THE POSSIBILITIES OF ELECTIVE BILINGUALISM IN BILIGUAL FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION:

RAISING BILINGUAL CHILDREN IN MONOLINGUAL CONTEXTS

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RESUMEN EN ESPAÑOL DEL TRABAJO.

"The possibilities of elective bilingualism in Bilingual First Language Acquisition: raising bilingual children in monolingual contexts" es un trabajo de fin de Máster del Máster en Lingüística Inglesa Aplicada de la UNED.

Se trata de un estudio de caso, con un solo informante, que tiene por objetivo determinar las posibilidades y limitaciones de tratar de criar a un/a niño/a bilingüe en un contexto de monolingüismo, mediante el uso de bilingüismo electivo en combinación con la estrategia Un Padre / Un Idioma, es decir, cada uno de los padres utiliza un idioma diferente con su hijo/a. Uno de los padres utiliza una lengua que no es su lengua materna (L1), es decir, una L2 sobre la que tiene un aceptable nivel de dominio. Como objetivo adicional, el autor pretende extraer conclusiones de su experiencia en la aplicación de este método con su hija para poder ofrecer consejos a otros padres que opten por intentar este sistema con su/s hijo/s.

Los resultados del estudio de caso son, en general, positivos, y se confirma la hipótesis de trabajo, según la cual se puede obtener buenos resultados en cuanto al desarrollo bilingüe (en las habilidades orales) de un niño en contextos monolingües, siempre que haya una adecuada exposición a la L2, empleando este método. Se tiene en cuenta, para ello, diversos factores lingüísticos en ambas lenguas. En la parte negativa, el estudio de caso finaliza cuando la hija del autor cumple 3 años y 5 meses, está yendo al colegio (Preescolar) y comienza a establecer amistades con sus compañeros del colegio, dando las primeras muestras de una clara preferencia por la lengua mayoritaria (español) en detrimento de la lengua minoritaria (inglés) empleada por su padre para su desarrollo bilingüe.

Este trabajo deja, por tanto, abierta la puerta hacia futuras investigaciones en la materia que recojan su testigo y traten de determinar si la estrategia de bilingüismo electivo, en combinación con Un Padre / Un Idioma puede por sí solo conseguir que, en un contexto monolingüe, un niño acabe siendo un adolescente bilingüe o no (incluyendo las habilidades escritas), y qué estrategias o métodos de apoyo adicionales pueden ser apropiados para fomentar un desarrollo bilingüe a partir del punto en el que el / la niño/a comienza a establecer amistades que utilizan de manera exclusiva el idioma de la comunidad.

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1. TITLE.

THE POSSIBILITIES OF ELECTIVE BILINGUALISM IN BILINGUAL FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: RAISING BILINGUAL CHILDREN IN MONOLINGUAL CONTEXTS.

2. ABSTRACT.

"Elective bilingualism", in broad terms, is defined as a characteristic of individuals who choose to learn a new language, but in more specific terms (when it is synonym to "artificial bilingualism" and to "non-native bilingualism"), it refers to the linguistic choice of people who opt to speak what is a foreign language for them in a country where this language is not the community language. Combined with the OPOL (One Parent One Language) strategy, with both parents having the same mother language (L1) and at least one of them being proficient in a second language (L2), it offers families the possibility of rearing a bilingual child in monolingual contexts, provided the aforementioned condition of one of the parents being proficient in an L2 is met. A minimum amount of exposure to the L2 is also necessary.

This field is not completely new, albeit it is one with scarce literature in terms of works of Linguistics[1]. The reason for this is that the interest in bilingual education typically focuses on the academic environment, i.e., in the classroom, where most professionals of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) develop their activities. This is only natural, as linguists teach a language to earn a living and that is their main concern; but there is one important aspect to take into account about language teachers: apart from their professional lives, they have got a life of their own, and may have children. There is no reason why these linguists could not aim at exercising their professional knowledge at home for the benefit of their children.

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[1] Bilingual Children: guidance for the family (George Saunders. Multilingual Matters. 1984), is a seminal work in the field and one of the few existing linguistic studies in elective bilingualism to this day. I will elaborate on the Saunders case further in this project.

Given the inherent advantages to children's education and careers that could stem from elective bilingualism, it is worth dedicating a linguistic study to explore its possibilities and limits. Saunders' book has but initiated a voyage into the unknown and there seems to be a whole world of possibilities regarding simultaneous, artificial, Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA).

This project also aims at determining whether elective bilingualism, in combination with the OPOL strategy, has got inherent limitations and should therefore follow a specific approach, and what practices and techniques may achieve better results when using this strategy to bring up a bilingual child.

3. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

3.1. INTRODUCTION.

Bilingualism and bilingual education are fields of relatively new concern. Before the first half of the 20th century, very little attention was paid to a phenomenon which, although extant since the appearance of the first human civilizations in the Neolithic, was not so common. It was the world before worldwide transportation, worldwide communications and the worldwide web. Except for those societies which regularly employed two languages (usually, but not always, those with a colonial background, with the language of the "foreign" - or hegemonic - power being the language of trade and economy, and the vernacular language being the popular one), and with the very notable exception of border areas, most human communities have traditionally been monolingual, and cultural and linguistic blends have been relatively uncommon.

With only a handful of exceptions - most notably, the works by Ronjat (1913) and Leopold (1939) - the first studies on bilingual education began to appear in the 1950s and 1960s, coinciding with a new interest in Linguistics and the appearance of new disciplines in this field, such as Psycholinguistics and Sociolinguistics, and also with new audio and video recording techniques provided by new technologies.

This was also the period in which technological advances were beginning to change the world forever: public transportation by plane would bring together all the cultures and languages of the world. It was also the time were analogic electronics saw light for the first time, paving the way for digital electronics to show up in the late 1970s, which in turn would give way to the computer revolution in which we are currently immersed.

In recent years, there has been a growing concern over bilingual education - and especially regarding ESL (English as a Second Language) - in general, and in European countries where English is not the first language (L1), in particular. Two factors have contributed decisively to this interest: the first is the phenomenon of globalization, and the second the rise of English to a status as the world's Lingua Franca, both events originating in the second half of the 20th century, both ongoing, and neither of them likely to become reversible in a near future.

Globalization is a by-product of the revolution in transportation and communications we are currently experiencing. Worldwide communications and transportation have managed to intertwine cultures and languages, on a global scale. Before 1930, long distance communications were possible with a limited number of assets and available to a few only. Hence, different languages and human cultures kept separated of each other by distance, with very limited interaction. Communication exchanges between people from different linguistic backgrounds were scarce. That is precisely the opposite situation to the current day's state of affairs.

Today, we make weekend trips abroad for leisure and we trade all around our planet with instant communications. Social relationships among people from different cultures are on the rise, sometimes producing marriages between two people with a different mother tongue. Globalization implies an increasing contact between all the different human cultures and languages, and multilingualism will clearly be the norm in the following decades.

The other of the two main factors behind this concern for the English language in Europe's classrooms is the current status of English as the world's common language

for trade and commercial transaction: English is the world's Lingua Franca. It is the language of tourism and science as well. It is the language any two people with different language backgrounds use for communicative purposes. English is the 21st century's equivalent to ancient and Medieval Latin in Europe or early-medieval Arabic in the Middle East, and every parent wants their children ready for the near future. This naturally translates into an increasing interest in bilingual education in European countries where languages other than English are spoken.

Bilingualism as a phenomenon can be observed from two different points of view: it can be seen as an individual's status, and what it means to a particular person the fact that they are fluent in two or more languages (called multilingualism), and it can also be seen as something a particular social group possess or uses. Baker calls this the "individual vs societal bilingualism distinction" (Baker, 2011, p. 2). This research project focuses on the first type of bilingualism, and especially, on the possibilities of bilingual acquisition in monolingual societies.

The question this work will strive to answer is whether it is possible to achieve a certain degree of simultaneous[2] childhood bilingualism or Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA) in monolingual countries / societies, and, more specifically, with English being the L2, in countries where English is currently not an L1, through the use of "**elective bilingualism**", also known as "artificial", and as non-native" bilingualism (Pearson 2008, p. 177), in combination with the One Parent One Language (OPOL) strategy.

Elective bilingualism in broad terms is defined by Valdés (cited at Baker, 2011, p. 4) as: "A characteristic of individuals who choose to learn a language, for example in the classroom", but in more specific terms (when it is synonym to "artificial bilingualism" and to "non-native bilingualism"), which are exactly the terms chosen for this research project, elective bilingualism refers to the linguistic case of people who "choose to speak what is a foreign language for him or her in a country where this language is not the community language" (Pearson 2008, p. 177). Elective bilingualism is a tool

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[2] I offer a definition of simultaneous, versus consecutive or sequential bilingualism at page 12.

available to parents to enable them to raise a bilingual child in monolingual societies with only one community language, provided at least one of the parents is proficient in a second language (L2).

3.2.   SCOPE OF THIS RESEARCH PROJECT.

The aim of this project is to determine to what extent it is possible to achieve simultaneous bilingualism within a non-bilingual social environment, and specifically what degree of competence it is possible to achieve in the non-dominant language (which in this work will be English) by using elective bilingualism, in countries / societies where there is one and only one dominant first language (monolingual contexts), and therefore the input of non-dominant language to the child is limited. This is the case of many countries in Europe, and, specifically, in most areas of the country in which this case study has taken place, Spain.

Many studies on infant bilingualism focus on a situation commonly found in countries with a high rate of immigration: a nuclear family moves to a country with a different community language and they have children which they raise at home using the language of their society of origin, up until the point when children start attending Primary School and they begin to set social networks and receive education in the language of their new society. These are typically known as "Minority Language at Home" case studies (Pearson 2008, p. 185). These works typically concentrate on parental behaviour in terms of subtractive or additive bilingualism.

 We have "[…] an **additive** bilingual situation when the addition of a second language and culture is unlikely to replace or displace the first language and culture […]", and "[…] when the second language and culture are acquired …] with pressure to replace or demote the first language, a **subtractive** form of bilingualism may occur" (Baker, 2011, pp. 71-72). Additive bilingualism may occur when the nuclear family temporarily moves to another country for a few years, and parents keep their language of origin at home in their relationships between them and with their children. These, when attending their schools and establishing social networks with their peers, will be able to learn a new language without losing their knowledge of their language of origin. Subtractive bilingualism is typical of an immigrant situation consisting of a

nuclear family moving to a country with a different L1, where parents feel afraid of their child(ren) not being able to integrate and progressively abandon their original language and culture.

Hitherto, few studies work with the following settings, which I intend to use as the working principles of the current research on BFLA. These are the settings that adjust to elective bilingualism in combination with the OPOL strategy, and to which I will refer to as the ***Set Conditions (SC)***, for the purposes of this research project:

- The nuclear family lives in a monolingual society, with an L1 different from English (monolingual context).

- Both parents have been brought up monolingually.

- At least one of the child's parents is a proficient BES (Bilingual English Speaker (as defined in Jenkins, 2000, p. 9)).

This investigation will be mainly based on the review of different works in Linguistics and, more specifically, in BFLA, and its analysis when applied to a case study. It is therefore chiefly theoretical and qualitative in nature. To support the inferences extracted from the analysis of written documents on the subject, I intend to use evidence from my three and half-year old daughter, Helena, who so far has been raised in a monolingual environment with a proficient BES parent (myself) using English on a regular basis in everyday communication with her. The method of inferring theoretical implications from the analysis of theoretical documents applied to a case study is not revolutionary (for an example of this, see Deuchar and Quay, 2000), but in the case of elective bilingualism it can –hopefully- shed light upon its possibilities to promote simultaneous bilingual acquisition.

A case study "is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case" (Dörnyei 2007, p. 151) and I have chosen this method for this study because it is the most appropriate method with the available means at my disposition, namely observation of my daughter Helena and document archives. In particular, I consider an instrumental case study – that which has the intention of providing "insight into a wider issue while

the actual case is of secondary interest" (Dörnyei 2007, p. 152) - particularly useful to be able to shed light on the possibilities of elective bilingualism to provide the base for a potentially bilingual adult.

The use of a single-case study to provide insight into theoretical grounds, ambitious as it may seem, is by no means a method to be cast aside. Eisenhardt (1989) presents the use of research with both single and multiple case studies in theory building, stating strengths and weaknesses for each of them. The selection of a specific case "focuses efforts on theoretically useful cases – i.e., those that replicate or extend theory by filling conceptual categories" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 533).

