SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

Book review:

Petra Bos, *Development of bilingualism. A study of school-age Moroccan children in the Netherlands.* Tilburg: Tilburg University Press 1997, 192 pp. [Studies in Multilingualism 8]

This is another excellent book in the series *Studies in Multilingualism* of the Tilburg University Press. Like the book by J. Aarsen, this one is focused on bilingual narrative structure (in this case, Moroccan bilingual children in the Netherlands).

The book is structured very well and contains an introduction, five chapters, conclusions and discussion, bibliography, six appendices and a summary in Dutch.

The Introduction (Chapter 1) presents different definitions of bilingualism, an overview of the literature on grammatical and pragmatic competence, and of the study itself: *grammatical competence* (dealing with *anaphoric reference* and *relative clauses*) and *pragmatic competence* (dealing with *topic continuity* and *temporality*). Three groups of children are the object of the study (bilingual Moroccan children from the Netherlands, Dutch monolingual and Moroccan monolingual children) and are divided into two age groups: 4-7 year old and 8-10 year old.

Chapter 2 (Design of the Study) introduces the key questions addressed in the study:

1) How are the grammatical systems of bilingual Moroccan children elaborated in the age range between 4 and 11 in the first and in the second language?
2) How do bilingual Moroccan children in the age range between 4 and 11 learn to master pragmatic rules for anchoring discourse structure in narrative production?

The study examines the development of anaphoric reference and relative clauses (grammatical competence) and development of topic continuity and temporality (pragmatic competence) in children's narratives. The groups of informants (25 children in each group), the data collection (semi-longitudinal) and data transcription, as well as the tasks which are given to the children, are presented. Transcribing the data the conventions of CHAT are used and ANOVA for statistical analyses.

Chapter 3 (Anaphoric reference) is in fact the first chapter where the data are analyzed. Here the author tries to answer the following research questions:

– what is the difference in the pattern of acquisition of bound and free anaphors?
– what is the difference in the distributional pattern of errors, as regards the error types?
– what is the difference in the pattern of acquisition of intersentential reference and intrasentential reference?

In order to find the answers to these questions, P. Bos organizes experiments: an oral task (one sentence-four pictures matching task with a focus on the difference between the bound anaphor "himself" and the free anaphor "him") and a reading task (eight stories were used, as followed by a multiple choice question with four possible answers). The results show that for the difference between the correct scores in L1 and L2, the factor Language turned out to be the significant one in both age groups. There was a significant difference in their performance on the two types of anaphor. In the reading task only the factor Distance turned out to be a significant factor, i.e., scores on stories with intersentential reference were higher than on those with intrasentential reference.

Chapter 4 deals with the acquisition of "Relative clauses". The questions which are answered in this chapter are:

– what is the hierarchy of complexity of the different sentence types (i.e., *ss, so*, and *oo*) in Moroccan Arabic and Dutch?
– what is the hierarchy of complexity of the different word orders?
– what kinds of errors do children make when processing relative clauses?

In order to answer these questions an experiment was used. The children had toy animals in front of them and were asked to act out each sentence they heard. The type of sentence was as in the following one:

The bear that kisses the monkey strokes the lion.

A total of 32 sentences were divided over two sessions of 16 sentences each (with intervals of at least one week).

The results show that the Moroccan bilingual children perform poorly on Dutch *ss* and *oo* sentences, but better on *svo* than *ovs* order sentences.

"Topic Continuity" in the children's narratives is presented in Chapter 5. The questions which P. Bos answers in this chapter are:

– what nominal and pronominal expressions do the informants use in Moroccan Arabic and Dutch, when introducing or maintaining reference, or switching from one referent to another?
– what developmental patterns can be found?

As stimulus material for data collection the *frog story* is used, and the collected data are transcribed using the CHILDES coding system. Analyzing the results in the case of reference maintenance, the younger bilingual children make more reference to the *dog* and the older children make more to the *boy*. By switching the reference the younger children predominantly use definite nouns switching to the dog and use definite nouns, pronouns and zero references to switch to the boy. The same phenomenon is observed in older children as well. For the maintenance of reference it is observed that the proper nouns are used from age 6 onwards, but not very often until age 9. By switching reference to the dog the children use high percentages of definite nouns.

Chapter 6 (Temporality) tries to find the differences between the bilingual and mono-lingual children regarding:

– the anchor tenses they use;
– the aspectual markers they use;
– the temporal adverbials they use.

In this chapter the Tense and Aspect of Moroccan Arabic in comparison with the Tense and Aspect of Dutch are presented. And for finding the developmental features of the use of tense and aspect in the children's narratives the same data from the *frog story* are used by the author. The results show that the bilingual Moroccan children use mixed forms of tense retelling the story in Arabic. Measuring the aspectual features it is found that the bilingual group uses mostly *ka*+prefixed forms or the suffixed form in Arabic. As regards the use of temporal adverbials, the bilingual children seemed to be less able than the monolingual children to establish subtle temporal relations that characterize for good story-telling.. They strongly overgenerelize the use of certain forms.

In the Conclusions (Chapter 7) P. Bos summarizes the findings in the study and gives further ideas about what can still be done in this particular area.

Finally, I consider that this book brings new knowledge in several areas but particu-larly in the area of language development of bilingual Moroccan children. It can be used as a base for comparison with other types of Arabic bilingualism (Arabic-French, Arabic-German, Arabic-English, etc.)

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