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“Mmmmm... I LIKE ENGLISH!”
LINGUISTIC BEHAVIORS OF UKRAINIAN-ENGLISH
BILINGUAL CHILDREN

The purpose of this study was to characterize the *Ukrainian only* home and to document school-aged children's use of their two working languages, Ukrainian and English. 20 children, born in Ukraine (BIU) and born in Canada (BIC), for whom Ukrainian was L1 participated in the study. The children were enrolled in a Toronto school, which provides L1 support and instruction. Information about home language use and language behaviors came from three sources: a parental questionnaire, interviews conducted with teachers and staff, and language tasks presented to the children. This study has confirmed and extended earlier reports of language loss and the role of the school in L1 maintenance. The findings support the claim that L2 mastery comes in tandem with L1 loss and that the school, even one committed to L1 plays a minimal role in L1 maintenance. This study has accomplished two things. Firstly, it has identified early L1 loss behaviors exhibited by recent arrivals. Although attitudinal and subtle, they represent a first subtractive step in the moving away from L1 and set the groundwork for further, more evident language loss. Secondly, this study has invalidated the *X-only* (where X is a minority language) descriptor, noted in school records and widely used by minority parents to characterize home language use. Two considerations relevant to minority language research have emerged from the present study. Firstly, reliance on parental responses in the investigation of minority children's language behaviors is both restrictive and inaccurate. Secondly, information about minority parents' language resources or *linguistic funds of knowledge* (Gonzales, Moll, & Amanti, 2004) provides important background information in the study of minority children's linguistic behaviors. This study concludes with a message to minority parents about the need to become *dedicated language workers* (Fishman, 1996a). They would do well to adopt age-appropriate and reasonable L1 maintenance strategies, extend their children's L1 exposure and acknowledge the very real presence of L2 in their homes.

*English is the Wal-Mart of languages:
convenient, huge, hard to avoid, superficially friendly,
and devouring all rivals in its eagerness to expand.*
(Abley, 2003)

Introduction

Minority language children find themselves at a linguistic, social and cultural disadvantage when they arrive in Canada and begin their English-language schooling. Their knowledge of the host language is either non-existent or very limited, they have no school friends and they are unfamiliar with the *ways of English*. Yet, studies have shown that the very large majority of these children are strongly motivated and quickly overcome their triple disadvantage: they are driven to learn the host language, they want to make friends and are anxious to discover English distinctive social and behavioral patterns.

Immersed in the life of the school, minority language children, equipped with their L1, begin their journey of acquiring their new language: ...*they quickly discover that the key to acceptance is English, and they learn it so they can take part in the social life of the school.* (Wong Fillmore, 1991: 334).

Step-by-step, using their established L1 skills and knowledge, they add another *string to their bow* (Lambert, 1975:67), or add English onto their already established linguistic system. Such new or second language learning recalls Lambert's (1975) *additive* bilingualism and Gass and Selinker's (2001) *successive* bilingual acquisition.

The present ethnographic investigation presents a one-time dual-language profile of a group of school-aged children from Ukrainian-speaking homes. The following question provides focus and direction to the investigation: *What characterizes the nature of the bilingualism of these minority language children?*

Landry & Allard's (1991) model of the determinants of additive and subtractive bilingualism provides the framework for the investigation. This is followed by a review of prior research, where societal and individual factors of bilingualism are considered. A macro description of the fourth wave of Ukrainian immigration to Canada serves to contextualize the micro-level study of children's language behaviors. Findings are related to earlier reports. This is followed by conclusions and implications of the study.

Additive-subtractive bilingualism

For Lambert (1975), *additive bilingualism* or the addition of a *socially relevant language to one's repertoire of skills* (p. 67) occurs with no corresponding L1 loss and has positive cognitive consequences. In contrast to this, a *subtractive*

type of bilingualism is characterized by L1 *dropping* and replacement, where L1 and L2 become competitive, resulting in L1 weakening and loss and L2 preference and dominance.

Landry and Allard (1991) propose an integrative and interdisciplinary 3-level model of the determinants of additive and subtractive bilingualism, which links societal and individual variables and predicts, rather than explains, the nature of bilingualism. The nature of these interactions, they believe, will determine both the degree and type of bilingualism.

The focus of the *social-psychological level* is opportunity for language use or the strength of a bilingual's network of *linguistic contacts*, which is quite different from actual language use. The strength of these networks, according to Landry and Allard, can serve to evaluate the individual's opportunity for bilingual experience.

Landry and Allard differentiate between interpersonal and educational dimensions of language opportunity. Interpersonal opportunity focuses on face-to-face interaction, is cognitively undemanding and recalls Cummins' (2000, 2003) BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills) distinction. The educational dimension refers to formal, cognitively demanding, context-reduced language opportunity and matches Cummins' CALP or cognitive academic linguistic proficiency. The frequency and strength of opportunities for linguistic contacts in three *milieux de vie*, the home, the school and the language community, serve to identify language dominance and the additive and/or subtractive nature of the bilingualism.

The two components of the *psychological or personal* dimension of language behavior, language ability and the learner's willingness are *complementary and mutually reinforcing* (p. 207) and directly affect the use of each language.

Prior research

For Shin (2005), social and cultural information, although absent in many studies of childhood bilingualism, is a prerequisite for understanding the language behaviors of linguistic minority children. She found that social and educational factors contributed directly to language shift in Korean American families. For example, parental L2 attitudes were a function of length of stay in the USA and affected home language use. With a longer stay in the USA, parents became more tolerant and accepting of the presence of English in their Korean-speaking homes. This in turn affected their children's language behavior.