Platt, quoted in Deuchar and Quay, 2000, p. 2, also considers that "there seems [to be] no reason to except case studies from the normal assumption that one can reasonably make generalizations from what one knows already until information inconsistent with this becomes available".

When my daughter was born in 2015, my wife and I decided that we would try and raise her bilingually in English and Spanish. That is when my interest in Bilingual First Language Acquisition rose, and I started reading on the matter (at that time I was already undertaking my MA in Applied English Linguistics for which this is the End of MA dissertation). I soon realized that the enterprise I was about to start had got a name, elective bilingualism (in its narrow meaning (when it is synonym to "artificial bilingualism" and to "non-native bilingualism")), but not so much literature behind it. It is a field with many questions still to answer, questions I asked myself at that time and whose answer could not find: Does it always work out? Only occasionally? What can be done to raise its possibilities of success?

The main motivation behind this work is to try to ascertain to what extent it is possible to raise a bilingual child by proficient BES parents and to try and establish a set of handy practices which could be used by other parents and, additionally, establish a starting point for future studies on the matter to be carried out.

3.3.   BILINGUALISM: DEFINITION AND TYPES.

The first hurdle in the way of this research project comes from the difficulty of establishing what bilingualism is and when a concept such as Bilingual First Language Acquisition is achieved. In my quest for a definition of "Bilingualism" and "Childhood Bilingualism" I have mainly used the following references: Chacón 2015, Lightbown & Spada 2013, De Houwer 2009, and Baker 2011.

Bilingualism is an elusive term. In Chacón's words (Chacón 2015, p. 107):

> "Both the notion of the bilingual speaker and the concept of bilingualism are rather fuzzy and have often been misconceived. The notion of the bilingual speaker has traditionally been idealized in the same way as other concepts that have not been adequately defined, in spite of being fundamental in applied theoretical linguistics".

It is next to impossible to define exactly what a bilingual person is. I remember what an American friend of mine told me a long time ago, when I said to him that I did not considered myself (at that time) to be bilingual: "you understand me, I understand you when you speak English; to me, you are bilingual". That could perfectly be one of many possible definitions of bilingualism; not the strictest of definitions in linguistic terms, though. In this sense, a definition of bilingualism based on the practical use of languages, and not so much in fluency or linguistic criteria, would be this one by Grosjean (cited at Baker 2011, p. 4): "bilinguals are those who use two or more languages (or dialects) in their everyday lives".

Oral production and reception are just two of the four basic linguistic skills, the other two being written production and reception. Writing and reading are an important part of the ability to use a language, so it seems just logical that these skills should also be considered into any definition of bilingualism. Baker elaborates on this (Baker, 2011, p. 7) stating that these four basic skills can be furthered subdivided (for example, speaking may include fluency, pronunciation, pragmatic use, etc., etc.), which may give a hint on the complexity of the problem of defining bilingualism in purely linguistic terms. "It is too simplistic to place people into a monolingual or a bilingual group. We need to ask what language competences are being used for classification" (Bialystok, cited at Baker, 2011, p. 142).

Many other features could be taken into account as well when considering potential characteristics of bilingualism, such as, for example, whether we accept bilingualism in terms of communicative efficiency (as my American acquaintance did) or, on the other hand, we consider linguistic aspects of different kinds (lexical, morphosyntactic, or phonological knowledge, etc.). Any and all of these facets could be taken into account in a definition of "bilingual person".

Chacón (Chacón, 2015, p. 107) reflects on the phenomenon of individual bilingualism ("an individual has some knowledge of two or more languages") as inherently intertwined with Societal Bilingualism (this is also discussed in Baker, 2011, pp. 2-3) and proposes four big questions on bilingualism:

a) To what extent does the bilingual speaker need to be proficient in both languages so that s/he can qualify as bilingual?
b) Does a bilingual speaker need to show equal proficiency in both languages?
c) Does the bilingual proficiency of the language entail a spoken or written command of both languages?
d) What language components should be considered as criteria for assigning the label of "bilingual": vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax, fluency, etc.?

What we can infer from the above big questions is that, were we able to define bilingualism, the problem would still stand as to the degree of proficiency needed in the two languages; bilingualism would still not be an absolute state. We cannot define a person simply as bilingual or not. There is no black or white linguistic state of affairs whereby a person can speak / write / understand / read two languages, or cannot. There are multiple shades of grey in between a monolingual person with no knowledge at all, whatsoever, of any language other than the one she learnt from her parents, and a person with complete fluency, proficient linguistic mastery, and cultural knowledge of two different languages - if this were to be a definition of bilingualism, which, as stated previously, is not so straightforward.

Another very important thing to take into account is context, i.e., the specific situation in which one or other language is used; context can determine, to a great extent, the choice of language in bilingual people: most of these use one of their languages when speaking to some people and a different language when speaking to other people, and / or use one language at a determined place or time, and a different one at another.

Combinations of the previous contextual situations are literally endless, hence the importance attached to context by many scholars of bilingualism (notably, British linguist Li Wei).

To sum up all of the above, when trying to define bilingualism there is simply no putting a mark in this continuum and saying: "here, from this point on, a person is bilingual".
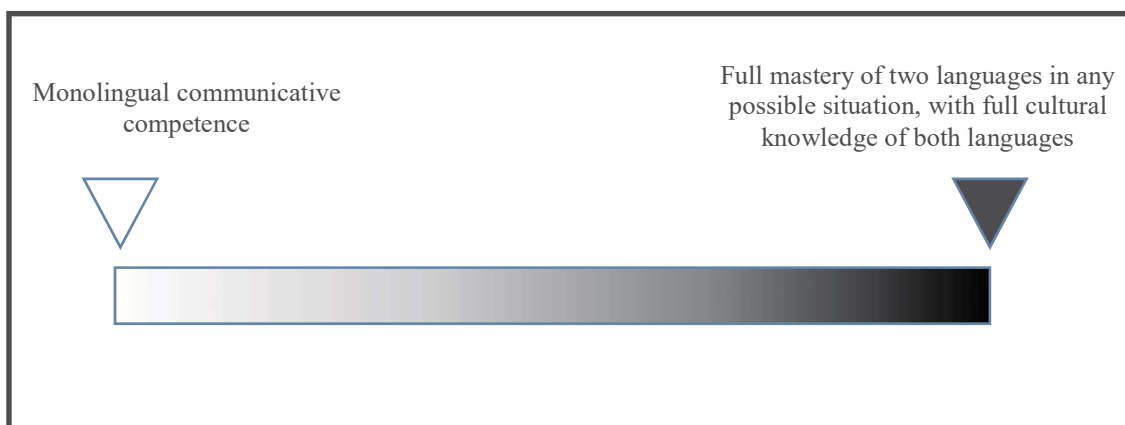
Figure 1. The monolingualism – bilingualism continuum.

Having highlighted this important caveat about the impossibility of defining bilingualism in clear, unequivocal terms, I will now move on to review what types of bilingualism are possible. My goal here is to establish preliminary concepts before applying them to the analysis of the case study that is the object of this research project, and thus I will strive to be deliberately schematic.

The first concept I would like to introduce is that of balanced bilingualism, which, quite self-explanatorily refers to the state of a person who masters, or is fluent in, two languages on equal terms. This concept is a referential one, for bilinguals (or multilinguals) use their different languages in different social contexts and with different people, which means that they do not use either of their languages in every situation. Typically, bilinguals tend to have a favourite language in each of their socializing situations. When this language is the one used in most social, educational and / or professional situations, it will be the majority language. A bilingual's majority language tends to be his / her dominant language, i.e. he/she tends to be

more comfortable / proficient using this language in most situations. "**Rarely are bilinguals equally fluent in all situations in both their languages**" (Baker, 2014, p. 39).

I consider the above concepts (balanced bilingualism, majority / minority language, dominant language) of the utmost importance as concerns the case study in this research project. Clearly, my daughter is being raised in a bilingual environment with a majority language (Spanish) and a minority language (English). This fact makes it just reasonable to expect a dominant language bilingualism situation in the best of cases.

Finally, I will try to explain an important difference in types of bilingualism in terms of what is relevant to this dissertation: in elective bilingualism applied to BFLA we are dealing with infant bilingualism, as opposed to adolescent and adult bilingualism, and more specifically, we are studying simultaneous infant or childhood bilingualism, as opposed to consecutive childhood bilingualism. In other words, we are taking into consideration the possibility of rearing a child with full capability to use two languages from the very beginning of their education. A clear explanation of all the above concepts can be found in Chacón, 2015, pp. 108-109. From his discussion of the topic, I consider worth citing here the following (Chacón, 2015, p. 109): "Childhood bilingualism […] takes place at the same time as the child's cognitive development".

For the purpose of this project, I will take De Houwer's definition of Child Bilingualism (De Houwer, 2009, p. 2): "Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA) is the development of language in young children who hear two languages spoken to them from birth".

3.3.1.   The importance of age.

Age plays a very important role in language acquisition. How exactly early acquisition influences second language development is not straightforward. Late acquisition is usually more efficient, as grown-up children and adults can make use of their developed cognitive skills and metalinguistic awareness to learn a second language at a faster pace. However, babies and toddlers seem to learn languages in an almost effortless fashion, provided enough input is available to them and evidence shows that they may be "better language learners" than adults, despite their initial lack of metalinguistic awareness (Pearson, 2008, pp. 7-8, pp. 79-81, p. 99, and p. 105. De Houwer, 2009, p. 4 and p. 20. Baker, 2011, pp. 94-95).

Based on the age at which a second (or subsequent) language is learned, we can define different types of bilingualism, which, it must be remembered, is an elusive term: it can be achieved either from birth, or by means of acquiring one language first, and then another. The first case is usually referred to as simultaneous bilingualism, or Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA). The second case, which is more typical of a situation of immigrant parents, is termed consecutive or sequential bilingualism. A very accurate definition of both of these concepts is found in Pearson 2008, p. 316: "Sequential bilingual (versus simultaneous bilingual): One who learns one language first and then another, either a childhood bilingual or a late bilingual, as opposed to someone who learns two languages simultaneously from birth."

I consider this concept important because this current project, based on a single case study of elective bilingualism, refers only to simultaneous bilingualism. I do not intend to imply, in any way, that a certain degree of sequential bilingualism could not be achieved in similar conditions to the SC; I only state that what I am studying here is BFLA.

It is possible that acquiring two languages simultaneously may not to be equivalent to acquiring one language plus acquiring another one, and that will be one of the areas open to research in this project. Simultaneous bilingualism seems

to imply a unique language development in which a child is learning two different systems of lexis and morphosyntax at the same time. These two systems may have more or less things in common, but all languages in the world share certain features (for example, all languages have got nouns, to refer to objects in the world around us, and verbs, to define actions). Is it possible that when a child acquires two languages at the same time, they may be acquiring those common features in a synergetic fashion, allowing a symbiotic development of two languages that benefit from each other's growth?

3.4.   LITERATURE ANALYSIS.

For the theoretical frame on which this project is based, I have selected a few works of well-known authors in the field of bilingualism. I have analysed their observations on infant bilingualism and, from them, I have extracted a few expected results for the case study in this research project. This literature is deemed to contain all of the elements that are needed to establish the theoretical frame on which to determine to what extent infant bilingualism is plausible, how profitable it may be in terms of cognitive development, and how best to proceed towards its achievement.

This dissertation verses on the case study of Helena, the author´s daughter who is in the process of being brought up as a simultaneous bilingual in English and Spanish, and about the possibilities of success of such a process using elective bilingualism rearing techniques. These are clearly determined by the fact that bilingualism is intended within a monolingual context and, therefore, with one clear dominant language (Spanish, in this case) that renders Bilingual First Language Acquisition possible only in terms of a majority language (Spanish, in this case) and a minority language (English, in this case).

Before plunging into the case study in itself, I consider important to state here the main features of the subject inferred from a close review of the studied literature. These will hopefully serve as an introduction to the matter of child / infant bilingualism.

