

## REVIEWS

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SARAH SHIN, *Developing in two languages: Korean children in America*.  
Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2005. Pp. 194. ISBN 1-85-  
359747-3, 1-85-359746-5.

This book provides an excellent account of the language situation of Korean immigrant parents and their children in the US, lays out important issues in bilingualism studies and makes recommendations about bilingual education.

The type of bilingualism that occurs in most Korean immigrant families in the US is ‘successive bilingual acquisition’, where children first acquire Korean (L1), the native language of the parents, at home, and begin to learn English (L2) as they go to school between the ages of 3 and 5 (preschool and kindergarten). In this context, both linguistic and socio-linguistic issues about learning two languages arise: (1) What is the nature of the interaction between L1 and L2 in terms of the grammar acquisition? (2) How does one maintain the home language, particularly when the dominant society considers it as a minor language? and (3) Are there linguistic and sociolinguistic benefits for maintaining and improving L1 while acquiring L2?

To answer these questions, the author assesses the bilingual ability in Korean-American children in relation to their code-switching (i.e. use of both L1 and L2, and switching between them in conversation) and the acquisition of morphology, as well as the relationship between bilingualism and the society (e.g. parental and school support for bilingualism).

A central claim of the author is that speaking two languages contributes to the richness of the linguistic repertoire with which bilingual children can express themselves. Furthermore, the structures of L1 (Korean) and L2 (English) have mutual influences, and contrary to beliefs by many education policy makers that L1 acquisition negatively affects L2 acquisition, the acquisition of L1 and its use in the classroom help children learn the grammar of L2 as well as the content of the class. These claims are supported by analyses of naturalistic and experimental data. The database comes from several sources: spontaneous speech data recorded during interactions of 12 first-grade Korean-American children in a New York public school, experimental data on plural marking in English and Korean from these children and survey data from 250 Korean parents of school-age children in America.

The chapters are organized as follows: Chapter 1 discusses common myths concerning being a bilingual and lays out important issues in

bilingualism – in particular those related to code-switching and maintenance and loss of the first language. One common myth is that learning L2 while still developing L1 at home confuses children, particularly in their acquisition of L2 – that is, that the underdeveloped native language INTERFERES WITH and HINDERS the second language acquisition. In this view, code-switching is viewed as a sign of being deficient in both languages. According to this view, then, it is better to learn only one language (the dominant language of the society, i.e. English in this case) in both home and school. In this book, the author argues to the contrary: the use of L1 (both at home and in instructional contexts) HELPS children develop a conceptual and linguistic proficiency that is strongly related to the development of literacy in L2.

In Chapter 2, the author provides an overview of the economic and social circumstances and a historical account of Korean-American immigration. A characteristic feature of Korean immigrant families in the US is that many come to the US primarily for the education of their children. They work hard (usually within the Korean immigrant community) so that their children speak fluent English and succeed academically in the US. However, the parents themselves have little time to learn English. Many of them, in fact, speak limited English even when they have been in the US for a long time. This leads to some disruption (in some cases, serious disruption) in communication and family relations, particularly as children become fluent in English and lose interest in maintaining Korean. Some parents switch to speaking English (often motivated by poor advice from therapists or educators) to children, but since their English is limited, their communication with their children does not improve. In this book, the author argues that speaking L1 in the home and mastering it are helpful not only for learning L2 but also in maintaining a good parent–child relationship.

With this social and historical background of immigration of Korean families, Chapters 3 to 6 report the author's own research findings. Chapter 3 describes the research methods, and Chapters 4 through 6 report the results of the analyses. Chapter 4 provides functional analyses, mostly qualitative, of code-switching, illustrating different types of code-switching with examples – e.g. participant-related and discourse-related. Participant-related code-switching occurs when the child switches to the language that the addressee prefers to use, and discourse-related code-switching occurs when the child switches to the language that he/she is more comfortable with for a given topic of discourse or that expresses better what he/she wants to say. Code-switching thus promotes solidarity with the addressee and gives children the tools to express themselves fully. Code-switching, therefore, is a communicative strategy available to bilingual speakers, one that goes beyond those available to monolinguals.

