Difference Lie? *Human Development*, 53(5), 245–255. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26764967>
- Grammont, M. (1902). *Observations sur le langage des enfants*. C. Klincksieck
- Grosjean, F. (1982). *Life with Two Languages: An Introduction to Bilingualism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Grosjean, F. (2010). *Bilingual: Life and reality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Grosjean, F. (2014). Bicultural bilinguals. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 19(5), 572–586. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006914526297>
- Guiberson, M. (2013). Bilingual Myth-Busters Series Language Confusion in Bilingual Children. *Perspectives on Communication Disorders and Sciences in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Populations*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1044/cds20.1.5>
- Haugen, E. (1953). *The Norwegian language in America: A study in bilingual behavior*. Vol. 1: The bilingual community; Vol. II. The American dialects of Norwegian. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hyltenstam, K., & Abrahamsson, N. (2003). Age of onset and ultimate attainment in near-native speakers of Swedish as a second language. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 20(2), 319–340. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0272263112000022>
- Hammersley, M. (2013). *The Myth of Research-Based Policy and Practice*. SAGE Publications, pp 50-63
- Hinkel, E. (1999). *Culture in second language teaching and learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Houston, S. H. (1972). *A Survey of Psycholinguistics (Janua Linguarum. Series Minor)* (Reprint 2018 ed.). De Gruyter Mouton, pp 203-226
- Johnson, J. & Newport, E. (1989). Critical period effects in second language learning: the influence of maturational state on the acquisition of English as a second language. *Cognitive Psychology* 21, 60-99.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications* (6th ed). Addison-Wesley Longman Ltd.
- Kuhl, P. et al. (2003). "Foreign-Language Experience in Infancy: Effects of Short-Term Exposure and Social Interaction on Phonetic Learning." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 100, no. 15, pp. 9096–9101
- Lenneberg, E. (1967). *Biological foundations of language*. New York: Wiley
- Mackey, W. (1962). The description of bilingualism. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics/Revue Canadienne De Linguistique*, 7(2), 40-65. doi:10.1017/S0008413100019393
- Meisel, J. M. (1994). Code-Switching in Young Bilingual Children. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 16(4), 413-439. doi:10.1017/s0272263100013449
- Müller, N., & Kupisch, T. (2003). For the simultaneous acquisition of German and French in (un)balanced bilingual children. *Vox Romanica*, 62, 1-25.
- Nikolov, M. (2009) *The Age Factor and Early Language Learning*. Berlin, Mouton De Gruyter.
- Paradis, J., Nicoladis, E., & Genesee, F. (2000). Early emergence of structural constraints on code-mixing: Evidence from French–English bilingual children. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 3(3), 245-261. doi:10.1017/S1366728900000365
- Patkowski, M S. "Age and Accent in a Second Language: A Reply to James Emil Flege." *Applied Linguistics*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1 Mar. 1990, pp. 73–89, 10.1093/applin/11.1.73.
- Pearson, B. (2008). *Raising a Bilingual Child: A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents*. New York, Living Language.
- Petitto, L., M. Katerelos, B. Levy, K. Gauna, K. Tétreault & V. Ferraro (2001) Bilingual signed and spoken language acquisition from birth: implications for the mechanisms underlying early bilingual language acquisition. *Journal of Child Language*
- Ronjat, J. (1913). *Le développement du langage observé chez un enfant bilingue*. Paris: Edouard Champion.
- Siegler, R. et al., (2005). *How Children Develop* (Second ed.). Worth Publishers.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

- Singleton, D. & Ryan L. (2004). *Language Acquisition: The Age Factor*. Clevedon; Buffalo, Multilingual Matters, p. 30,59.
- Steiner, N., & Hayes, S. (2008). *7 Steps to Raising a Bilingual Child* (Special ed.). AMACOM.
- Stake, R. (2008). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (pp. 119–149). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Vanhove, J. (2013) The Critical Period Hypothesis in Second Language Acquisition: A Statistical Critique and a Reanalysis. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0069172>
- Weinreich, U. (1957). Functional Aspects of Indian Bilingualism. *WORD*, 13(2), 203–233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00437956.1957.11659634>
- Weinreich, U. (1968) *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*. The Hague: Mouton
- Yow, W., Tan, J., Flynn, S. (2017). Code-switching as a marker of linguistic competence in bilingual children. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Appendix A

Questions asked during the first step of research to find the possible participants

- A. Do you have any kid(s) who is/are bilingual?
- B. Do you have any personal experience with bilingualism?
- C. Did your children receive early second/foreign language exposure? If so, what were the sources?
- D. Did that exposure begin before your kid(s) was/were 7 years-old?
- E. Would you like to participate in a case study research project for educational purposes?
- F. Do you have time availability to conduct some interviews, either in person or virtual?
- G. Would you let your kid participate in observation sessions in order to analyze and describe their language(s) proficiency?
- H. Would you be willing to share your kid(s) media content, (audio and/or video), in order to gather more authentic information for the study? Note: this information will be kept confidential and its use is limited to the researcher.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Appendix B

Informed Consent Sent to the Chosen Participants

Date

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am a student from Universidad de Nariño (Colombia). I am conducting a research project on early bilingual second language acquisition.