3.4.1.   Parental discourse strategies.

The first concept which I consider worth noting before the analysis of my case study is that of parental discourse strategies. These are defined by De Houwer as follows (De Houwer, 2009, p. 134): "Conversational patterns that express the speaker's wishes and expectations regarding language choice". In other words, parental discourse strategies are different possible approaches that parents can take in order to make their children use a determined language more or less. De Houwer classifies them in an increasing scale from most monolingual to most bilingual (De Houwer, 2009, pp. 134-135):

> **Minimal Grasp Strategy**. In response to a child utterance in Language Alpha, the parent uses Language A to ask the child to clarify the Alpha utterance. […]
>
> **Expressed Guess Strategy**. In response to a child utterance in Language Alpha, the parent uses a question in Language A to translate what they thought the child intended to say. […]
>
> **Repetition**. In response to a child utterance in Language Alpha, the parent repeats the child utterance in language A. […]
>
> **Move On Strategy**. When the child produces a mixed utterance or an utterance in Language Alpha, the parent […] continues talking in Language A. […]
>
> **Language Switch**. When the child produces a mixed utterance or an utterance in Language Alpha, the parent switches to Language Alpha or a mixed utterance and does not stick to Language A.

I am introducing the concept of discourse strategies because these have a clear importance in those situations of intended BFLA when parents may come across possible subtractive bilingualism, or when the scenario is one of a clear dominant language and, therefore, there is a risk of not achieving bilingualism because of insufficient input in the minority language. I consider this to be the case of the SC and the case study of this project.

3.4.2.   A study with similar features.

Examples of elective bilingualism are not very common among studies on the subject, most of which analyse situations where either each of the parents is a native speaker of two different languages, or else the two parents are native speakers of one language and live in a society where their language is not the community language (an immigrant family situation). Examples abound of this kind of studies, especially from scholars who specialize in immigrant situations of parents bringing up their children bilingually, with their L1s as their children's minority language (for two examples of this, see Case Studies 9 and 10 in Pearson 2008, pp. 186, 187, 188, 189).

Uncommon as it may be, the case study in this project is not unique. A very representative example of previous work in the field is that portrayed by Pearson under the epigraph "Elective" Bilingualism with OPOL (Pearson, 2008, pp. 177, 178, 179, 180). It describes an Australian family, the Saunders, whose father chose to speak German to their children, a language in which he was proficient, but which was not his L1. I would like to highlight the features of this case because I consider it to be very similar to my case study.

George Saunders was a teacher of German in Australia who had learnt German as an L2 and decided to bring up his children bilingually in English and German. His wife understood German. They were both native Australians, brought up monolingually in English, and lived in a monolingual English society: Australia.

Saunders proceeded in the same manner as if he had been a native speaker of German. When he did not know a word or a sentence applicable to a precise situation, he used a paraphrase until he could look up in a dictionary or consult with a native speaker the appropriate form, and later on he used language gambits to replace the paraphrase with the right word or expression. Also, here is a set of good practices that he followed:

- He used radio to produce additional input to that stemming from him.
- He encouraged his children to speak German, but never forced them to do so.
- He played a lot with his children and engaged in as many activities with them as possible, always using German in his communications.

Saunders was successful in his intent, and when his family moved to Germany some years after the birth of their last children, these were able to take up education in German and eventually consolidated their bilingualism (once again, the caveat that bilingualism is not a black or white state of affairs must be brought to attention - see paragraph 3.3 above).

3.4.3.   Observations from a review of the literature.

I would like to analyse here and now those main points that I have extracted from the literature and stated in epigraphs 3.3 and 3.4 above, incorporating a few more elements that will, hopefully, shed light on what BFLA means and on which ways lead towards it in general, and specifically in the Set Conditions.

First of all, and once again, we should look at bilingualism as a continuum, with communicative competence in one language only at one of the ends, and full literacy and complete mastery of two languages in every possible situation and with any person on the other end. We should also look at this bilingual pole as a referential, or ideal situation, and bear in mind that it is very rarely the case for most, otherwise perfectly bilingual, people. In this sense, we should not gauge the success of a process of BFLA in absolute terms, but rather in terms of how much communicative competence in two languages in different situations is achieved.

One other important thing to take into account is the fact that every child (whether monolingual or multilingual) has a linguistic development of their own. There is a set of milestones which can be considered as the usual pattern, in the sense that most children roughly follow it.

These milestones must be considered with due care and allowing for some deviations from it, as a slight drag is perfectly normal, and should not be a reason for concern to parents or caregivers. Only when this drag is conspicuous (and bilingualism is NEVER at the root of any linguistic disorder, or what causes any kind of drag, as many, many studies on the matter have proven) should parents look for professional help.

I have chosen Baker to show the above said milestones, because I consider his scheme simple enough while concise (Baker, 2014, pp. 49-50):

0-1 year	Babbling, cooing, laughing (dada, mama, gaga).
By age 1	Understanding words and phrases
Around 1 year old	First understandable single words spoken
Around 2 years	Two-word combinations, moving slowly to three- and four-word combinations. Three element sentences (e.g. "Daddy come now"; "That my book"; "Teddy gone bye-byes")
3 to 4 years	Simple but increasingly longer sentences. Grammar and sentence structuring starts to develop. Conversations show turn taking
4 years onwards	Increasingly complex sentences, structure and ordered conversation. Use of pronouns and auxiliary verbs
5 years onwards	Tell a short story that is meaningful.

It is still unclear why some children accomplish the above landmarks earlier than others, but studies have demonstrated that it has nothing to do with bilingualism, for the same differences have been observed among both monolingual and bilingual children under equal or similar sociolinguistic conditions.

These sociolinguistic conditions under which children are brought up determine, to a great extent, the point up to which a child will effectively become bilingual. **Input** is arguably the most instrumental single factor when establishing the extent to which a child will grow up into a bilingual adult, but it is by no means the only one. Within input, it takes special precedence that which children receive primarily by the closest people to them and with whom they spent most of their time, and these happen to be, in almost all of the cases, the child's parents. Within

the concept of input, it takes special precedence the idea of exposure and, in BFLA, the rate of exposure to each of the languages. Pearson (2008, p.116) considers an 80/20 (majority / minority language) to be the minimum for bilingualism to prevail, and 70/30 a desirable figure.

One other very important factor is the relationship between the language or languages spoken at home and the community language, i.e., whether the language or languages spoken by parents to their children are the same of the community (we call this the dominant language or majority language), or, on the contrary, it is a language not spoken by the social environment in which the nuclear family lives (in which case it would be a minority language). This is also a crucial factor. As the child grows up and sets up social networks, the language they use in their relationships will acquire growing importance, even to the point of "ousting" a previously spoken minority language.

De Houwer reflects on the above factors by presenting a survey carried out in Flanders among bilingual families (De Houwer, 2009, pp. 9-10). In this survey, the results matching the two factors above described (language used by each parent and majority / minority language) with success in bilingualism development (she takes for this the case of children using both languages productively) were:

- Both parents speak just a minority language or at most one parent also speaks the majority language: 96%.
- Parents both speak both languages or one parent speaks a minority language: 79%.
- Parents both speak the majority language and one parent also speaks a minority language: 36%.

We should analyse these survey results with due care, given that:

a) They refer to a limited sample, in a very particular geospatial localization, with very concise sociolinguistic conditions.

b) De Houwer is taking for bilingual those children that produce two languages, deliberately not incorporating what she describes as passive bilinguals (children understanding two languages but speaking just one) (De Houwer, 2009, p. 2), and not taking into consideration all the possibilities along the monolingual – bilingual continuum.

Notwithstanding these caveats, this survey offers interesting results in terms of what may be expected from bilingual upbringing in the SC, which correlates with the third scenario of the survey (parents both speak the majority language and one parent also speaks a minority language). According to this study, **we can expect something in between one in every two and one in every three children reared in the SC to become a bilingual adult**. Of course, many more factors are to be taken into account.

If we take as an example the Saunders case – see paragraph 3.4.2 above-, there is good reason to be optimistic regarding the achieving of BFLA in a dominant language context, even in an elective bilingualism environment. Although Pearson does not describe in detail what bilingual achievements exactly this family reached (she just says: "it is encouraging to know that his children made above average progress in English and also achieved a reasonable level of proficiency in German" (Pearson, 2008, p. 180)), this description allows us to presuppose that the tag went well to the bilingual end of the monolingual – bilingual continuum. I think it is important to bear in mind that the description made by Pearson of this case is carried out when the Saunders children are grown up and have even moved and lived for several years in Germany, the initial minority language in this elective bilingualism case. That is not the case (yet) of the case study in this research project.

The Saunders example sheds a light of optimism on my case study. Difficult as it may seem, I firmly consider that it is certainly possible to achieve fairly high levels of simultaneous bilingualism under the SC, especially if all the efforts are

reinforced with trips to or periods of living in a society where the minority language - English in this case - is the dominant language.

3.5.   RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS.

For this project, I am using the following working hypothesis:

In a monolingual context, it is possible to achieve a high degree of simultaneous bilingualism (proficiency in understanding any sentence about routines and everyday activities, expressing feelings, needs, etc., in both languages) in oral skills in children during early infancy, by using elective bilingualism and One Parent One Language (OPOL) strategies, provided that at least one of the parents is proficient in the second language (L2), and that the amount of exposure to the L2 is, at least, of 20%[3].

This working hypothesis assumes that:

- Parents are using an OPOL strategy, with one parent using the monolingual society's language, and the other parent using English.

- At least one of the two parents is fairly proficient in an L2 and uses that L2 in everyday communications with the child, in every possible situation. For the purpose of the case study in this project, I am assuming that L2 to be English and, to that effect, one of the parents is therefore a BLE (Bilingual English Speaker). In a general sense, my working hypothesis is holistic in nature, assuming that if elective bilingualism works for English, it could work for any other L2.

- The child will still be having a great part of their language input in the monolingual´s society language, and hence it will be their majority language and it can be expected that it will be their dominant language too (the language they

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[3] Figure taken from Pearson, 2008. See paragraph 3.4.3.

will be more comfortable with and that they will use predominantly in most situations).

- The OPOL strategy may be supported or reinforced with the additional help of media, tasks / games / songs in the minority language and / or activities with natives of the minority language.

I will strive to determine to what degree my working hypothesis can be proved right, and establish the possibilities of bilingual upbringing efforts by parents with the same L1 living in monolingual societies.

3.6.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

In this project, I am expecting to establish to what extent it is possible to raise bilingual children in monolingual societies by using elective bilingualism in combination with the OPOL strategy. The results obtained from the analysis of the case study of my research should provide a novel approach into the possibilities and limitations of this method. I also expect to be able to provide advice on how best to proceed for those parents who opt for this method, and even give some hints for anyone interested in carrying out further investigation on the subject.

To these ends, I am going to try and answer the following research questions:

- Is the method of elective bilingualism combined with the OPOL strategy effective in achieving a fairly high degree of simultaneous bilingualism in children within monolingual contexts? What inherent advantages or limitations, if any, are there to this method?

- What can this study provide to Linguistics in terms of theory induction, if anything? Can anything be inferred concerning elective bilingualism and OPOL strategy used in monolingual contexts to raise bilingual children that could be of use for any researcher in this field?

- How can the analysis of this case study help future developments in the field of elective bilingualism, combined with OPOL strategy, achieve childhood bilingualism in monolingual contexts? What could be the next step for anyone wishing to carry out follow-on research on this method?

3.7.   EXPECTED RESULTS IN THE CASE STUDY IN THIS PROJECT.

This case study was has been carried out with a toddler, Helena, between the ages of 2 years and 9 months (2:9) and 3:5. Based on the analysis of the literature on bilingualism carried out so far, it would be reasonable to expect her to utter simple sentences, to show early mastery of grammar and sentence structuring, and to be able to participate in conversations with turn taking, at least in the majority language, and maybe a slightly similar proficiency in the minority language could be expected as well.

We have seen that at least a third of children brought up using elective bilingualism can achieve a fair "level to the right" in the monolingual-bilingual continuum presented above. One in every three is not at a high rate, though, and it seems plausible to expect negative results in the case study ahead, i.e. to expect Helena to use only her majority language in most situations.

The Saunders case study, on the other hand, allows for reasonably good expectations. Based on it, it seems sensible to consider that activities related to cognitive and linguistic development – flash cards, songs, jigsaw puzzles…- developed in the minority language can foster the use of this language and therefore boost bilingualism.

It also seems reasonable to expect Helena to understand both languages, Spanish (the majority language) and English (the minority language) in most situations, and to produce mainly Spanish when speaking to any person other than her father. When addressing her father, many different results could be expected form the literature

analysis carried out above: from Spanish only to English only, with a whole range of possibilities in the middle including codeswitching and codemixing.