Chapter 5 reports on the acquisition of grammatical morphemes in spontaneous speech and in their use in responses to experimental elicitation of plural marking in English and Korean. The author argues that both L1 and L2 influence each other in bilingual acquisition: the structure of Korean influences the course of development of grammatical morphemes in English. For example, because plural marking is optional in Korean, the age of acquisition of the English plural by these children is much later than in the case of monolingual English-speaking children. However, L2 also influences the L1 grammar, particularly in the area of word order. These children use English SVO order for Korean, which is an SOV language.

Chapter 6 reports a survey study of 250 Korean-American families living in big cities in the US. In this study, the author shows pervasive parental emphasis on education and parental desire to see children acquire fluent and unaccented English. Such a desire by parents contributes greatly to the overall shift to English in the Korean-American children. Even though Korean parents would like their children to be fluent in both languages, they realize that this is not easy to attain, and they choose English as the language to encourage for the children's future. This tendency is often reinforced by a belief by teachers and parents that bilingualism is a cause of children's language problems. Professionals (teachers, doctors, speech therapists) who are uninformed of the positive effects of bilingualism often advise parents to stop speaking the native language to children at home so as not to confuse them with input from two languages. The author again emphasizes the advantages and value of maintaining L1 in learning the L2 grammar and the content of the subject matter taught in class.

In Chapter 7, the author explains the importance of educating parents on the facts and myths of bilingualism and provides practical recommendations for successful inter-generational transmission of the mother tongue. It also discusses the ways in which minority languages can be integrated into regular school programs and how communities and institutions can support their maintenance.

Overall, the book does an excellent job in laying out important sociolinguistic issues concerning bilingualism in Korean-American society in the US, and in arguing that the bilingualism of linguistic minority children is a resource to be cultivated and not a problem to be overcome. Through surveys and interviews, the book explains comprehensively and accurately the situations controlling the dynamics between second generation Korean-American bilinguals and predominantly monolingual Korean parents. The sociolinguistic analysis of the bilingual situation in Korean-American families is a strong component of the book and it is important for an understanding of the bilingual issues in Korean-American families in the

US. However, the linguistic analyses are mainly qualitative, and I would have liked to see more quantitative analyses. For example, the relative frequencies of different types of code-switching (e.g. participant-related vs. discourse-related code-switching) in children's interactions would provide more meaningful data for educators and researchers. Also, a more detailed and quantitative account of how L2 influences the L1 grammar would have strengthened the author's argument for a bi-directional influence between L1 and L2 in bilingual development.

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ADELE GOLDBERG, *Constructions at work: The nature of generalization in language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. 280. ISBN 0-19-9-268517 and 0-19-9-268525 (pbk).

Adele Goldberg's 2006 book continues some of the topics of her 1995 book on constructions and argument structure. The most important extension of her work since 1995 is the development of a child language and experimental component which explores the way input influences the acquisition of argument structure by the child. While she draws on work in construction theory generally, her focus is primarily on the treatment of argument structure in a constructionist approach.

The subtitle reflects the stated goal of the present book: 'to investigate the nature of generalization in language: both in adults' knowledge of language and in the child's learning of language' (p. 3). The importance of this goal cannot be overestimated. While the book itself only opens and sets the stage for such an investigation, it is my view that this is exactly what linguists should have been doing all along – studying the nature of generalizations that real speakers make and trying to establish how children come to these generalizations from the specific material in the input. In this way, then, *Constructions at Work* sets an important agenda for linguistic and psycholinguistic study. At the same time, some caution must be exercised: the validity of the methods used and the strength of the argumentation offered is somewhat uneven, as we shall see below.

As a general reference work on constructionist approaches to language, the book is valuable in offering a very readable introduction to constructions, the arguments in favor of describing grammar directly in terms of form-function units, the arguments for constructions over derivations from an underlying structure (Chapter 2) and the nature of a usage-based