The study consists of the description and possible consequences of early second language exposure in the development of language skills for kids under the age of 7. The project will be explained in terms that you and your child can understand, and your child will participate only if he or she is willing to do so. Only I will have access to information from your child. At the conclusion of the study a summary of group results will be made available to all interested parents. Parents or legal guardians will have an available downloadable copy for their use.

Participation in this study is voluntary. No payment or bonification will be given. Even if you give your permission for your child to participate, your child is free to refuse to participate. If your child agrees to participate, he or she is free to end participation at any time.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Confidentiality will be maintained by not using proper names and not giving any personal information; moreover, the use of this information will be strictly used for this research process and be deleted after it is presented.

Audio- or videotaped or digitally recorded information, will be used only by the researcher and will be erased or destroyed after.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Should you have any questions or desire further information, please call me or email me at 7152400137 and dvmv55@gmail.com.

Sincerely, Dayana Victoria Mafla

Please indicate whether or not you wish to allow your child to participate in this project by checking one of the statements below, signing your name and state how the parent is to return the letter.

_____ I grant permission for my child to participate in the early bilingual second language acquisition project.

_____ I do not grant permission for my child to participate in the early bilingual second language acquisition project.

Signature of Parent/Guardian Printed Parent/Guardian Name

Printed Name of Child Date

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Appendix C

Survey questions for initial interviews with parents

1. What is your background? Were you also raised bilingual?
2. Could you tell me more about your kid(s), age, activities, hobbies, personality or specific details about his/her development?
3. Does your kid have any type of health condition that could affect his cognitive development?
4. What was the main reason why you chose to raise your kid(s) bilingual?
5. What is the main difficulty you have found along the process?
6. What are the benefits you have found of raising your kid(s) as bilinguals?
7. What is your main expectation and how long do you think it will take to reach that goal?
8. Which of your current or past circumstances have contributed positively to your kid(s) language needs?
9. Which of your current or past circumstances have impacted negatively your kid(s) language needs?
10. Did you, at any point, seek any kind of expert support (for example, teachers, doctors, psychologists, or therapists) to ensure your kid(s) learned both languages?
11. What kind of method (if any) or resources have you used to help your kids with their language performance or needs?
12. How have you ensured your children have enough exposure to both languages?
13. Do you consider your kid is already bilingual and why?
14. Did you choose any specific method or route to ensure equal exposure to both languages?
15. Did you have any concern before or during the process, for example, language delay or loss of identity?
16. What are your expectations about your kid(s) attitudes or behaviors regarding language use?

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

17. What other people are supporting you along this process? And how?
18. What is your view of “failure” and “success” when it comes to raising a bilingual kid?
19. Are you keeping a journal, diary, portfolio or some sort of way to keep track of your kid(s) progress? If so, how often do you add information to it?
20. How many hours of meaningful exposure is your kid getting a week? What kind of exposure is it? If it’s not enough, how can you increase that number?
21. Besides speaking and listening, are you fostering reading or writing in the minority language?
22. In which way do you promote ties to the minority language? Is there family or culture involved?

The questions stated before were general questions to start the interview and fitted the 4 families involved and their children; however, along the conversation there were other specific questions that only worked for every specific case and that is why they were not noted in the main list.

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Appendix D

Rubric to Detail Information During the Observation Stage

Date:	
Kid(s) age:	
Time of start:	
Number of People present:	
Place:	
Subject:	
Main language used: Minor language used:	
Important notes or details:	
End time:	
Total time spent:	

There were also audio-visual elements considered for the observation stage. The same rubric was followed with the exception of date, start time and end time because some videos were recorded before the beginning of the study and there was not a specific date; time of start and end time and the total time was the total length of the video or audio (usually less than 10 minutes).

Appendix E

Sample Questions for Interviews With Children

English

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you ?
3. Where do you go to school?
4. Do you have any siblings ?
5. What is your favorite subject at school ? or Do you go to school (depending on the age)?
6. What do you like to do on weekends?
7. Do you like to watch movies? What is your favorite one? and what is it about?
8. Can you tell me what you did or are going to do today?
9. What did you do this past weekend?
10. Where did you go on vacation last time? Can you tell me what you did there?
11. Can you speak Spanish? Who else speaks this language at home?
12. What is the best part about speaking two languages?
13. Do you know the difference between English and Spanish?
14. What would you like to be when you are older?

Spanish:

1. ¿Como estas hoy?
2. ¿Qué hiciste esta última semana?
3. ¿Cómo te fue en la escuela?
4. ¿Qué te gusta hacer en el verano?
5. ¿Hay algún lugar al que quisieras y por qué?
6. ¿Sabes leer y escribir en inglés y español?
7. ¿Cuál es tu comida favorita? sabes cómo se prepara?
8. ¿Te gusta más la música en inglés o español?

CASE STUDY ON EARLY SECOND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

9. ¿Qué idioma te gusta más?
10. ¿Cuál es tu animal favorito y por qué?
11. ¿puedes entender todo lo que tus papas te dicen?
12. ¿Si pudieras pedir tres deseos cuáles serían?
13. ¿Qué es algo que no te gusta?
14. ¿sabes cuál es la diferencia entre inglés y español?
15. ¿crees que es bueno o malo saber dos idiomas y por qué?