Codemixing describes "changes at the word level (e.g. when one word or a few words in a sentence change", while codeswitching "has generally been used to describe any switch [of language] within the course of a single conversation" (Baker, 2011, p. 107). Both codeswitching and codemixing are natural outcomes in the process of bilingual upbringing, and both are widely encountered in the early linguistic development of bilingual children.

Before the linguistic and scientific study of the phenomenon of bilingualism, codeswitching and codemixing were commonly thought to be the expression of mental disorder for which bilingualism was to be blamed. Nowadays we know they are perfectly correct features that are part of the steps for most bilingual children on their progress to bilingualism.

4.   METHOD.

This work will be carried out using an instrumental single-case study - i.e., a study of a phenomenon designed to provide insight into a wider issue while the actual case is of secondary interest (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 152) - to achieve a qualitative research through the descriptive-analytical-synthetic method. This method consists of describing the analysis made of a problem which is first divided into simpler parts (analytical method), and then the different solutions found are compiled into the solution for the overarching issue which is thus reconstructed (synthetic method).

I will try to provide insight into the matter of infant elective bilingualism by using purposive sampling (the sample selected being my own three-year-old daughter, Helena) combined with analytic generalization. The fact of using my own daughter as an informant for a research study has got an inherent advantage: I can keep a log of her linguistic development, and I can record with my mobile phone any passage which I consider of interest to this research, at any given moment of the time I have spent with her.

On the other hand, it may appear that using one's own child as a subject for a research could hold a point of scientific immorality, but this is not the case in point at all, as all this I am doing for her own profit, considering the inherent advantages that bilingualism renders ultimately, both in terms of an individual's education and career, and also in a person's future open-mindedness, enriching multiculturality and wider-tolerance-towards-different-people stance as a person.

Through comparison of the literature on the subject summarized in paragraph 3.7. above, and contrast with the analysis of this single-case study in paragraph 5.1.2. below, I expect to reach a set of good practices in the form of guidelines and establish the grounds for future works in the field.

With all the above in mind, there is reason to be optimistic about the potential findings and conclusions of this dissertation.

For this project, I have followed two main data collection methods: diary notes and audio and video recordings:

1). Diary notes / log. I have been taking notes of Helena's progress in English and the interaction between the two semantic and morphosyntactic systems (those of English and Spanish) since her first word in English showed up, which happened to occur when she was 1:3, and I have continued to do so up until the moment of writing this project (3:5). These notes are supported on my linguistic background and its analysis may hopefully be of linguistic interest for the purpose of future research in the field of bilingualism. My notes have not followed a periodic frequency; rather, I noted down different progresses of my daughter or events that I considered of importance, such as her first word, her first sentence, etc. The first entries follow an approximate frequency of once o month, from 1:3 up until 1:8 (November 2016, December 2016, January 2017, February 2017, April 2017), and from that point on, 1:8 to 3:5, they follow a frequency of approximately once every two months (June 2017, August 2017, October 2017, December 2017, February 2018, May 2018, July

2018, October 2018, December 2018). My notes are quite schematic, and, therefore, rather short. They typically have a length of a paragraph, sometimes slightly more.

My log mainly focuses in Helena's oral production (she cannot read or write yet, and my analysis of her oral reception skills I have based on direct observation, without having felt the need to note down her progress). These are the aspects on which I have tried to focus, and which form the main features of the analysis of my case study:

- Lexical development (size of vocabulary repertoire) in both Spanish and English, especially in English (minority language).

- Morphosyntactic development of English: use of English structures and grammar rules, codemixing and codeswitching.

- Grammar transfer between English and Spanish.

- Synchronic variation. Use of linguistic traits from different dialectal varieties, both in English and Spanish, especially in Spanish (the language in which she has experienced a greater variation).

I chose the above mentioned features of oral production because I considered that they cover, quite representatively, the linguistic development of a bilingual toddler, and the interaction between two language systems in BFLA. I have put a special emphasis in following her linguistic development of English because it is her minority language and the one she could lag behind in her bilingual development.

2) Audio and video recordings. I started taking footings of the activities I undertook with my daughter to foster her acquisition of English in the context of her bilingual development at approximately the time when I started writing this research project. I have complemented my own recordings with those sent to me by my wife, which I considered to be of interest to my monitoring of Helena's linguistic development. This is the information about the audio and video recordings I have used in my project, which constitute a selection of the many

recordings I have taken (many have been discarded because of lack of linguistic interest for this project):

Recording no. (chronological order)	Date	Place	Recording device	Duration	Description
1	07/12/2017	Grandparents' home, at Gijon, Spain	Mother's mobile phone: Iphone 5S	0m. 11s.	Helena is singing (a fragment from the song: "Santa Claus is coming to the town"). Her mother records the moment (mobile phone in hand) and sings with her. Helena knows she is being recorded. Linguistic interest: first time Helena sings in English. A transcription of this footing is provided in 5.1.1.
2	29/3/2018	Grandparents' home, at Gijon, Spain	Father's mobile phone: Huawei P8 Lite	0m. 51 s.	Helena is opening a present, her father records the moment (mobile phone in hand) and speaks in English to her. Other people present at the moment: grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunt and mother (they all speak Spanish). Helena does not pay any attention to the fact of being recorded. Linguistic interest: Helena codeswitches.
3	02/05/2018	Family's flat, Naron	Father's mobile phone: Huawei P8 Lite	1m. 25 s.	Helena is playing with her father a jigsaw puzzle game, matching numbers with images. The mobile phone is placed on a table. Helena notices she is being recorded, and acts playfully. Linguistic interest: Helena understands English and codeswitches between English and Spanish. She recognizes

					numbers in English and some of the figures in the images.
4	06/05/2018	Family's flat, Naron	Father's mobile phone: Huawei P8 Lite	2m. 6s.	Helena is playing with her father a jigsaw puzzle game, matching numbers with images. The mobile phone is placed on a table. Helena does not seem to notice she is being recorded. Linguistic interest: Helena understands English and codeswitches between English and Spanish. She recognizes numbers in English and some of the figures in the images.
5	27/07/2018	Family's flat, Naron	Father's mobile phone: Huawei P8 Lite	2m. 9s.	Helena is playing with her father "the game of shapes", with flashcards. Helena has to recognize shapes. The mobile phone is placed on the floor. Helena notices she is being recorded, but seems to disregard the phone. Linguistic interest: Helena has learnt a good deal of shapes' names in English. A transcription of this footing is provided in 5.1.1
6	25/10/2018	Family's flat, Madrid	Mother's mobile phone: Iphone 5S	0m.29s.	Audio recording of Helena playing by herself, with her toys from "The Mickey Mouse Club House" merchandising. She does not notice she is being recorded by her mother. Linguistic interest: she speaks only English. Some words are not recognizable. A transcription of this recording, matched with number 7, is provided in 5.1.1.

7	25/10/2018	Family's flat, Madrid	Mother's mobile phone: Iphone 5S	0m.53s.	Audio recording of Helena playing by herself, with her toys from "The Mickey Mouse Club House" merchandising. She does not notice she is being recorded by her mother. Linguistic interest: she speaks only English. Some words are not recognizable. A transcription of this recording, matched with number 6, is provided in 5.1.1.
8	29/19/2018	Family's flat, Madrid	Mother's mobile phone: Iphone 5S	0m. 23 s.	Helena is pretending to read a book of tales in her bedroom (in English). Her mother enters the room and starts recording (mobile phone in hand). Initially, Helena does not notice her mother and carries on pretending to read (she knows the tale almost by heart, as it is frequently read to her by her parents). When she realizes she is being recording, she stops reading and codeswitches to Spanish. Linguistic interest: Helena pretends to read in English by her own, and codeswitches to address her mother.
9	07/11/18	Family's flat, Madrid	Mother's mobile phone: Iphone 5S	0m. 39 s.	Helena is looking at a toy catalogue, where there is a farm, and she is singing the song "Old McDonald had a farm". Her mother records her from above (mobile phone in hand). Helena disregards the fact of being recorded, and carries on singing and pointing at the animals in the

					farm, as she names them in the song. Linguistic interest: Helena has learnt some names of animals in English and music has had a strong influence in making this happen.

Table 1. Recordings used in this research project.

5. RESULTS.

5.1. CASE STUDY.

At the time of starting this work, Helena was my 2:9 (two year, 9 month) old daughter. She has been reared in the Set Conditions (SC), in a monolingual context (brought up in Spain, with three different locations: Madrid, Ferrol, and Gijon; although Ferrol is placed in the part of Spain known as Galicia, where there is a co-official language (Galician) that shares institutional status with Spanish, the contact that Helena has had with this language is almost non-existent, and, for that reason, and none other, I will not consider Galician in this project). Spanish is clearly the majority language in Helena's community. Helena is my firstborn child and, at the time of carrying out this study, the only one.

Her mother is a monolingual Spanish Speaker, with a mid-level proficiency in English and French, who has spoken Spanish to Helena most of the time since before she was born. Occasionally, Helena's mother reads out a tale in English or answers / reacts to Helena's utterances in English in that language.

Her father, me, I am a bilingual English Speaker, with Spanish being my L1 and English my L2 (acquired after the age of 7). I have always spoken in English, and in English only to Helena since before she was born. I always use a Southern England's dialectal variety of English.

The following table sums up the educational and linguistic backgrounds of Helena´s parents:

	Helena's mother	**Helena's father**
Education	BA level education (Law related)	MA level education (Linguistics, English Language, International Politics, Military Graduation)
Languages	Spanish: L1 English: Upper-Intermediate. B2 Level (Escuela Oficial de Idiomas). French: Upper-Intermediate. B1 Level (Escuela Oficial de Idiomas).	Spanish: L1 English: native-like proficiency (5-year degree in English Philology). French: Upper-Intermediate. B1 Level (Escuela Oficial de Idiomas). Italian: Basic (1-year course in his degree in English Philology).

Table 2. Helena's parents educational and linguistic backgrounds.

When Helena's mother, my wife, got pregnant, we started considering the possibility of raising our child bilingually, taking advantage of my proficiency in English. At that time, we had not documented ourselves well-enough on all possibilities, but nevertheless we decided that we would try to follow a bilingual upbringing of our daughter because of the inherent advantages that bilingualism meant for the professional and personal future of our daughter: higher educational and career opportunities, higher self-esteem, more open-mindedness, more opportunities to establish social networks, and an immensely long list of etceteras derived from the current status of English as the world's Lingua Franca. Without having read previously about it - and without knowing it was actually one of the multiple possibilities in BFLA - we opted for a One Person One Language (OPOL, or 1P/1L) parental strategy.

It was during pregnancy that I started reading on BFLA education. By the time our daughter was born, I had already acquired a minimum knowledge on how best to proceed to follow an OPOL course of action in bringing up our daughter bilingually. We do not follow this approach in the strictest of senses (Helena's mother reads out

tales in English to her, and I very occasionally use Spanish words), but we do it for almost all of the time.

Helena's parents always use Spanish in their communications between them, both in front of their daughter and otherwise. Following De Houwer's guidance (De Houwer, 2009, p. 78), I consider important to note that Helena's mother fully understands her child's conversations in English with me.

Her extended family uses only Spanish when communicating with Helena, with the only exception of one of her aunts, two of her cousins and two distant cousins of her father's, all of them proficient in English and supportive in collaborating in her bilingual upbringing by using English when communicating with her (which does not happen very often as they live in different towns from the one the nuclear family lives in).

Apart from daily communication with her father, Helena's main contact with the English language is through television. Almost all of the TV shows and cartoons that she watches are deliberately set to English audio by her parents. Her two favourite TV shows use different dialectal varieties of English, with "Peppa Pig" using RP (Received Pronunciation) English and "The Mickey Mouse Club House" using GA (General American) English. There follows a table with exposure to English (both interactively and passively) expressed in percentage of Helena's waking time (percentages are approximate).

Helena's other contact with English came from her pre-school centre, where a native British teacher carried out activities in English two hours a week. Helena attended this pre-school centre from 2:6 to 2:10, and did it for 3 hours a day, 5 days a week. This certainly had an influence in Helena's pitch when she spoke Spanish at that time (in other words, she began speaking Spanish with "Northern Galician" accent since she attended her Nursery School). I will come back to this later on.

All of the above contact of Helena with English is chiefly, but not exclusively, oral in nature. Helena's parents are also teaching her the letters both in English and Spanish, and she recognizes the "H" (being the first letter in her name) and a few others. Helena seems genuinely interested in learning how to read, and frequently asks us "what reads in here?" when she comes across a script that, naturally, she cannot read yet.