Her description of the Korean-American children's language use in two contexts, the home and the school, allows for the identification of their bilingualism as subtractive, characterized by increasing L1 loss.

Strategies minority language parents adopt in their attempts to maintain the home language is an important area of minority language research. For example, Shin (2005) describes the daily, two-hour *Korean time* strategy adopted by parents in response to the growing presence of L2 in the home and the *violent objection* (p.139) of the Ss to use L1. The strategy proved unsuccessful where Ss re-

mained silent, refusing to speak L1. This led frustrated and anxious parents to admit defeat, acknowledge the importance of communication with their children, even in L2, and tolerate and accept the shift to L2. Similar L1 maintenance strategies are described by Mills (2001) where Punjabi parents expected their children to repeat L1 lexical gaps five times and were punished (by silent unresponsive parents) for using L2 in the home (p. 392). Both parents and children were aware of the ineffectiveness of these strategies. Like their Korean counterparts, the anxious Punjabi parents grew to accept the shift to L2 in their homes.

In her two-part study of Ukrainian-English bilingual children, Chumak-Horbatsch (1999) found that the *Ukrainian-only* home language rule was far more effective with preschoolers who were raised in a Ukrainian-speaking home. With school entry came repeated violation of the home language rule resulting in maternal uncertainty, even confusion about its effectiveness. By the last year of elementary school, mothers reported a new tolerance towards the use of English in the home and admitted that the *Ukrainian-only* rule was *official* only.

Over thirty years ago, Lambert (1975) wrote that the school has an *important educational task* in dealing with minority language children. Educators, Lambert believed, had a responsibility to assist children who come without knowledge of the host language and to ensure that *that they can profit from an additive form of bilingualism*. This implied a positive language experience for minority language children, where L2 is acquired with the expectation that the L1 will continue to develop.

Since Lambert's general directive of the school's responsibility of promoting additive bilingualism, numerous researchers have written about the reality and the price of acquiring the new, dominant language. Post Lambertian educational writings continue to remind educators about the importance of embracing and supporting linguistic diversity (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2004, Cantoni, 1996, Waiste, 1994). Educators are reminded that *they can do much* to help minority language children in the educational context. Professional practice suggestions include the avoidance of criticism and put-downs of minority languages and language comparing. A number of authors even suggest that educators try to learn minority children's home languages. Cantoni's (1996) four-part, school-wide minority language initiative supports L1 maintenance and includes (a) dissemination of information, (b) attitudinal change, (c) sustained action and (d) creation of opportunities for using the minority language. She writes:

The school can and must become a strong promoter of minority language preservation and transmission instead of continuing to be one of the main agents of its endangerment.

In contrast to the above, the school has been blamed for creating serious social and linguistic problems for minority language children. Wong Fillmore (1991) describes the school's focus on L2 acquisition as subtractive, characterized by

linguistic assimilation, whereby mastery of L2 comes in tandem with erosion and loss of children's home language. This subtractive process, she goes on to say, negatively affects minority children's adjustment and has serious social consequences. In a similar tone, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) describes the school as an agent of *minority language endangerment*. Too often, she writes, L1 classes are tolerated only because the silent agenda is hasty L2 acquisition. Fishman (1991) strongly believes that when compared with other social factors the school plays a *negligible* role in L1 maintenance.

One way of promoting minority language maintenance in the school context has been the inclusion of L1 as a school subject. Such language additions to the curriculum are offered daily for 15-30 minutes, are conducted in the minority language and include, in addition to literacy instruction, subjects such as history, geography, religion and cultural study. While such L1 curriculum additions are welcomed by many parents anxious to maintain the home language, they have been described as inadequate and even deceptive in terms of long range L1 maintenance. For example, Cantoni (1996) warns that when a minority language becomes an academic subject it stops being used for *meaningful communication in authentic social interactions*. Fishman (1996a) claims that when a minority language becomes part of the school curriculum, it becomes *institutionalized* like geography and math. As a school subject, it becomes artificial and programmed and will not be used in social interaction. It becomes something to celebrate, to study and teach, not a tool of meaningful verbal interaction.

Fishman (1996a) places the main responsibility of minority language maintenance at the feet of the home and the language community. In contrast to the *institutionalization* of the minority language in the school, he believes that it must become *vernacularized* in the home and in the community, the two contexts where languages are *alive*. This means that it takes on a meaningful life of its own, characterized by continuous intimate, informal and spontaneous social interaction, resulting in the formation of language bonds. It also means that parents must become committed and *dedicated language workers*, a role Fishman describes as *the hardest part of stabilizing a language*. They must create a vibrant, relevant language community for their children and not rely on the school to carry out their language transmission and maintenance tasks.

A study by Chumak-Horbatsch (1999) supports Fishman's views about the limited role the school plays in L1 maintenance. She found that even a supportive school, where L1 instruction was included in the curriculum, failed to foster the continued use of L1 and develop positive L1 attitudes in Ukrainian-English bilingual children.

Landry and Allard's *personal* level of the determinants of additive and subtractive bilingualism, which focuses on the views learners have about the new language, has been missing in most second language childhood studies. This dimension of the bilingual situation is important as it reflects bilingual children's *metalinguistic awareness* or their ability to *think about and reflect upon the na-*

ture and functions of language (Baker 2006:156). This level gives bilingual children a voice and allows them to speak about their language beliefs, attitudes and the degree of willingness with which they approach their new language. For Smith (1999), a key component in the study of minority language loss is the child:

... it is not the mere existence of hindrances or deterrents in the environment that determines language shift, but rather the children's recognition, interpretation and internalization of those negative messages from broader school community that prompts language loss. (p.270)

Smith found that grade one Spanish-English bilingual children were sensitive to social and personal contexts that determine language use in the classroom environment. They assessed their *linguistic ecology* or surrounding communicative behaviors and the physical and social contexts in which they occurred. This assessment of surrounding L1 and L2 language dynamics includes language status, prestige, and power and influences the children's own language preferences and use. For example Smith's Ss quickly understood *the power and prestige* of L2, which led them to prefer L2 and *transition away* from their L1.

