The bilingual child: Early development and language contact. By Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press. 2007. Pp. xvi, 295. Hardback $85.00. Paperback $29.99 [To order, visit *www.cambridge.org*]

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Language acquisition of all types has been at the forefront of many recent theories of the emergence of pidgin and creole (P/C) languages and other bilingual varieties. Bilingual language acquisition in contact studies is key since languages in contact clearly affect each other through the imposition or transfer of forms (via lexical borrowing) and features (via grammatical borrowing and convergence). Creole studies that focus on the roles of superstrate and/or substrate languages typically look for evidence of this interaction, but identifying the processes by which languages interact have heretofore relied mostly on the individual researcher's intuitions and knowledge of ingredient languages. For instance, in previous studies of relexification, researchers have surmised that the structure of the original, native language(s) spoken by African-origin slaves sufficiently accounts for the characteristics of Haitian Creole. However, some argue that the role of superstrate varieties cannot be ignored (owing to the significant role of lexicon in the development of syntax), and others propose that language universals (of one sort or another) are responsible for most, if not all characteristics of creole varieties. There has been no shortage of discussion of the various views.

Enter the role of language acquisition as an observable process capable of shedding light on the interaction of languages inside an individual speaker's head. It might be prudent at this juncture, however, to point out that some historical approaches show that P/C varieties result from second/subsequent language acquisition (SLA) by adults (e.g. Singler 1993). The interaction of languages in SLA seems to be transparent, with transfer of native-language characteristics relatively easy to track. One reason for this, of course, is that languages are acquired consecutively, one after the other, and the role of a native language — or L1 (which apparently correlates with the concept of substrate) — is clearly defined. But, even in this scenario, the influence of a native language typically decreases proportionately as proficiency in the L2 (which correlates with superstrate) increases. The role of social conditions is also evident in many cases.

The authors, ostensibly in search of how languages influence each other in situations of long-term, intimate contact, focus on *bilingual* first language

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acquisition (BFLA). One subtle difference is that bilingual acquisition is not consecutive. Instead, it is simultaneous; in essence, two native languages are acquired as first languages. Yet, according to Yip & Matthews (henceforth Y&M), the two languages being acquired are no less distinguishable from each other. The goal of the meticulously documented case studies is to shed light on bilingual development, mechanisms of transfer at the individual level, and how particular features may seep into the community.

Several chapters are edited versions of papers previously presented or published, giving the impression that they are autonomous, independent pieces knit into a cohesive whole. Chapter 1 ('Introduction') lays the groundwork for study of Cantonese-English bilingual development. It asks how and why grammar develops in bilingual children differently from that of monolinguals, and what this says about language contact phenomena, e.g. substrate influence and contact-induced grammaticalization (convergence). Chapter 2 is an overview of the authors' theoretical framework. They conclude that SLA and BFLA are not contrary, but complementary, forming a continuum of sorts based on a continuous gradation of age at the onset of (bilingual) acquisition. The authors note that the problem of two target languages for acquisition appears to make bilingual acquisition more challenging for the child; the results, therefore, are that much more amazing. However, uneven development (delays in the acquisition of one language) requires explanation.

Chapter 3 is an overview of methodology. Y&M rely on a series of longitudinal studies of six children supplemented by home diaries along with extensive corpora of monolingual acquisition from CHILDES and numerous others, e.g. that of Tomasello & Stahl. Theoretically, their approach seems to be eclectic, grounded in the 'complementarit' of generative and typological approaches. Whether one agrees or not, their analyses are transparent enough for those familiar with these viewpoints (though one might claim that the book itself would benefit from work linking learnability with complexity, e.g. Pienemann 1998, 2000). Y&M gauge language dominance by comparing mean length of utterance (MLU) in each language. They acknowledge the difficulty in comparing languages of contrasting morphological types, but minimize this by comparing subjects acquiring the same pair of languages. They note that children mix more English words into their Cantonese than the reverse, reflecting patterns of usage in their environment. Y&M conclude that such uneven behavior is not an indication of language dominance in societies where code-mixing is the norm.