Concerning parental discourse strategies (see 3.4.1. above), my impression has always been that there was a clear asymmetry in terms of the input that could be available to Helena in Spanish and English -with the scale clearly leaned on the side of the former. I assumed from the very beginning that bringing Helena up bilingually would inevitably be through an uneven development, if at all possible. In other words, given the SC, I have always expected Helena to speak Spanish and was hoping that she might speak some English when she communicated with me, but I was very much aware of the fact that Spanish would be her primary language, given that it is the majority language outside her home.

The discourse strategies chosen by Helena's father, therefore, are those that favour the minority language, English, and more specifically: Expressed Guess Strategy (in response to an utterance by Helena in Spanish, I use a question in English to translate what I thought she intended to say), Repetition (in response to an utterance by Helena in Spanish, I repeat it in English), and Move On Strategy (when Helena produces a mixed utterance or an utterance in Spanish, I continue to talk in English).

Helena's attitudes towards language choice has been hitherto neutral with a tendency towards the majority language (Spanish), i.e., when spoken in Spanish she always uses that language in her reply, and when spoken in English by anyone who is not me, she prefers to reply in Spanish most of the times. When communicating with me, she sometimes uses English, sometimes Spanish (despite my extensive use of monolingual discourse strategies to favour English, as explained above), and I have observed that she uses Spanish more and more by the day. She has already started to realize that Spanish and English are two different languages, and that she can used either of them, and she is starting to show a preference for Spanish, the language mostly used by her

extended family and her peers at the Nursery School. However, English seems to be her language of choice when she plays by herself with her toys. This may be due to the fact that most of her toys come from the merchandising of the films and TV shows that she watches (in English).

Helena was born in 2015, in the era of smartphones. In the days since she was born, up to now, almost every person in Spain carries a smartphone in his or her pocket, and Helena's parents are no exception. What this means in terms of this study is that trying to carry out an elective bilingual upbringing of our daughter is considerably easier than it was for the Saunders family (see paragraph 3.4.2 above). If a word does not come naturally to me when speaking to Helena in English (an L2 for me), I just use a synonym, turn around, grab my smartphone, and look up the right word on an on-line dictionary (I regularly use https://www.wordreference.com/). Likewise, if I am not sure of how a certain word may be pronounced, I just have to look it up on any of the assorted webs that produce audio samples of every single word in English (I regularly use https://howjsay.com/). When looking for slang or very specific words in very specific contexts, I text my British friend Jim using WhatsApp, and he will come up with the most appropriate word - an example of this is the word "scrunchie", quite common in Southern England but difficult to come across in dictionaries, even in slang dictionaries (scrunchies are hairbands, from the verb "scrunch", a slang, colloquial term for squeeze).

As of today, I have not documented myself on specific child's language. So far, I have made use of my knowledge of the English language by employing chiefly words and structures related to every day's routines, feelings, etc., specifically avoiding technical terms and colloquial language.

Like Saunders (Pearson, 2008, p. 177-180), the researcher (Helena's father, me) tries to keep a record on the progress of Helena's bilingual upbringing. My smartphone has made this task very simple for me, as I have got different video footings of my daughter, with the date of their recording automatically annotated in the files' name,

through which I can follow her bilingual progress, without the need for recording tapes which have to be further labelled.

Turning now to exposure and context, two instrumental features in studying bilingual development, this is a summary in figures:

- Helena has been exposed to two languages, English and Spanish, since before she was born. By the time this study is delivered, she is 3:5. That constitutes the timespan for this longitudinal study.

- Due to his job, Helena´s father has spent some time away from home during these three years and almost a half. In those days that her father was away, the only English input that Helena received came from TV shows (children cartoons), and also from her English teacher at her kindergarten. These days roughly summed 130 days from Helena's birth up until she was 2:4, and 90 in the 1:1 remaining, for a total of 220 days in the total timespan, approximately 18 % of Helena´s life.

- The context of language exposure in both languages is clearly different in this 18% timespan, from the remaining 82%. In the former, English is limited to TV shows and cartoons, and occasionally to songs and games practiced with her English teacher at her crèche. When her dad was not with her, not only English input constituted a low amount of the total amount of language that Helena was exposed to when she was active (my estimate is of about 25% percent of her active hours) but, more significantly, this input was delivered in a passive context, in which the child did not interact, did not sing, and did not play, with the only aforementioned exception of her English teacher at the nursery (which I estimate in a low 5% of this time).

- When her father was home, on the other hand, the exposure to English language of Helena increased, to approximately 50% of the total input in her active time (her interactions with her father and her visioning of TV shows). Moreover, and possibly more importantly, the context in this second situation included both passive exposure (TV shows and songs) and also active interactions with her dad

(including reading books, playing games and singing songs, on which I have made a point based on a firm belief that all these activities contribute decisively to language development), with passive activities being approximately 40% of the time, and interactive activities the remaining 60%.

The following table and graphics sum up all of the above information (percentage figures are approximate and should be treated as such):

Age at which she was spoken in two languages for the first time	Time lapse for this study (longitudinal study timespan)	Time of exposure to each language estimates (in % of total active (i.e. non sleeping) time))		Context of exposure to English estimates (in % of total exposure to English)	
0 (actually, before she was born)	3 years, 5 months	**Father away** (18% of time)	**Father at home** (82% of time)	**Father away** (18% of time)	**Father at home** (82% of time)
		25% English 75% Spanish	50% English 50% Spanish	Passive: 95% Interactive: 5%	Passive: 40% Interactive: 60%
		Total: **English: 46.5%** **Spanish 54.5%**		Total: **Passive: 49,9%** **Interactive: 50,1%**	

Table 3. Linguistic data on exposure to both languages (English and Spanish) and context of this exposure (passive versus interactive).
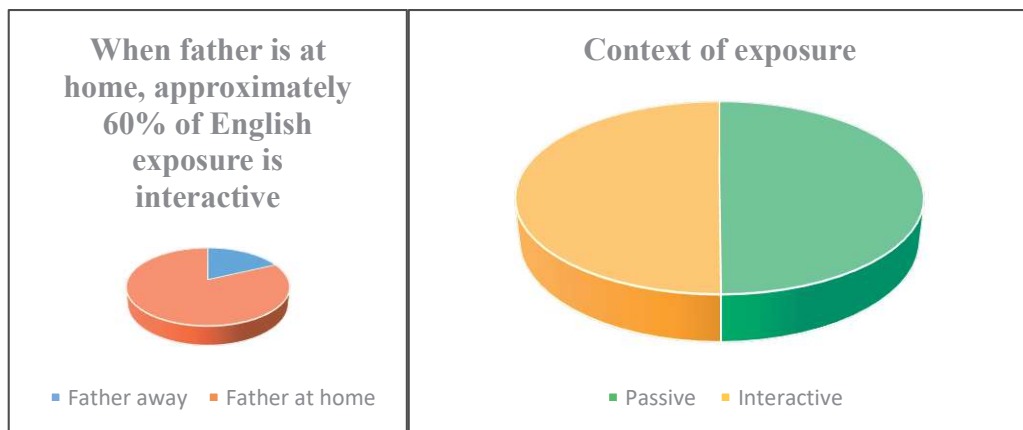
Graphic 1. Time Helena's father (English speaker) is home vs time he is away

Graphic 2. Passive context vs Interactive context in English exposure

5.1.1.   The bilingual upbringing of Helena.

Helena was born in August 2015. Since before she was born, her mother started speaking and singing in Spanish to her, and her father did likewise in English. From that point on, to this day, her parents have always stuck to the rule of following the OPOL strategy and they continue to do so.

Mindful of the fact that she was being raised in a monolingual society, and that one of the languages she was being bilingually reared in was used by everyone around her except her father (with minor exceptions already reflected upon), I tried to reinforce the English pole of her bilingual upbringing by employing different assets thought to be related to cognitive and linguistic learning, chiefly but not exclusively related to music and images. These included:

-    A lullaby in English. Up until Helena become three years old, I was the person "in charge of" taking her to bed, and I consistently did it by using one specific lullaby in English language ("The Connamara Cradle Song", of Irish origin).

-    Songs. Lots of songs: nursery rhymes, songs for children, songs and more songs.

-    Flashcards. Activities related to images are well known as an effective tool in lexical development. As of today, Helena has learnt the name of shapes in English, but not in Spanish, and she has learnt the name of colours both in English and Spanish. She also learnt the name of a good deal of vehicles and animals in English through the use of these useful items. I have mainly used the flashcards that can be found at the British Council webpage: https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/flashcards

-    Jigsaw puzzles and other games, always in English (her favourite jigsaw puzzle is a map of the world with the names of continents and oceans in English):
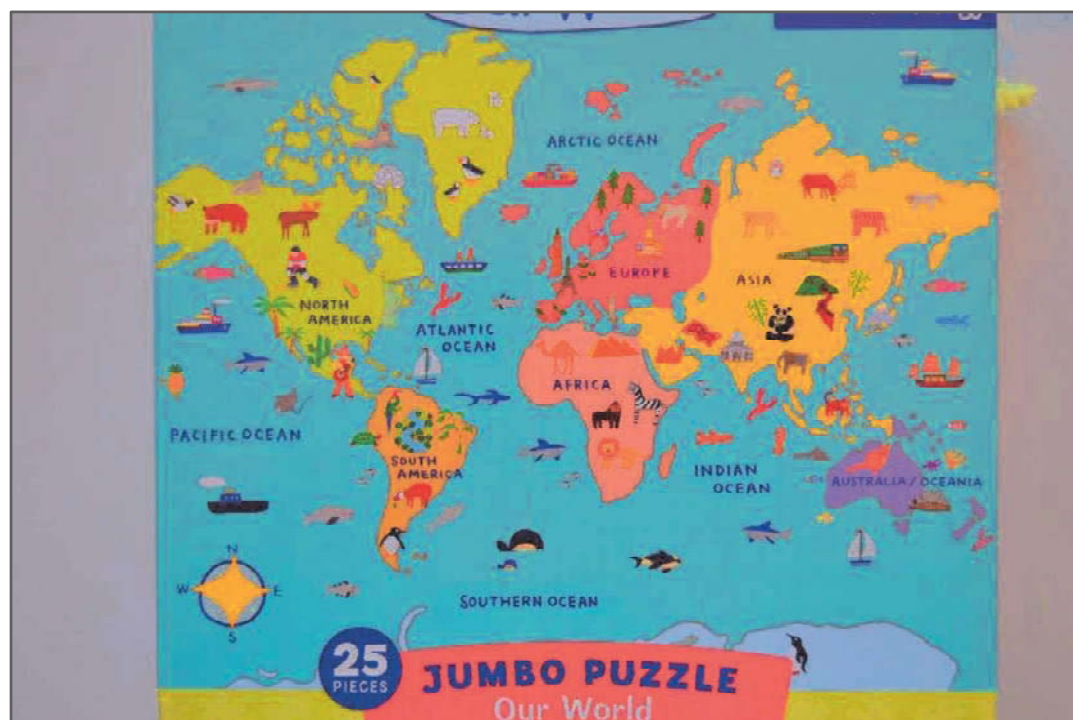
Figure 2. "Our World" jigsaw puzzle.
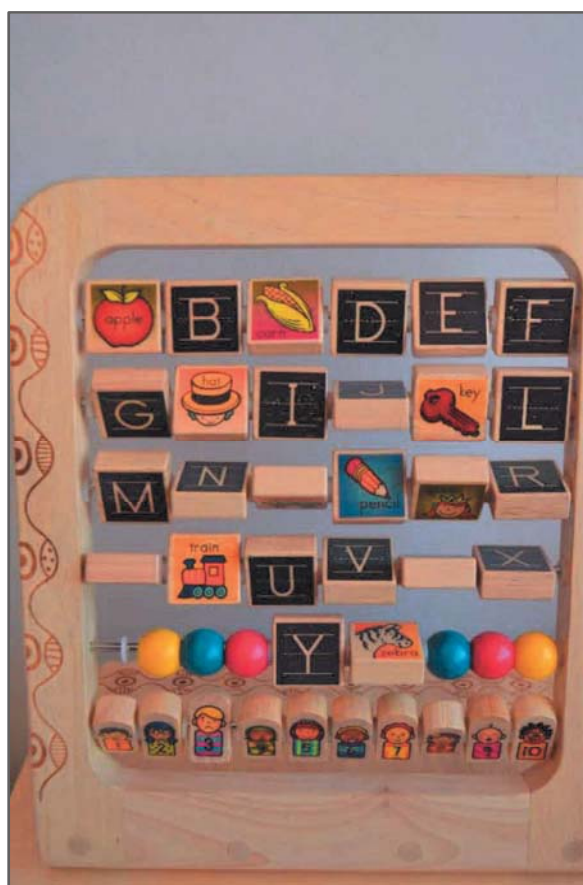
Figure 3. Letters, colours, and moods abacus.