Mills (2001) investigated the language attitudes and views that third generation Asian (Punjabi, Mirburi Urdu) -English children and adolescents (ages 5 to 19) have about their bilingualism. Her Ss were aware that L2 was their preferred and superior language and that their L1 skills were limited. They admitted to L1 lexical gaps, which they filled with L2 and reported that, if need be, they would choose L2 over L1. They exhibited sensitivity to social and personal contexts that determine language use. They described L1 as the intimate, heritage, family and community language, while L2 was presented as public and *serviceable* (p.395).

In sum, both societal and individual profiles are important in the investigation of children's dual language behaviors. In attempting to predict the nature of children's bilingualism, one must provide a language community backdrop, describe the frequency and strength of linguistic contacts and consider children's personal understanding of managing their two languages. This holistic approach represents a real challenge and explains, perhaps, why many bilingual studies report on single factors of second language acquisition.

Ethnographic inquiry

The present study of home and school language dynamics represents an *ethnographic quest*, (Pawluch, Shaffir & Miall, 2005) which documents the language world of one group of immigrant children and their families. As a holistic ethnographic attempt, the study begins with a brief macro description of the fourth wave of Ukrainian immigration, which serves to situate the micro in-depth investigation, a focused documentation of home and school language behaviors.

Macro description. Fourth wave of Ukrainian immigration to Canada

The *fourth wave* refers to immigrants from Ukraine who came to North America from 1991 to the present day. (For a review of Ukrainian immigration to Canada see Chumak-Horbatsch, 1993.) In 2001 the number arriving in Canada stood at approximately 18,000 to 20,000. The survey conducted by Isajiw (in press) showed that most (approximately 86%) of these immigrants from Ukraine arrive with high educational qualifications from polytechnic institutes and /or universities. Even though they tend to remain somewhat distanced from local Ukrainian Canadians, they are keenly interested in Ukrainian matters. Most read Ukrainian and Canadian newspapers, 50% send their children to a Ukrainian school and 92% feel that the transmission of the Ukrainian culture is important.

Micro investigation. The study: Context

The context for the present study was a Toronto elementary (JK to Grade 8) school referred to here as Trainway School. The school opened in 1961, and two years later, was included in the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB). Students are provided with an English-language plus L1 curriculum. The Ukrainian addendum translates into a half-day Ukrainian program for the Kindergarten (both Junior and Senior) children and 30 minutes of daily Ukrainian instruction (literacy, history, geography, culture) for the older children (grades 1 to 8). Trainway School is within walking distance of a Ukrainian Rite Catholic cathedral, allowing for close contact between the clergy and the school community. In addition to weekly Ukrainian-language religious instruction for all of the grades, the priests lead church services and attend school concerts, festivals and celebratory events.

At the time of the study, one-third of the teachers at Trainway School were speakers of Ukrainian. These included both classroom and special subject teachers: ESL (English as a Second Language), Ukrainian, Kindergarten, French, and Music. Also, the school Principal and the school settlement worker were Ukrainian-speaking.

Since the middle 90's, Trainway School has witnessed an ever-increasing number of children from Ukraine. For example, at the time of the study, school records showed that Ukrainian was both L1 and the home language for 73% of the children who were both Ukraine- and Canadian-born. Enrolling their child/ren in Trainway School represents an important *language maintenance* step for parents, where, they believe, daily opportunity will be provided to use and further develop the home language.

Subjects

20 parents responded to a letter of invitation and met the following two criteria: Ukrainian was (a) the home language and (b) the child's L1. Of the 20 children who participated in the study, 10 were born in Ukraine (BIU) and 10 were born in Canada (BIC). Table 1 shows grade distribution for the two groups.

Table 1. BIU and BIC grade

Grade	BIU	BIC	Total
Kindergarten	2	2	4
Grade 1	1	1	2
Grade 2	2	4	6
Grade 3	2	2	4
Grade 6	1	0	1
Grade 7	2	1	3
Total	10	10	20

Born in Ukraine (BIU)

Of the 10 BIU Ss, 5 were male and 5 were female. Table 2 shows age of arrival in Canada for the BIU Ss. It also shows age and number of years in Canada. 5 of the Ss were 5 years old or younger at the time of arrival in Canada. 5 of the Ss were between 6 and 13 years old. 7 of the 10 BIU Ss were in Canada for two years and less, while 3 were in Canada for 6 years.

Born in Canada (BIC)

The 10 BIC Ss ranged in age from 6 to 12 years. 5 were male and 5 were female. Table 3 shows the sex and age of the BIC Ss at the time of the study.