The next three chapters focus on grammatical patterns: Wh-movement (Chapter 4), null objects of transitive verbs (Chapter 5), and the development of relative clauses (Chapter 6). Regarding Wh-movement, Y&M conclude that occurrences of Wh-words *in situ* provide clear cases of syntactic transfer from Cantonese.

There is also a clear contrast between Cantonese-dominant and English-dominant children. Similar patterns are found in Singapore Colloquial English (SCE) and Chinese Pidgin English (CPE) (pp. 125–126). The persistence of null objects in the bilinguals' English also appears to be motivated by transfer from Cantonese. This occurs more frequently and over longer periods with bilingual learners than with their monolingual peers, more so among Cantonese-dominant children. This raises the issue of *unlearning* null objects (permitted in Cantonese, as well as SCE) when acquiring English. Concerning relative clauses, prenominal relatives appear to evidence transfer from Cantonese. From a typological perspective, prenominal relative clauses are dispreferred on typological grounds, though Sinitic languages show this property. Postnominals, in contrast, trigger resumptive pronouns in subject position, which do not occur in Cantonese. But they do occur with monolingual English speakers, suggesting a strategy universally available to the language learner.

Chapters 7 and 8 deal more specifically with language contact. In Chapter 7, Y&M claim that Cantonese has certain domains that are vulnerable to the influence of English. The first is [V PP] versus [PP V] order in certain Cantonese locatives. Bilingual children, irrespective of language dominance, favor the former — the English pattern. Second, they produce "give" dative constructions that also occur with monolingual English speakers. Third is the placement of verb particles, where the English pattern of movement shows up in the bilinguals' Cantonese, which typically requires that similar particles occur adjacent to the verb. Taken together with the previous examples, these phenomena show that cross-linguistic influence can be found in both directions in the same children, though it appears to be asymmetrical with Cantonese-dominant children. Accordingly, the interaction of languages provides a possible route for convergence.

Chapter 8 covers contact-induced grammaticalization. Citing Mufwene 2001, Y&M suggest that the features to which the bilingual children are exposed constitute a feature pool for their developing language. The children even create strategies by emulating a construction in one of their languages and applying it to the other (e.g. in passives). This links bilingual acquisition to features available throughout the community. Children who are exposed to monolingual input from native speakers of a putative standard grow out of this sort of language mixing. The authors emphasize (rightly so) that where social situations differ significantly and corrective input is unavailable, development can be quite different.

In their concluding Chapter 9, an interesting conclusion pertains to the well-known controversy of whether a bilingual child has one unitary underlying grammatical system in the early stages of bilingual acquisition, or two separate systems, one for each language. The copious data demonstrate that two languages develop independently, though there is considerable mutual influence. The children

showed patterns of development unlike their monolingual counterparts. The influence of a dominant language may suggest directionality, but even relatively limited influence of the weaker language shows that two systems are at work. Even in cases of the clear dominance of one language, the influence of the weaker language is not completely nullified. For this reason alone, this book may interest researchers in BFLA. This lends considerable support to Grosjean's (1989) oft-cited dictum that 'The bilingual is not two monolinguals in one person'.

As one possible criticism, this book focuses on a specific type of bilingual child. It does not necessarily speak to conventionalization of forms and structures in terms of social processes. So, it seems open to similar complaints as those given Schumann's early work (and the well-known case of Alberto) that has forever linked SLA and pidginization in the minds of acquisition specialists (e.g. Schumann 1978). The social circumstances under which the subjects of the study live influence the nature of the input in their respective target languages. The effects of schooling and stress on literacy (e.g. Timmy as honored 'poet' of King George School) stand out. Without question, these conditions are far from those that slaves and other laborers endured where 'input' may have been little more than commands or instructions. In P/C varieties, the emerging language is typically unintelligible to speakers of either substrate or superstrate.

The detailed analysis of the children's speech offers much for discussion. Numerous P/C varieties are discussed (e.g. Baba Malay, Bislama, Chinese Pidgin English, Haitian Creole, Hawaiian Creole English, Mauritian Creole, and Sranan Tongo). No doubt, specialists in these languages will want to read the authors' observations. Y&M make the case for a plausible link between two disparate areas of research, language acquisition and language contact, especially, given the similarities between their data and varieties such as SCE and CPE.

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