Figure 4. The Mickey Mouse Club House book and game.

- Regularly connecting to British radio broadcasts on the internet. I especially enjoy listening to "Heart Radio" because music helps and fosters cognitive and linguistic developments: https://www.heart.co.uk.

- All cartoons and TV shows, as well as films, have always been set in English audio (whenever this was the original language for the show) for Helena.

All and above, so far Helena is following and ticking in the box of the landmarks explained in paragraph 3.4.3. above. She uses Spanish most of the time and, mainly when speaking to her father, sometimes she produces words and utterances in English (worryingly, less and less every day). This is not surprising at all, as a majority of the language input she receives is in Spanish. She codeswitches and codemixes regularly, although less and less by the day – as can be expected of a normal, bilingual development. There is also a considerable amount of morphosyntactic transfer from English to Spanish and vice versa (a recursive example of this is the use of the Saxon genitive when speaking Spanish. A specific

example: "el abuelo's mando" – el mando del abuelo (grandpa's remote), produced when she was 2:11).

Maybe more surprising than the above mentioned features is the finding of errors typical of L2 students in Helena's speech. For example, she has been noted as mistaking the verbs "ser" and "estar", a common mistake in English-speaking students of Spanish, who typically find trouble in telling apart when to use one or the other verb, as both translate for the verb "to be" in English. I will discuss this particular topic later in this project.

Receptive skills.
Helena has got a perfectly normal language development in both languages, English, and Spanish, in terms of receptive skills. In other words, she can understand most sentences she is told in either language, provided basic, daily-use vocabulary is employed. Her lexical repertoire in both languages is considerable, thanks in no small part to the regular reading activities her parents carry out with her.

Helena can understand any TV show in English or Spanish. It is easy to check to what extent this happens: Since her parents regularly set their TV broadcast in "original language" mode, the fact that she happily watches cartoons in English (even complaining when Peppa Pig speaks Spanish) and, on the other hand, disapproves of cartoons in any other language (for example, French) because she does not understand what is said in them, gives proof to her receptive skills in English and Spanish.

Productive skills.
As concerns her use of English productively, Helena chiefly uses Spanish in her daily communications. This is not surprising at all, as the practical totality of her social networks speaks that language. When communicating with her father, she sometimes uses Spanish, sometimes English. When she uses Spanish, I trys to foster her using English by applying the parental discourse strategies already

stated: **Expressed Guess Strategy** (in response to an utterance by Helena in Spanish, I use a question in English to translate what I thought she intended to say), **Repetition** (in response to an utterance by Helena in Spanish, I repeat it in English), and **Move On Strategy** (when Helena produces a mixed utterance or an utterance in Spanish, I continue talking in English).

The one other instance in which she uses English productively is when playing by herself. There is a good probability that this is highly related to her watching cartoons in English, since most of her toys are directly or indirectly related to the TV shows and films she usually watches in English (mainly "Peppa Pig", "The Mickey Mouse Club House", and "Frozen").

The following is a transcript of Helena playing alone with her toys from "The Mickey Mouse Club Hose" merchandising:

Date: 25th October 2018 (3:2).
People: Helena (H).

H.   Dale[4]! Here it is.
            …
            Hello! How're you doin' there?
            [Unintelligible]
            It's much bigger.
            [Unintelligible] this. No, much better, much better. I'm trying this.
            [Unintelligible] ah, so much better. No, Chip, don't go away. You
            [unintelligible]ing. Ok?
            No, Dale, don't go away. [Unintelligible].
            Dale! Dale!
            [Guttural Noises]

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[4] The two squirrels in "The Mickey Mouse Club House" show are Dale and Chip.

<u>Lexical development</u>.

Helena started to produce words in Spanish and English at approximately the same time, when she was 1:3 (as annotated in my log). That is slightly behind the regular pattern[5] for either a monolingual or a bilingual child, but perfectly normal in any sense. Her first three words in English were, in this order, "apple", "cheese", and "queen".

One month later, at 1:4 (as annotated in my log), she was producing about 30 words in English and a slightly higher number in Spanish. These included: "Minnie" (Mouse), "Peppa" (Pig), "pee", "poo", "mommy", "tee" (tree), "I joo" (Hey Jude, the famous song by The Beatles), "nappy", "Paw par" (Paw Patrol, a well-known cartoon show) and "bubbles". As we can observe, a number of them are related to the TV shows she watched and the songs I sang to her, as well as to routine activities. At that time, she started having problems with producing consonant clusters (tee, instead of tree), which is something we can find systematically in the language development of any human being. To this day, she still has problems with the pronunciation of consonant "R", both in Spanish (in its trill realization) and in English when in a consonant cluster. It is worth noting that at this time, remarkably early, she produced her first sentence in English: "Where are you?" That is approximately 6 to 9 months ahead of the regular pattern in any child, as reflected by Baker and stated in 3.4.3. above.

At 1:5 (as annotated in my log), she started recognizing parts of her face, and named them when pointed at in my face by me: "mouth", "nose", ears", eyes", "cheeks". She also produced at that time her first interjections in English: "Oh, no!", "Oh, dear!", and learned vocabulary related to requests and routine activities, like "keys" and "hungry".

At 1:6 (as annotated in my log), she started codemixing: "Hola, moon" (Hello, moon), "Mira, un car" (Look, a car). She has continued to codemix and codeswitch regularly since that moment. I will get back to these features.

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[5] See paragraph 3.4.3.

At 1:8 (as annotated in my log), she commenced producing creative combinations of two words: "Peppa, rubbish" (there are dust balls on my Peppa Pig dolly). This is quite remarkable, and considerably ahead of the regular linguistic development in children, whether bilingual or otherwise.

At 2:0 (as annotated in my log), she produced the first word in English not taught to her by me, "mug of coffee". She must have learnt this word from a TV show, which is a clear proof of the didactic value of cartoons set in English to children.

At 2:3 (as recorded by video), she started singing in English, and has never stopped doing it since then. This is a transcript of a footage taken at that time:

Date: 7th December 2017 (2:3).
People: Helena (H) and her mother (M).

H.	[…] is coming to the town.
M.	Otra vez (Again).
H.	Santa Claus is coming
H&M.	to the town.

She also sings in Spanish, chiefly the songs she learns at school and through the online videos of the popular Spanish band "Cantajuegos". In general, she prefers songs in English, being her favourite the following: "Ba Ba Black Sheep", "Old McDonald Had a Farm", "London Bridge is Falling Down", "Do, Re, Mi" song from "The Sound of Music" OST, and the Christmas carol "12 Days of Christmas".

At 2:9 (as recorded by video), she knew the names of most shapes in English. The following is a transcription of "the game of shapes", i.e. Helena playing with flashcards with me.

Date: 27th May 2018 (2:9).

People: Helena (H) and her father (F).

F.   Baby, would you like to play "shapes"?

H.   Sí (Yes).

F.   Come on, let's play shapes. I've got it here.

H.   ¡Hala! (Wow!)

F.   Hey, it's shapes!

         Ok, so you gotta say what shapes these are, ok?

         Ok, first one. What shape is this?

H.   Heart.

F.   Heart. Well done!

         This one. What shape is this?

H.   A diamond.

F.   A diamond. Very well, baby!

         Ok. What shape is this? I don't think you know this one.

H.   No this one.

F.   You don't know this one. It's an oval.

H.   *uval.

F.   Oval.

H.   *uval.

F.   What shape is this?

H.   I *nini [don't know what] shape is this.

F.   Yeah, you should know it.

H.   No.

F.   It's a pentagon.

H.   Pentagon.

F.   What colour is this?

H.   Yellow.

F.   Well done! What shape is this?

H.   Circle.

F.   Circle, well done, well done.

Ok. What shape is this?

H. Triangle.

F. Very well! Triangle. Yes, it is.

What shape is this?

H. Hmm… *hatigon

F. Hexagon.

H. Hexagon.

F. Hexagon.

H. Hexagon.

F. Ok. What shape is this?

H. Rectangle.

F. It's a rectangle! Well done!

What shape is this?

H. Circle.

F. It's a circle, yes. Well, it's supposed to be a sphere, because it's supposed to be in 3D. But yes, ok, circle is all right.

What shape is this?

H. Square.

F. Very well! Square.

What shape is this?

H. [laughs]

F. A cube.

H. Cube.

F. Cube.

And finally, what shape is this?

H. A star.

F. A star, very well, baby! You got them all! Excellent!

[Helena claps her hands]

F. Bravo!

I consider it worth noting, from the above transcription that, at the time, Helena already masters the use of English determiners, as proofs the fact that when told

"a cube" she answers "cube", recognizing that "a" was not part of the name of the shape's name.

At the time of writing this essay (Helena is 3:5), Helena has got an English vocabulary of considerable extension. The number of words she uses (productively) in this language is undoubtedly inferior to that of Spanish words she uses, but her reception abilities in English are at the same level as those in Spanish – that is, she can understand chiefly anything she is told in either language (I obviously mean normal, everyday language).

Morphosyntactic development. Codemixing and codeswitching.

Helena has followed a parallel morphosyntactic development in both languages, English and Spanish, although her production in the latter language is considerably more extensive than that in the former. She has undoubtedly benefited from the synergetic development of both languages at the same time in symbiosis, and she has currently achieved a similar and considerably remarkable mastery of both languages' grammar use, to include:

- Basic sentences in both languages, including expressing feelings, short interjections, making requests and posing questions of curiosity (she has already started the "what is this?", and "why is this so?" phase).

- Recognition and good use of determiners, in both languages (see my comments on the transcription of the game of shapes above).

- Recognition and good use of pronouns all and above (with some occasional mistakes), in both languages.

- Basic conversations including turn-taking in a logical, creative fashion, in both languages.

- Use of singular and plural, in both languages.

- Some verb inflections, mostly of regular verbs.

Achievements do not include, as of yet, gender (Spanish), irregular conjugations (she produces only a very short number of them) or descriptions in either language.

All of the above makes up for a perfectly normal pattern, even ahead of a regular child language development scheme in many senses. Children of between 3 and 4 years of age are supposed to start making basic, short sentences, which is exactly the case for Helena in both English and Spanish.

As part of a normal bilingual development, Helena codemixes (uses both English and Spanish in the same sentence) and codeswitches (changes from sentences in English to sentences in Spanish and vice versa) regularly and systematically, albeit less and less by the day. "Mixing languages is about being inventive within current resources and does not indicate a muddle" (Baker 2011, p. 96).

These are some examples of her codemixing:

(2:4)   - "Oh, oh, it's rain. I need a paraguas (umbrella)".[6]

            - "Abuela, comí lentejas con potatoes (grandma, I had lentil soup with potatoes)".

(2:6)   - "¿Qué hiciste*? ¡Caca! Boo, disgusting! (what did you*do (she meant I)? Poo! Boo, disgusting!").

(2:9)   - "Magic tricks! A ver, ¿dónde está mi wand? (let's see, where is my wand?"

Helena's codeswitching mainly responds to her father's most used parental discourse strategies which, as stated above, are Expressed Guess Strategy, Repetition, and Move On Strategy. These strategies have proven, so far, very handy in fostering, but not forcing, Helena's production of English.

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[6] Notice that words with a higher morphosyntactic load in this sentence are in English, while the word with a higher lexical load, umbrella, is in Spanish ("paraguas"). This is not necessarily the case in all instances of Helena's codemixing events, but I think it is representative of how bilingualism may work in First Language Acquisition, with one language exerting the role of "frame", and the other one delivering the "adequate" words with the "precise meaning".

Codemixing and codeswitching conform a pattern that is part of a natural path of the normal development of a bilingual child. Hilarious as it may result, I have always been very careful not to appear scornful in any sense to my daughter when she produced these features. Codemixing and codeswitching are also supposed to wane and eventually fade away with time, as bilingual children grow up and start to be aware of the two perfectly distinct linguistic systems they use (i.e., they begin to develop metalinguistic awareness that enables them to distinguish between languages). This seems also to be the case of Helena.