Table 2. BIU: Ss information

S code	Sex	AOA	Age	Stay in Canada
HU K	F	5	6	8 months
NUK	F	11	12	8 months
LOK	M	5	6	1 year
LOB	M	7	8	1 year
DEY	F	6	7	1 year
TOS	F	4	6	2 years
SAT	M	10	12	2 years
LES	M	7	13	6 years
DOH	F	3	9	6 years
PAH	F	3	9	6 years

Table 3. BIC: Ss age and sex

S code	Sex	Age
KOS	M	6
LOW	F	6
WAS	F	7
LAG	M	8
TAP	M	8
TEV	F	8
REG	M	8
HEC	F	9
JOB	F	9
TAR	M	12

Methodology

The study consisted of three parts. The first part was a Questionnaire where parents were asked to respond to questions about the following aspects of home language use: dominant language of parents and child/ren, spousal language(s), parental languages (known/used), language(s) used with child/ren, home language rules and children's response to these rules. The purpose of the Questionnaire was to provide specification for the *Ukrainian-only* entry found in the school records.

The second part included interviews with Trainway School teachers and staff. The intention of the interview was to gauge teacher and staff dual language views and attitudes.

By way of preparation, for the third and final part of the study, the presentation of the language tasks, the author took an active role in the life of the school in order to get a *language sense* of the school collectively and the Ss individually. Over two school years, the author, (a speaker of Ukrainian and English and a certified classroom teacher) became a regular school visitor meeting individually and informally with Ss (in the halls, schoolyard, library), chatting with teachers and staff, sharing books with groups of children, attending school concerts and, on occasion, meeting with parents.

It was considered imperative to demonstrate to the Ss that *both* Ukrainian and English were working languages for the author. During interactions with the children, the author used both Ukrainian and English. Languages were switched but never mixed. Language task materials (picture cards, card games and writing cards) were prepared especially for the present study. Classroom teachers approved reading selections for novelty and age- and grade- appropriateness.

Language choice

As each child arrived for the language tasks, the author greeted him/her in both Ukrainian and in English. Each S was then asked to select the language in which s/he wanted to begin the language tasks.

Language tasks

Language tasks were presented individually to each S in Ukrainian and in English. Three narration tasks (a card game, a picture card and a story retelling task) were presented to the Kindergarten Ss. The older Ss were presented with two of the narration tasks (not the card game) and two literacy tasks, reading and writing.

During the narration tasks, the Ss were invited to give a verbal account of events, to describe actions and to retell a story. When required, encouragement and prompts were used by the author: *Aha, Mhmm, What else? Why do you think so? Have you ever seen something like this? Can this really happen? And then what happened?*

The older Ss were presented with novel and level-appropriate reading material. Also, after choosing a picture card, they were asked to: *Write about the picture you have chosen.* The Ss were given as much time as they needed to complete the writing task. As required, the author provided encouragement by asking: *What else can you write about the picture?*

Language task assessment

The original 9 scoring bands of the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) were reduced to the following three-level analytic rubric and were used to measure Ukrainian and English task performance: (a) a *strong* score reflected fully operational command of the language, (b) a *moderate* score showed partial command, coping with overall meaning in most situations, and (c) a *weak* score meant the ability to convey and understand only general meaning, and frequent breakdowns in communication.

For the narration tasks, dimensions included attitude, pronunciation, word choice, standard grammar, organization, originality of content, logical consistency, sequencing of events, presentation of main ideas and creativity. For the reading task, dimensions included attitude, fluency, pronunciation, task completion, word recognition, self-corrections and speed. Writing task dimensions included attitude, conventional punctuation, level of syntax, word mechanics, length, legibility, standard grammar and imaginative response.

Findings and discussion

The findings are divided into three parts. Part one provides a summary of responses provided by parents in the Questionnaire. Part two reports on the interviews conducted with the teachers and school staff. Part three is divided into three

sub-sections: (a) a language portrait of the Ss, (b) language task performance and (c) the nature of the Ss' bilingualism.

Keeping in mind the changing and dynamic nature of bilingualism, the findings represent a one-time bilingual *snapshot* of the Ss dual language ability.

Part one: Parental language resources

Ukrainian was the first language of 36 of the 39 parents. L1 in the remaining three cases was English (one BIC father) and Russian (two BIU mothers). Most of the parents (31/39 or 80%) listed Ukrainian as their dominant language. The three parents who listed Russian as their dominant language were born in Ukraine while the two who listed English as their dominant language were born in Canada. In most cases, Ukrainian was reported as the spousal language. In four cases, two languages were listed as spousal languages: Ukrainian and Russian, and Ukrainian and Polish. Not surprisingly, Ukrainian (alone, or combined with Russian) was used more often by born-in-Ukraine parents.

All of the parents knew and used more than one language: 10% knew five languages, 28% knew four languages, 59% were trilingual and 16% were bilingual. Fathers knew more languages than mothers, most likely due to employment requirements. Languages known and used by parents included Ukrainian in combination with Russian, Polish, English, Romanian, Spanish, French and German.

Language(s) used with child/ren

In 14 of the 20 homes, Ukrainian was reported as the *only* home language used by parents. Ukrainian and Russian were used in two homes where the Ss were BIU, while Ukrainian and English were used in four homes where the Ss were BIC. All of the parents indicated that the home language rule was *Ukrainian-only*. Four parents reported that in reality this is not always the case, as the children use more English than Ukrainian in the home.

Languages known/used by the Ss

All of the parents reported that their children know more than one language. 75% of the Ss were reported as Ukrainian-English bilinguals while the remainder (25%) was listed as trilingual who, in addition to Ukrainian and English, knew and used Russian and/or Polish.

Responses provided by parents showed a mirror image of language dominance of the two groups of Ss. All of the BIC Ss were (with one exception) English-dominant, while BIU Ss (with one exception) were Ukrainian-dominant.

In sum, a four-part picture emerges from the responses: (i) the homes of the participants of the present study were *not* monolingual, (ii) languages other than Ukrainian were clearly present in the *Ukrainian-only* homes, (iii) parents had extensive and rich linguistic resources, and (iv) a great deal of English was present in the *Ukrainian-only* homes.

