Norbert Francis. 2012. *Bilingual competence and bilingual proficiency in child development.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Pp. xvi + 394, US $55 (hardcover).

Reviewed by John W. Schwieter, *Wilfrid Laurier University*

Bilingualism is becoming increasingly important every day, a reality that is reflected in the fact that the majority of the world's population speaks more than one language. Although some people decide to learn (or may be required to take in school) a non-native language later in life, many are fortunate enough to be brought up in a bilingual environment from birth where they may develop native competence in more than one language. The simultaneous development of two language systems and the competencies that work together to formulate these systems present a unique situation for research in bilingualism. In *Bilingual competence and bilingual proficiency in child development*, Norbert Francis takes this one step further by exploring some of the specific complexities that arise in bilingual literacy (when children use two languages for school learning tasks such as reading and writing). Also explored in the book are sociolinguistic issues, where Francis draws upon an ongoing study of bilingualism among youth in an indigenous language speaking community in Mexico. The inclusion and intersection of the socio- and cognitive approaches is one of the many strengths of this book.

To immediately resolve some past inconsistencies in the field, Francis defines and differentiates competence and proficiency, two variables that have been fuzzily defined, or even used interchangeably in previous work on bilingualism. The author refers to bilingual *competence* as the cognitive systems or knowledge structures that underlie bilingual *proficiency*. Bilingual proficiency is defined here as the ability to apply such competence, in one or both languages, for expression and comprehension. Using this distinction, Francis' goal in his book is to investigate the competencies that underpin bilingual proficiency and how these competencies dynamically interact in the mind to help overcome linguistic challenges faced by bilingual children when performing tasks such as reading and writing at school.

Chapter 1 introduces two main threads that run throughout the book. The first is a theoretical exploration of aspects of bilingualism such as modularity, the poverty-of-stimulus problem, and how competence and proficiency differ from one another. A second thread consists of discussions on findings from a longitudinal study of literacy issues among bilingual children in a Nahuatl–Spanish speaking community in Mexico. Francis effectively paints a picture of how this unique bilingual community, and in particular how modularity and a componential view of bilingual proficiency, can provide insightful perspectives on bilingual literacy problems.

Chapter 2 continues along the lines of the introductory chapter by discussing the broader topic of bilingualism in schools. The chapter lays important groundwork for the rest of the book by looking at bilingual education policy globally and by drawing attention to the fact that this important research area could eventually lead to a better consensus regarding effective pedagogies, a notion to which Francis returns at the end of the book.

In chapter 3, Francis presents the study of academic language abilities in Nahuatl and Spanish among these bilingual children in Mexico. He does so by making

some modifications to Cummins' (2000) Common Underlying Proficiency model. The findings of the study in Mexico allow for a more explicit version which makes a strong case for a componential approach to bilingual proficiency. Of particular note is that, for Francis, the subcomponents of language proficiency are not language-bound and thus require their own domain.

Chapters 4 and 5 go beyond the confines of the Mexican project by drawing on in-depth analyses from componential and modular approaches. In these two chapters, Francis moves away from the study in Mexico, although he returns to it again later in the book. Based on these analyses and the findings from the study in Mexico, at the end of chapter 5 Francis develops a compelling bilingual version of Jackendoff's (1997) Tripartite Parallel Architecture.

Chapter 6 continues to draw on previous work by discussing pertinent issues in bilingual development, namely the critical period, the extent to which there is access to universal grammar, and language attrition.

Francis suggests in chapter 7 that academic language proficiency depends on two dimensions of abilities: secondary discourse ability and metalinguistic awareness. Through concrete examples and insightful discussions, Francis brings the reader's attention back to the competence–performance distinction but also fosters in his reader an appreciation for the distinction between these two dimensions.

In chapters 8 and 9, Francis returns to the study in Mexico by further investigating issues of self-reflection and self-correction. Here, he focuses on orthographic, grammatical, and discourse-level reflection in light of the discussions from the proceeding chapters and how they relate to the competence–performance distinction. The specific question on which Francis chooses to focus in these two chapters is metalinguistic in nature in that it explores self-reflection on language forms. In particular, Francis explores how bilingual children react to being asked to shift their attention to orthographic, grammatical, and discourse-level patterns in their own writing (chapter 8) and reading (chapter 9).

Chapter 10, the final chapter, provides concluding remarks on the issues raised throughout the book. Notable in this chapter is Francis' argument that in order to move the field of bilingualism forward researchers must first analyze the components of bilingual ability. The author maintains that an understanding of these components has the potential to steer the field of bilingualism in a more productive direction, a claim which is substantiated by Francis' longitudinal study presented throughout the book.

Francis' presentation of the bilingual version of Jackendoff's (1997) Tripartite Parallel Architecture is an excellent start to explaining bilingual children's abilities and how these abilities are assessed in school. Furthermore, the modified model has the potential to encourage and refine effective teaching pedagogies that more effectively address literacy skills and language learning. All in all, *Bilingual competence and bilingual proficiency in child development* situates itself in the field uniquely not only by investigating relevant issues in bilingualism, literacy, and indigenous language and culture, but by doing so through a cognitive lens which allows the author to link together important theoretical notions such as the competence–proficiency

distinction, metalinguistic awareness, modularity, and the poverty-of-stimulus problem with a profound examination of empirical data.

REFERENCES

Cummins, Jim. 2000. *Language, power, and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire.* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
Jackendoff, Ray. 1997. *The architecture of the language faculty.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Jessica Coon. 2013. *Aspects of split ergativity.* In the series *Oxford studies in comparative syntax.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. xii + 276. US $39.95 (softcover).

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This book presents a structure-based analysis of split ergativity and offers a compelling account of why aspectual splits in many unrelated languages follow a consistent pattern (i.e., with nonergative forms found in nonperfective aspects and ergative patterns retained in perfective aspects). Coon's central claim is that ergative splits do not arise from splits in mechanism(s) of case assignment, but rather from splits in clause structure. Nonergative patterns are seen in nonperfective (progressive and imperfective) aspects because these aspects typically employ a complex, locative-based structure not found in perfective constructions. The split in case marking is reflective of how this extra structure essentially 'severs' the subject from the lexical stem. The book consists of seven chapters and is split into two parts: the first part focuses on the Mayan language Chol, and the second proposes a general theory of split ergativity.

In part one (chapters 2–4), Coon presents an in-depth analysis of predication, complementation, and argument structure in Chol and explores how an aspect-based split ergative pattern arises from these structural phenomena. Chol exhibits a split alignment in nonperfective aspects and an ergative alignment in perfective aspect. Coon argues that this is due to the fact that nonperfective aspects involve a complex biclausal structure in which the aspect marker functions as an intransitive matrix verb, whereas perfective aspect is monoclausal.

Chapter 2 provides a background to Chol and the Mayan language family. It gives an overview of Mayan morphosyntax with a particular focus on Chol stem morphology and case marking. Generally speaking, lexical roots in Mayan are not classified as one part of speech, but may surface as nouns, verbs, or adjectives depending upon the syntactic configuration which they enter into. Coon discusses two major stem categories: complementing (those which take complements) and complementless (those which do not). Complementing stems (transitive, passive, and unaccusative) surface as verbs, while complementless stems (unergative and antipassive) surface as nominals which require a light verb (*cha'l*) to predicate. Case alignment is reflected in predicate morphology, with Set A (ergative and genitive) morphemes marking external arguments and Set B (absolutive) morphemes marking internal arguments. This chapter introduces the Chol Predication Requirement