Grammar transfer.

As already briefly touched upon, Helena regularly transfers grammar structures from English to Spanish and the other way around. The same as codemixing and codeswitching, this is perfectly normal a behaviour in bilingual children and it is also supposed to eventually fade away.

The main grammar features observed to have taken part in this process of transfer are:

- Saxon Genitive. This typical English structure that expresses possession is formed by adding "apostrophe + s" at the end of a noun to denote that the following item(s) in the sentence belongs to that noun. Helena regularly transferred this construct into Spanish from 2y to 3y, even when word order in the Spanish sentence made words that would go after the noun in genitive, precede it: "¿Vamos a casa de la abuela's?" (Shall we go to grandma's? I consider worth noting from this example that there was a complete transfer of the concept of Saxon genitive, applying it to indicate possession where it would be relevant and grammatical in the sentence in English, even when it was unnecessary in the Spanish sentence, as elements used in this language to indicate possession were already in place (preposition "de", of).

Helena began making this transfer less and less by the day, as if acquiring awareness of its ungrammaticality, and she has stopped making it by now (3:5).

- Adjective order. Adjective order is different in English and in Spanish. In English, adjectives typically precede the noun they modify; in Spanish, it is

usually the other way around (there are exceptions to these general rules, in both languages, especially in Spanish). Helena has sometimes been noted as using Spanish adjective order in English ("a crayon green"), and occasionally using English adjective order in Spanish ("una alta torre" (a high tower)). This transfer can also be considered part of her normal bilingual development, and, the same as the previously stated one, it has already vanished.

- Verb "to be". The verb "to be" translates into Spanish into two different verbs, "ser" and "estar". This is also the case in other languages of Latin origin (such as Italian), but not in all of them (it is not the case of French). Explaining the difference in use between the two of them is one of the first and main handicaps a teacher of Spanish finds to teach this language to students who take Spanish studies as an L2 and come from languages where there is just one verb that covers all the possible meanings of "ser" and "estar" (for example, English). The main difficulty rests in trying to convey a difference in meaning between two verbs in an L2 when this difference is a small difference in aspect and use of the same verb in an L1. To this, we have to add the fact that "to be" is the most extensively used verb in English, along with "to have", and the same happens in Spanish with "ser" and "estar", along with "haber".

Helena has been noted as mistaking the verb "ser" for the verb "estar": "Papá, ¿eres triste?"(dad, are you sad?), and vice versa, a trait very commonly found in English-speaking students of Spanish as an L2, and rarely found in monolingual Spanish children. This, in my opinion, is an indicator of a normal development of the English language, and a logical transfer of this into Spanish, as part of a regular, bilingual development. As with all of the above transfer features already commented upon, she has stopped carrying out this transfer.

- Gender. The fact that English has got no inflections for gender may be exercising a modifying component on her lack of good use of gender inflections in Spanish. So far, she uses whatever choice of gender inflection she has learnt for a determined noun or adjective. This is usually the case of the feminine inflection, chiefly because that is the most extensively used by her mother when describing

to Helena how she is or how she feels: "Papá, ¿estás cansada?" (dad, are you tired [feminine inflection]?)

- Reflexive verbs. Reflexives are those verbs in which the subject and the object are the same, and this is expressed by using an adverb. This property is far more frequent in Spanish (and other languages of Latin origin) than in English, although examples can be found in this language. Some verbs that are reflexive in Spanish are not reflexive in English, and vice versa. Helena regularly transfers this feature from one language to the other, when they do not have a correspondence: "Papá, ¿afeitaste?" (dad, have you shaved[7]). As with other similar transfers already commented, she does it less and less by the day.

- Dialectal varieties (accents).
In her relatively short language development, Helena has shown that exposure to different dialectal varieties in both languages has produced effect upon her linguistic production, especially in the case of her majority language, Spanish.

Helena has lived in three different locations of Spain: Madrid, Gijon (Asturias) and Ferrol (Galicia), with three different dialectal varieties of Spanish. These varieties have got minor lexical and morphosyntactic differences between them. At the phonological level, on the other hand, there are some noticeable differences, especially as concerns suprasegmentals and, more specifically, intonation.

All of Helena's relatives come from Gijon (Asturias). While she stayed all day with her parents and extended family, she developed a variety of Spanish with clear Asturian influence, even when the nuclear family lived at Ferrol. It was when she started attending a crèche at that town, Ferrol (2:7) that she began to show clear traces of Galician dialectal variety of Spanish, most notably in her intonation (Galician accent is well known to be a variety of Spanish with well-defined and distinguishable intonational patterns). By the time she stopped attending her kindergarten at Ferrol and shortly before the nuclear family moved to Madrid

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[7] In Spanish, shaving is reflexive, so a man "shaves himself". The right sentence would have been: Papá, ¿te afeitaste?

(2:11), Helena had acquired a clear "Galician accent". At 3:1 Helena started attending her current Nursery School in Madrid. By the time of writing this paragraph (3:4), her Galician accent has completely faded away and clear features of Madrid's dialectal variety have begun to show (extended use and even abuse of perfect tenses that are underused in Galician and Asturian varieties, vocabulary belonging to this area of Spain, etc.).

All of the above concerning Helena's development of Spanish is a perfectly normal linguistic development and underpins, quite clearly in my opinion, two notions: first, **social networks and, very especially, educational environments exert a great influence in child linguistic development**, and second, **linguistic development is drastically and very quickly affected by changes in a child's surrounding society**.

Regarding English, Helena's linguistic development has been considerably more stable. This is only logical as her almost exclusive interactions in English have been with only one person, me, who always use the same dialectal variety of English (Southern British English). A different input in other dialectal varieties comes from TV shows and cartoons, with General American English variety being extensively common in some of Helena's favourites: "The Mickey Mouse Club House", "Paw Patrol" and Disney's film "Frozen". So far, these shows have exerted a very limited influence in Helena's production of English, with only minor traces (rhoticity, flapping, and American realization of the vowel /ɒ/, for example in "D<u>o</u>nald Duck") in her reproducing exact sentences or songs from these cartoons.

5.1.2. Analysis of the observations from literature review applied to this case.

Helena seems to be following all the steps in a perfectly normal, even ahead of schedule, bilingual linguistic development, bearing in mind that, as already stated, bilingualism is not a clear-cut state of affairs and should be looked upon as a

capability to exercise communicative competence in two languages in different situations.

There is no drag in Helena's development with reference to the milestones of a normal linguistic child development, as proposed by Baker (see paragraph 3.4.3 above). On the contrary, Helena seems to be profiting from the symbiosis of two different linguistic systems developing at the same time in a synergetic fashion, and she can hold two-way, turn taking conversations using relevant, creative sentences (in both languages), provided the topic is at her cognitive level (i.e., that she is talking about her feelings or daily routines). At 3:5, this is perfectly on schedule, or even slightly ahead of a child's normal linguistic development.

Helena's communicative competence seems to correlate, quite accurately, the amount of input in each language in her different, daily situations. Her preference for Spanish in oral production is quite logically related to that being the language most people use to talk to her in most situations. The fact that she plays in English also correlates to her watching TV shows in that language. Her receptive capabilities in both languages correlate to the fairly even amount of language input in both Spanish and English (see Table 2 above).

Helena is very young to have set up social networks, out of her nuclear family. Therefore, she uses both her majority language (Spanish) and her minority language (English), the two languages used by her parents, even when she consistently uses the former more naturally and more regularly than the latter.

In sum, she seems to be in that "at least, one third" part of children reared under SC which, according to DeHouwer (see paragraph 3.4.3. above), will become bilingual adults. Although it is very early to make an assessment, all things considered it seems that elective bilingualism is making adequate progress.

6.   DISCUSSION.

6.1.   CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS.

In paragraph 3.7 above, I posed the expected results for the case study in this project. In paragraph 5.1.2. above I summarized the actual linguistic status found through the case study. Let me now compare both of them.

Helena is able to communicate in both English and Spanish with a fairly reasonable level of competence. She can understand simple sentences in both languages, and she can express feelings and pose simple requests in both languages, with Spanish, her majority language, being the one she prefers to use. She can also hold basic conversations with relevant, creative turn-taking statements on either language or codeswitching (usually doing so when spoken in English). Her linguistic development seems to be clearly beyond the regular expected situation, and far from being a hurdle, her bilingual upbringing seems to be favouring a symbiotic development of both languages' morphosyntactic and lexical systems.

The above state of affairs matches the expected results, where her use of English when communicating with me was the main unknown quantity to be solved. Basically, Helena does not use English productively except when playing on her own and when speaking to me, and she uses English in considerably less situations than she uses Spanish when talking to me, which means that the majority language is clearly gaining ground detrimental to the minority language. It seems logical not to expect this situation to reverse unless the nuclear family moves or starts making frequent trips to countries where English is a majority language and Helena needs to start using it to communicate with her peers.

At current point, elective bilingualism seems to have obtained a dark grey in the monolingual-bilingual continuum in Helena's case. It is very difficult to assess how dark this grey is, as no system of indicators have been defined for this study, chiefly due to the difficulty of "measuring someone's bilingualism". However, the fact that

she is able to understand nearly anything told to her in English, that she regularly plays on her own using English language, and that she sometimes uses English creatively in interactions makes a really dark shade of grey a safe bet.

It looks reasonable to assume that a notorious part of Helena's bilingualism may be attributed to all the media and English developing assets used by me in support to my interactions in English with her. It becomes apparent that playing with her toys on her own in English is a by-product of her watching films and cartoons in English, mainly due to the fact that her toys are the starring characters in those shows - Mickey Mouse and his friends in "The Mickey Mouse Club House", Elsa and Anna, the princesses from the Disney film "Frozen", and Peppa Pig and her family and friends.

As happened with the Saunders (see paragraph 3.4.2. above), elective bilingualism seems to be achieving results, but will probably need some kind of reinforcing with trips /moving to a country where the minority language – English- is spoken, as Helena grows up and starts developing social networks. This is already beginning to loom in the horizon: Helena uses English less and less by the day at the time of writing this paragraph, a logical outcome of her social relationships in Spanish at her nursery school.

Concerning codemixing and codeswitching, Helena has started to use these phenomena less and less by the day, as could be expected of a normal bilingual development. However, codemixing and codeswitching are giving way to a widespread use of the majority language (as could be expected, as well), in lieu of the minority language, English, which she continues to understand perfectly well but uses less and less by the day. It is becoming clearer each day that elective bilingualism works well at an initial stage, but needs further measures to shore up the minority language pole in the bilingual continuum as the child grows up and starts developing social networks.

6.2.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS.

It is time now to review this study's working hypothesis, as well as its research questions, as detailed in paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6 above, and to analyse to what extent my research hypothesis has proven right or wrong and if the research questions presented can be answered. The following paragraphs will constitute my main analysis in this research project.

My working hypothesis for this dissertation has been:

"In a monolingual context, it is possible to achieve a high degree of simultaneous bilingualism (proficiency in understanding any sentence about routines and everyday activities, expressing feelings, needs, etc., in both languages) in oral skills in children during early infancy, by using elective bilingualism and One Parent One Language (OPOL) strategies, provided that at least one of the parents is proficient in the second language (L2), and that the amount of exposure to the L2 is, at least, of 20%".

I consider this hypothesis has been confirmed. It is reasonable to affirm, based on the case study analysed in this project, that **elective bilingualism has got fairly serious possibilities of success**, with appropriate reinforcement of the OPOL strategy, especially by means of extensive use of music, games, cartoons and media in the minority language.

The analysis of the case study in this research projects shows that the use of available media and extensive use of games and songs proves invaluable in helping simultaneous bilingualism set in place, mainly due to two main reasons: first, it raises the exposure, and therefore the input of the minority language to the child, which otherwise would be limited to communication with the bilingual parent. If exposure drops below 20%, elective bilingualism has got little chances of success (Pearson, 2008, p. 116). By providing extra input, media helps shore up the child's minority language linguistic development and, therefore, promotes a bilingual development.