Thus the above picture invalidates the *Ukrainian-only* claim made by parents and shows that their responses do not always reflect an accurate picture of home language dynamics.

Part two: Interviews

All of the teachers reported that Trainway School does not have a language policy, leaving children free to speak the language that they are most comfortable with. Most of the school personnel felt that out-of-classroom contexts, such as recess, lunchroom and hallways were better suited to L1 use than were the classrooms. Both classroom and ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers reported that parents were eager and anxious for their children to learn English. A central topic for discussion during parent-teacher interviews was L2 progress and proficiency.

Ukrainian-language teachers reported that engaging BIC students was an ongoing challenge. This was especially difficult with the junior (4 to 6) and intermediate (7 and 8) grades, where some Ss asked to *sign out* of the Ukrainian language class: *Because I was born here and I don't remember that much Ukrainian and because I don't speak that much Ukrainian at home.*

Unwillingness of many BIC Ss to complete written assignments was a concern of the L1 teachers. This was confirmed in the L1 writing task where completed written work was at a lower level than English written work. Explanations provided by Ukrainian language teachers pointed to the home context. They felt that there is a strong relationship between parental L1 commitment and children's interest, attitude and proficiency in their native Ukrainian.

All of the non-Ukrainian speaking teachers spoke about the L1 life of the school positively, yet reported encouraging new arrivals to speak English. Some stated that effective L2 learning means increased exposure in both formal and informal contexts and the exclusion of other languages. They described what Shin (2005) calls a *revolving doors* approach, between home language monolingualism and English monolingualism, which provides new arrivals with *just enough L1 support to be mainstreamed into English-only instruction* (Shin 2006: 31). They expressed tolerance of a short-term *transition time* for the new arrivals where L1 is used in the classroom and peers serve as translators and interpreters. A number of teachers felt that quick L2 mastery should be encouraged and that L1 should not be taught in the school.

Thus, on the surface, Trainway School is L1-friendly and supportive. The L1 atmosphere, together with the L1 curriculum addendum, speak to the value and importance placed on the home language of the children. However, the school language picture described by teachers and staff, reveals an underlying L2 agenda characterized by a hasty transition to L2. This agenda finds support with parents who are anxious that their children master the host language.

Part three: Language portrait

Informal conversations with the Ss provided important information about language attitudes, home language use, L1 and L2 exposure and proficiency. Their comments served to confirm, elaborate, and at times contradict parental responses.

Parental reports of their children's language dominance were accurate and were confirmed by the Ss during informal conversations. All but one of the BIC Ss were English-dominant, as were the BIU Ss with a longer stay in Canada. The BIU Ss with a shorter stay in Canada were Ukrainian-dominant.

Comments provided by the Ss revealed that their *Ukrainian-only* homes were not monolingual as reported by parents. The Ss who had siblings, admitted to using *a lot* of English: *When no one is listening - no one knows. Sometimes I speak English with my sister - just sometimes. I speak much English at home.*

Like the Punjabi (Mills, 2001) and Korean (Shin, 2005) children, all of the Ss spoke of repeatedly violating the home language rule and of the ineffectiveness of parental language maintenance strategies. All spoke of parental disapproval, even anger when English was used in the home. Reminders to *speak Ukrainian* were frequent and caused children apprehension and, at times, guilt. Four Ss said that parents insisted on *Ukrainian-only* in the home because they claimed not to understand English. Yet children were aware of the fact their parents know, understand and use English: *My mother knows English but she says she doesn't.*

The 13 English-dominant Ss (10 BIC and 3 BIU) reported ease and preference in using English. They were aware of their stronger language and were negative about L1 use: *I don't know that much Ukrainian. It's hard to do projects in Ukrainian.* The Ukrainian-dominant recent arrivals voiced their strong, almost passionate attraction to L1: *Mmmmm, I like English. English is nice. English is so good. I was born in Ukraine but I speak English! When I came to Canada I didn't know a single word. I just knew „hi”. And now I speak!* Their dismissive L1 attitude had clear negative overtones: *But I know Ukrainian, it's better in English.*

Not surprisingly, exposure to English for the BIC Ss was extensive and outweighed exposure to Ukrainian. All 10 BIC Ss were exposed to English *formally* before coming to Trainway School. Four attended full and/or part-time English-speaking daycare in their preschool years. Two spent their Junior Kindergarten year in a regular Toronto school before coming to Trainway. At the time of the study, 8 of the 10 Ss were enrolled in English-speaking after-school programs such as music, art, sports, pottery, choir and/or ballet. Additional exposure to English included English-speaking friends, visits to the Public Library, access to English-language technology and media.

In comparison, exposure to L1 for the BIC Ss included limited home use, daily 30-minute Ukrainian classes, school celebrations and church attendance. The exception to this were the 2 Kindergarten Ss, who attended the half-day Ukrainian-language program at Trainway School. Also, two younger BIC Ss (ages 6

and 7) had Ukrainian language *immersion* experiences in the spring and summer months, when they were sent to Ukraine to spend time with grandparents.

Thus English played a central role in the lives of the English-dominant Ss. Their L2 linguistic contacts were more numerous than their L1 exposure. The English-speaking world of the BIC Ss was larger, more alive and preferred over their Ukrainian-speaking world.

In the homes of the Ukrainian-dominant BIU Ss with an 8-12 month Canadian stay, hereafter, *recent arrivals*, English was a challenge for the entire family. All of these Ss described home English-language encouragement and support provided by their fathers in hopes of improving their proficiency in the new language. *I speak English with my dad to help me learn it. My father knows lots of English so I speak English with him. I speak Ukrainian with my mom and practice English with my dad.*

The principal and several teachers reported that before immigrating to Canada, English language preparation is considered important for the parents, especially fathers, who will be working outside the home. However, the feeling among parents is that children do not require any English language preparation, as they will quickly and easily *pick it up* in school. Yet the recent arrivals described difficulties of arriving in school without any prior knowledge of English: *I learned English here in school and it was so tough because I was new and my teacher was like working with me for a month and I like knew it finally fast.*

Two older recent arrivals had English as a school subject in Ukraine. Yet they described their literacy skills as *OK* and admitted to having limited proficiency in spoken English: *I knew a little bit how to write. I knew a little bit how to read. I learned English but no talking. We learned to say again and again and to write.*

The initial L2 novelty and attraction of the recent arrivals was absent in the BIU Ss with a longer Canadian stay who exhibited a clear L2 preference and negative L1 attitudes. Performance on the language tasks, which follow, confirms this.

The language portrait presented above reveals home environments which are not L1 monolingual. The presence and preference of L2, combined with the ineffective L1 maintenance strategies adopted by parents, does not hold much promise for the preservation of the home language and points to ever increasing replacement of L1 with the majority L2.

Language task performance

In this section the following language performance features are described: language choice, L2 and L1 task performance, and mutual influencing. Based on the Ss' performance, findings are divided into three groups. *Group A* consisted of 4 BIC Ss, three L2-dominant and one L1 dominant, who were competent and comfortable in both of their working languages and who scored strong on all L1 and L2 language tasks. The parents of all of these Ss provided additional L1 exposure for their children. *Group B* included 9 L2-dominant Ss: 6 were BIC and 3

were BIU with a 6-year Canadian stay. Their strong L2 task performance came in tandem with weak L1 scores. *Group C* included 7 L1-dominant Ss, recent arrivals as well as those with a two-year Canadian stay, who scored strong on L1 tasks and whose L2 attraction and motivation resulted in impressive performance on the L2 tasks.

Language choice

Overall, language choice of the Ss was directly related to their language dominance and proficiency (Shin, 2005). Thus L2-dominant Groups A and B chose English and L1-dominant Group C chose Ukrainian. Reasons and explanations for language choice were related to: (a) proficiency: *Because I don't speak that much Ukrainian at home and at school.*, (b) home expectations: *My whole family is Ukrainian. Ukrainian is better because my whole family came from Ukraine. My whole family speaks Ukrainian and it should mean the main language for me.*, (c) an awareness of the wider language environment: *In Canada there's more English than Ukrainian.*, (d) country of birth: *I was born in Canada but I'm Ukrainian.* and (e) awareness of language ability: *English is not so good, I am not good in English. English is better. I have, like, 30 minutes of Ukrainian and much more of English.*

L2 task performance

For all three Groups, the L2 tasks were approached with enthusiasm and excitement. Enjoyment and interest were greatest during the narration tasks. Of the literacy tasks, reading was far more enjoyable than the writing task.

The two L2-dominant groups, A and B, scored strong on all of the L2 narration tasks. Their responses were characterized by lengthy descriptions, attention to detail (windows on buildings, a zipper on a boy's jacket) and background descriptions (bushes on the ground, clouds in the sky). Possible worlds of the depicted people and/or animals were presented. Emotion and drama were added to the story retelling with changed voices representing story characters. For example, expression and drama were part of the following comment about a fox: *He sure is sly - some people are like that - they want to trick you.* The one exception was a grade 7 S who, even though on task and co-operative, was anxious to complete the narration task.

All of the Group A and B Ss read enthusiastically with few errors. While their overall performance on the L2 writing task was strong, writing was not as enjoyable as reading, as witnessed in the haste with which they wrote.

For the L1-dominant Group C, the number of strong scores (more than half [58%] of all English tasks), show that within a relatively short stay in Canada, with no previous exposure to the host language (with the exception of the two older Ss for whom English was a school subject in Ukraine) they are managing both communicative and academic components of their new language.

The L2 narration tasks were enjoyable and challenging for the L1 dominant Group C recent arrivals. Their responses included pointing and short staccato-like responses, such as: *Cat is hopping. He's so fat. His tail is like handle.* The Group C Ss with an additional year in Canada and a richer lexicon produced longer responses: *The snowman has a carrot and it also has a broom instead of a hand and it doesn't have another hand and it has a hat and it's a yellow hat.* All of the Group C Ss were enthusiastic and focused as they read in their new language. For example, when presented with the reading material, a very anxious S asked: *You mean this page or the whole book? You know, I can read the whole book!* The Ss read slowly, asked for help, self-corrected, sounded out unfamiliar words, finger-followed the text and looked to the author for approval. The writing task was approached with reservation by the Group C Ss. Attempts were short and one Ss requested to return to the reading task.

The spoken L2 of all of the Ss included features of *pubilect* (Danesi 2003), a specialized mode of verbal communication found among teenagers and characterized by the use of discourse particles, reductions and numerous uses of the word *like*. This finding extends Danesi's *pubilect* users to school-aged second language learners.