Second, when a child has fun while learning, there are inherent advantages to linguistic and cognitive developments. Music and games definitively provide this fun bit necessary to promote learning. By carrying out activities pleasant to children in the minority language we are providing them with a frame on which they can build adequate linguistic development. The "game of shapes" (see transcript in 5.1.1. above) is a clear example of how a game related with images and visual learning can boost vocabulary learning in the minority language. Music has also proven invaluable in contributing to my daughter's linguistic development of English, often directly associated with vocabulary and grammar development and progress.

There is an important caveat in here, and it is that this study has covered a period between birth and 3:5, a period of life known as "early childhood" which comes right before a toddler grows into a boy or a girl and starts developing social networks. From the observations in this case study we can deduce that it is precisely the establishment of the first social networks what determines to a great extent language choice concerning productive skills. My working hypothesis has proven right because it was meant to study precisely my case study, which covered a timespan of 3 years and 5 months from birth.

Another aspect that we should factor in is that this study has covered a period of language use only through oral skills (understanding and speaking), as 3:5 is an age when children start learning to read but still cannot do, much less write. If by the time toddlers start establishing social networks they make a choice for the majority language - logically the language spoken by their peers - it seems reasonable to assume that reading and, especially, writing will be developed mainly in precisely that majority language. If this is the case, simultaneous bilingualism will be very hardly achieved, unless other circumstances concur.

What could these "other circumstances" be? When analysing the Saunders case in paragraph 3.4.2. above, it was established that Dr. Saunders was eventually successful in rearing bilingual children through elective bilingualism, as his family ultimately

moved to Germany and his children were able to complete their education in German. That seems to me to be a big "AS". What the Saunders case may be telling us is that elective bilingualism might only obtain plain success if the nuclear family moves to a society where the previously minority language is a/the majority language. Or perhaps, it is only necessary that the nuclear family makes frequent trips to (a) country (ies) where the minority language is employed as a community language, and the child experiences the need to and positive effects of employing that language.

I will now turn to the research questions on which this project was oriented. I consider I have already answered, at least partially, the first of the research questions in the discussion of my working hypothesis above:

- Is the method of elective bilingualism combined with the OPOL strategy effective in achieving a fairly high degree of simultaneous bilingualism in children within monolingual contexts? What inherent advantages or limitations, if any, are there to this method?

I believe elective bilingualism has been proven to possess clear advantages in setting the initial stages of a child's bilingual development and, therefore, cannot but be considered inherently beneficial. It can certainly help toddlers grow into bilingual infants, up until the time when they start developing social networks, as the case study in this dissertation clearly demonstrates.

As concerns elective bilingualism's limitations, it appears that it could not suffice by itself to produce a bilingual adult, as a child grows up and starts setting social networks, which is approximately the time when children begin developing their reading and writing skills. This end cannot be completely confirmed or ruled out from the longitudinal case study in this research project because it finishes right at the point when this change begins to occur, and should need further research.

For the purpose of the analysis in this dissertation, it seems reasonable to state that elective bilingualism can help set the foundations for a potential bilingual adult up to

the point when a toddler becomes a boy / girl and starts setting their social relationships, but may need further action to guide a child through infanthood into becoming a bilingual teenager and later a bilingual adult.

The second research question for this project was:

- What can this study provide to Linguistics in terms of theory induction, if anything? Can anything be inferred concerning elective bilingualism and OPOL strategy used in monolingual contexts to raise bilingual children that could be of use for any researcher in this field?

Bold as it may seem to produce theory induction from a single case study with one informant only, I would like to go ahead and postulate an assertion I have found to derive from the case study in this essay that might be of help to establish potentially future theory in the field of bilingualism:

Elective bilingualism combined with an OPOL strategy in monolingual contexts can achieve positive results and, therefore, it is possible and desirable as a method to achieve BFLA. Its results may be variable, depending on many factors, the very child being the most determining of them all, as every child has a linguistic development of their own. Regardless of whether a bilingual adult will eventually follow a bilingual toddler or not and under which conditions this may ultimately happen, elective bilingualism can definitively achieve a fair degree of bilingualism in young children, and this can only mean that the whole set of advantages inherent to bilingualism is rendered to those children reared under elective bilingualism conditions (the Set Conditions of this work).

Even if elective bilingualism eventually fails by itself, without further circumstances concurring (like the nuclear family moving or making frequent trips to a society where the initially minority language is a majority language) to produce adult bilinguals, something which this research project cannot confirm or discard, it can help produce a toddler with "**bilingual hues**". This means that elective bilingualism can help

children become more tolerant, more acceptant of diversity and capable of more divergent thinking - i.e. capable of developing multiple solutions to a single problem. Furthermore, even in the worst case scenario, in which a child abandons the productive use of the minority language, elective bilingualism is still useful in having provided a child with the necessary skills and language knowledge to become a bilingual adult in their L1 and in that language, and also with the metalinguistic knowledge to become proficient in any other language during their period as teenagers and later in life.

Concerning the third research question for this dissertation,

- How can the analysis of this case study help future developments in the field of elective bilingualism, combined with OPOL strategy, achieve childhood bilingualism in monolingual contexts? What could be the next step for anyone wishing to carry out follow-on research on this method?

I consider a possible contribution to Linguistics and specifically to infant bilingualism the above mentioned finding of elective bilingualism being capable of creating "bilingual hues" in monolingual contexts that can set the base for further bilingual linguistic development. Therefore, I consider worth researching into the possibilities and reaches of these bilingual hues, whether they suffice by themselves to pave the way for a potential bilingual child or not, and if so, what supporting elements they may need.

The work in this project leaves a partially unanswered working hypothesis because of too short a timespan for its case study and, therefore, it calls for further investigation to receive the baton and carry out follow-on research in elective bilingualism at exactly the same point where this one has stopped, i.e., just before a toddler grows into a boy / girl and starts developing social networks. This further research should aim at determining the extent of the impact that the setting up of these new social networks has got on the linguistic development of a child that has been reared with elective bilingualism hitherto. Elective bilingualism is a relatively new discipline with a full range of possibilities yet to explore…

7.   CONCLUSSIONS.

As far as BFLA is concerned, Elective Bilingualism in combination with an OPOL strategy is a viable and desirable tool to obtain positive results to pave the way for a potentially bilingual child, in monolingual contexts. Furthermore, this child could eventually grow up into a potentially bilingual adult, but further research would be needed to ascertain this end.

Elective Bilingualism is a proven method to obtain positive results in early childhood in monolingual contexts, up until the point when a toddler starts developing social networks. These positive results manifest themselves in the form of "bilingual hues", that allow a toddler to develop productive oral skills in two languages, and provide him or her with metalinguistic knowledge of two languages that can serve as a frame for further linguistic development.

Because it finishes at precisely the time when a toddler starts setting up social networks, this project has not been able to determine how long the effects of elective bilingualism can last into early childhood or into the teenage period, or what reinforcements it may need to shore up its early achievements.

In sum, **elective bilingualism combined with OPOL strategy in monolingual contexts can create bilingual hues that can definitively set in place the foundations, and even pave the way, for a potentially bilingual adult. However, it is unclear whether it suffices by itself, as it seems clear that when toddlers grow into boys /girls and start developing social networks in the majority language, they gradually and naturally start abandoning the productive use of the minority language**.

7.1. ADVICE TO PARENTES WHO OPT FOR ELECTIVE BILINGUALISM.

This research project is based on a longitudinal case study of the bilingual linguistic development of my three and a half-year-old daughter. On top of the conclusions found in relation to Linguistics and, more specifically, to BFLA, I consider it worth dedicating a few lines to provide other parents who may try to follow this method with useful tips based on my experience.

Elective bilingualism in combination with an OPOL strategy in monolingual contexts is a method that intends to bring up children able to make use of oral skills in two languages up to the point when these children start Primary School. These two languages, by definition of the above mentioned conditions, have got an asymmetrical relationship, with one of them being the community and extended family's language, and therefore, a majority language in the local conditions, and the other one a minority language.

The most important thing to be aware of about this asymmetry is that **the minority language in elective bilingualism will need fostering, encouraging and coaxing, but never forcing**. This simple rule had already been stated by Dr. Saunders and I have followed as rigorously as possible, to good avail. Using parental discourse strategies that tend towards the monolingual end (of the minority language), such as minimal grasp, expressed guess or repetition (see paragraph 3.4.1. above) is an excellent approach to this much needed coaxing, without forcing, because they enable a parent to encourage the use of the minority language in a non-imposing fashion.

The next important thing to know about the already mentioned asymmetry is that we need to make the two languages converge as much as possible, and we can fill the gap by providing as much exposure as possible to the minority language. In current days, it is easy to have access on the internet to any kind of media in many different languages. If the minority language in your case is English, as has been my case, then the availability of material is, literally, as much as you want and considerably more. Therefore, you may want to make a selection of what would be best for you to offer to your child. Here is what I recommend:

- Music is a must. Music fosters cognitive and linguistic development, and almost every child loves it. Choose games and cartoons that make extensive use of nursery rhymes and other simple, educative, funny songs. Play music at moments when your child can associate it with pleasant moments, such as tea-time or bath time. Sing as much as you can to and with him or her.

- Set the audio in your TV shows and cartoons in the minority language whenever possible. If your minority language is English, that is almost always. If you do this from the very beginning in a consistent manner, a point can rise when your child does not want to watch TV in the majority language (it is my case right now as I write these lines).

- Select contents adequate to your child's age and avoid especially cartoons with fight-related contents that may have visual attraction to them but teach little. Go for simple, childish cartoons with songs and games.

- Select games that can have visual associations (such as flash cards), which coax lexical development (i.e., learning vocabulary). Our brain works mainly with images. Anything that is learnt visually, through images, remains in our long-term memory for, self-explanatorily, a long time.

- Read frequently and abundantly to your child. Reading fosters linguistic development, not surprisingly. Make sure you use books of tales full of images, for the above mentioned reasons.

- Play games in the minority language as much as you can. The pleasant feeling of having fun is directly related to a higher, quicker degree of learning. By associating the minority language with happy moments, your child will feel prone to use it and more comfortable when you use it; they will learn it in a more efficient manner; and, last but not least, you will enjoy those moments and cherish those memories forever.

One final double piece of advice:

- Do not be afraid of what other people may think or say about you speaking a minority language that it is clearly not your L1. Do not be shy, use it. It is good for your child, that is all that counts. Bilingualism promotes tolerance and acceptance of otherness, it

is associated with positive cognitive development, and it will help your child in their career. Do not let others' ignorance or prejudice stop you from providing these advantages to your son or daughter.

- Do not be worried about your lack of fluency or strong accent having a negative impact in your child's linguistic development. Anything that fosters bilingualism is positive. By using another language, you are facilitating its use in your child. If you do not seem to find the right word or sentence, use a synonym or a circumlocution / periphrasis and look up later what you wanted to say. If you are not sure about a word's pronunciation, use a synonym and look up later how that word is pronounced (for example, here: https://howjsay.com). You do not need a complete mastery of that L2, only a fair level of proficiency and a good deal of will to use it.

Always be supportive of your child's development, and never make fun of him or her. Codemixing can be hilarious, just try not to laugh at your child's mixed utterances in front of him or her, or comment on what they said in a comical manner. It may give them the wrong feeling that they are doing something they should not do. A smile is always more supportive (and more elegant) than a laughter.

7.2.   GOING FORWARD. POTENTIAL FUTURE RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF ELECTIVE BILINGUALISM.

Hitherto, elective bilingualism used in combination with the OPOL strategy to achieve simultaneous bilingualism in monolingual contexts is a field with little research.

The findings in this project may hopefully cue reflection on the bilingual hues achievable by this method and spark future research into the possibilities and limitations already reflected upon in paragraph 6.2. above.

Although generalizability is hardly possible with a single case study, it seems reasonable to state that this method can obtain positive results. If it has been able to work out for the informant in this case study, there is not a reason why it should not be put into good use. Even if results from this case apply only to the point when a toddler starts attending Primary School and starts developing friendships with their peers, and we cannot be sure about the rest of their linguistic development, the

positivity of having achieved bilingual hues in this single case study seems reason enough to proclaim this method a valid tool in Bilingual First Language Acquisiton.

The main question to be answered seems to be: What comes next?

What happens with elective bilingualism when a toddler reaches the age of setting social networks (which naturally will use the majority language and that must inevitably have an impact on the child's further use of the minority language) remains open to investigation. Also, the important question about whether elective bilingualism suffices by itself or not to achieve perdurable simultaneous bilingualism that can help a bilingual child become a bilingual teenager, will need dedicated efforts to be answered.

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