Two kinds of conversational discourse particles (Green, 2000) were noted in the spoken English of all of the Ss: attitudinal discourse markers such as *well*, and *y'know*, and structural discourse markers such as the sentence-initial *OK* and *but*. Reduced modals such *wanna*, and *gonna* were widely used and the conjunction *because* was reduced to *cuz*. The word *like* was used as a meaningless particle with a focus function (The American Heritage Book of English Usage, 1996, Tagliamonte & D'Arcy, 2004), which served to focus on the action. Two examples follow: *The cat like ran down the stairs. She like doesn't work.*

L1 task performance

For Groups B and C, the enthusiasm noted during the L2 tasks was starkly absent during the L1 tasks. Group B for whom L1 was the weaker language, exhibited negative behaviors and appeared burdened during the L1 tasks. Unwillingness was evident in their body language (lowered heads, shrugged shoulders) as they spoke in lowered tones and avoided eye contact with the author. The following comments were made (in Ukrainian) by Group B Ss during the L1 language tasks: *I'm already tired. I forgot. I don't know. I want to go back to my class now. I don't want to do this. Can we do this in English?*

Group B's responses to the Ukrainian narration tasks were short and mechanical. They spoke quietly and responded to questions and prompts with shrugs and frowns reflecting their unwillingness. Pointing accompanied single word responses and sentences were short and repetitive: *Here is an X* and *This is an X* (where X was the name of an object or a person). The story-retelling task proved to be difficult as the Ss struggled to recall and narrate in a language in which they were

far from proficient. Their attempts consisted of single story elements, with no sequencing or structure.

The Group B Ss struggled with the L1 literacy tasks. Words were called out in a halting fashion and eye contact with the author was avoided. Writing attempts were short and included orthographic and agreement errors.

The L1-dominant Group C Ss were dismissive, almost negative during the L1 tasks. Aware of their L1 strength and proficiency they were eager to move onto the challenge of the L2 tasks. They repeatedly asked the author (in Ukrainian): *Now can I do this in English? Is it time to do this in English? Will we do this in English? I like more English than Ukrainian.* The English tasks, then, were viewed as a reward for completing the Ukrainian tasks. Upon completion of the Ukrainian tasks one S threw up her arms and said (in Ukrainian): *Hurray, finally in English!*

The narrative ability of the Group C Ss can be characterized as follows: explanations and description went beyond the pictures and stories; possible worlds were presented and events were related to personal experiences; changed voices added a sense of drama; lexicons were enormous and rich, flexible and productive grammatical and word (verbal and substantive) formations, and the use of idiomatic expressions and interjections. The following features, characteristic of native speakers from Ukraine were also noted: expressions such as *prosto, normal'no, nu, stalo pohano, dekoly, tut mova pro, spochatku, mozna skazaty*; many nouns and some adjectives were diminutivized; verb use was varied and extensive and included formations such as: *pidkradatysja, prybuty, rozdjahatysja, volodijty*. On numerous occasions, the particle-prompt *davaj*, which translates as *c'mon* or *let's* preceded 1ppIMP formations such as *Davaj hrajmo!* (*C'mon, let's play!*)

The L1 literacy tasks were unpopular with the Group C Ss who exhibited unwillingness and referred to the tasks as *schoolwork*. Four Ss requested additional narration tasks and spoke about their preference for conversation: *Can we just talk some more?* Even so, strong scores dominated the L1 reading and writing tasks with no showing of weak scores. For the Group C Ss, the L1 reading task was more enjoyable than the writing task, which was approached with hesitancy and unwillingness. Most of the Ss said that they would prefer to write in L2 because: *English, I need to practice English.*

Mutual influencing

Mutual influencing (Shin 2005), also referred to as language transfer, where a speaker makes use of established linguistic resources and where the stronger language is used to manage the weaker one, was noted in the speech of all of the Ss. In attempting to satisfy their communicative needs, then, the Ss make use of *all* of their linguistic resources

Overall, Group B used their L2 knowledge as they attempted the L1 tasks while the Group C Ss used their L1 knowledge to complete the L2 tasks.

In the recent arrivals, instances of L1 influence were noted in three differentiation situations that are vastly different from or absent in Ukrainian: sound substitution, article omission, and negation (Zhuktenko 1964, Gass & Selinker, 2001, Hakuta, 1976). This demonstrates two things about childhood second language learning: (a) that the Ss' phonological and grammatical L1 knowledge plays an important and active role in L2 acquisition, and (b) that L2 acquisition is a complex process driven, not by a universal single processing strategy but by a number of factors (Shin, 2005).

Sound substitution

The recent arrivals substituted the interdental sounds [θ] and [σ], (not found in Ukrainian), with either the voiced alveolar [d] sound or the voiceless [t] (Zhuktenko 1964: 40). The voiceless [t] was used as a substitute for [θ], in words like *think* and *arithmetic*, while the voiced [d] was used as a substitute for the [σ] sound in *the* and *mother*.

Article omission

The lack of overt definite *the* and indefinite *a* articles in Ukrainian meant that, in acquiring L2, the recent arrivals encountered a new and unknown grammatical category which caused them some difficulty. Article omission has been reported in studies of Japanese (Hakuta, 1976) and Korean (Shin, 2005) children whose native languages, like Ukrainian, lack an article system. While these reports describe children's *consistent* poor article performance, the present study found that L2 article acquisition was directly related to length of L2 exposure where only recent arrivals omitted all articles, as in: *Fox want to eat rabbit*.

Negation

In Ukrainian, like in other Slavic languages, double negation or the use of two (or more) negative markers in the same sentence is acceptable. For example, the English sentence, *I don't know anyone* would be translated thus: *Ja ne znaju nikoho*, which includes the negative particle *ne* and the negative adverb *nikoho* and translates literally as *I not know noone*. The following examples show how the recent arrivals transferred the Ukrainian negative formation rules onto their new language: *I never not see ladybug. They didn't do nothing. Promises to not tell nobody*.

Lexical borrowings

The limited L2 lexicons of the L1-dominant Ss meant filling L2 lexical gaps with L1 words. Two examples follow: *Here hacok (hook) missing. And khvylja (wave) came*. All of the recent arrivals *flagged* their code mixing (Genesee, Paradis & Crago, 2004:95) and asked the author (in L1) for help: *Jak skazaty vudka po anglijsky? (How you say fishing pole in English?)*. On occasion, these Ss switched to L1 as they attempted to demonstrate their knowledge: *I'll say this in Ukrainian*.

In addition to the above code mixing, all of the recent arrivals included L2 words in their L1 speech stream, as in: *Mene poklaly v hospital.* (*They put me in the hospital.*) and *Ja pryjkhala v September.* (*I arrived in September.*) When asked about this, they proudly reported that they *know some English*. Such code mixing is identified here as *participant-related* (as opposed to discourse-related) (Auer, 1995), with a showcasing function where the Ss were eager to demonstrate two things to their interlocutor: their newly acquired L2 lexical ability and their positive L2 attitudes.

The L2-dominant Ss mixed codes for quite a different reason: they filled L1 lexical gaps or forgotten words with L2 words, evidence of their diminishing L1 lexicon. Many of these were everyday nouns such as *fork*, *glass* and *cake*. Many L1 responses were *half-and-half*, where both L1 and L2 were used, as in *Vona prykhodyt' tut next year.*

L2 and L1 task performance has shown that the second language child learner uses established linguistic tools to navigate her two languages. The new learner approaches the majority language with three tools: enthusiasm, a positive attitude and established L1 skills. These help in the rapid acquisition of the new language. Yet performance on L1 tasks revealed the invoice of L2 acquisition: negative L1 attitudes, subtle turning away from L1 and a weakening of L1 skills.

The nature of the Ss' bilingualism: Bilingual report cards

Information provided by parents and school personnel, together with behaviors noted during the language tasks, allows for the preparation of *bilingual report cards* for the three groups of Ss. It is important to acknowledge here that such grouping tends to hide individual differences due to similar behaviors exhibited by each group (Baker, 2006).

Taken together, the *bilingual report cards* are more subtractive than additive. The bilingual situation of all of the Ss was characterized by the very real presence of L2 in the home and ineffective parental L1 maintenance strategies.

The bilingual situation of 80% of the Ss (Groups B and C) was subtractive to a lesser or greater degree, while the bilingual experience for the remaining 20% (Group A) was additive.

The 4 *Group A* Ss were all BIC and were identified as balanced Ukrainian-English bilinguals who were positive, competent and comfortable in both of their working languages and who scored strong on all L1 and L2 language tasks. Following Baker's (2006) definition, these Ss *understand the delivery of the curriculum in school in either language*. The parents of all of the *Group A* Ss, as reported by teachers, ensured extended L1 exposure for their children

The 9 *Group B* Ss, both BIC and BIU, were identified as L2-dominant English-Ukrainian bilinguals. Their L2 preference and strong L2 task performance came in tandem with negative L1 attitudes and weak L1 scores, resulting in a subtractive bilingual effect.

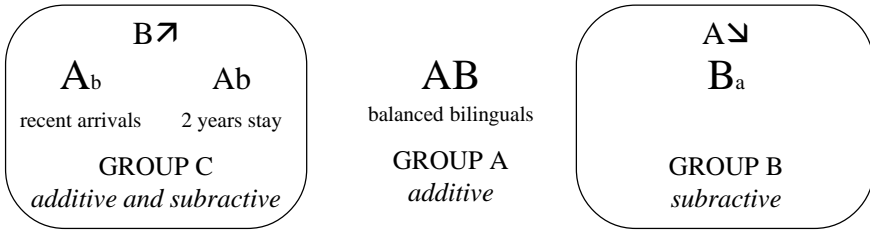


Figure 1. The nature of bilingualism of the Ss at the time of the study; A = L1 (Ukrainian, B = L2 (English)

The bilingual situation of the 7 *Group C* L1-dominant Ss is both additive and subtractive. While their impressive L2 task performance is identified as additive, their negative and dismissive L1 attitudes are identified as a *first subtractive step* or a subtle turning away from L1. It can be speculated that an extended stay in Canada will bring these Ss into the L2-dominant subtractive situation characterized by L1 erosion.

Figure 1 provides an illustration of the three bilingual report cards. Adapted from Valdes (2003), it presents a bilingual continuum where A represents L1, B represents L2, and the font size represents proficiency level. Thus, for Group C, B or L2 is on the increase, with subtle decrease of the dominant A or L1. For Group A, both languages are at an approximate level of proficiency, while for Group B, A or L1 is on the decrease while B or L2 is both dominant and at a high level of proficiency.

Conclusions

This study of one group of minority language children, who *walk in two language worlds* (Stebih 2003), has accomplished three things. Firstly, it has both confirmed and extended earlier reports on L1 loss and the role of the school in L1 maintenance. Secondly, it has put into question the reliance on parental reporting in minority language studies. Lastly, it has provided specification for the widely used, *X-only* home language-use descriptor. It is hoped that this contribution will allow for more accurate investigation of what *actually* happens with language in minority homes.

Language loss noted in the present study provides support for the claim that the price of L2 acquisition is L1 loss (Wong Fillmore 1991). Areas of loss were identified as lexical, syntactic and communicative, and support an earlier study of Ukrainian-English bilingual school children (Chumak-Horbatsch, 1999). Also, earliest L1 loss behaviors identified in this study are viewed as the first subtractive step in the shift to L2.

This study confirms earlier writings, which have found that the school plays a negligible role in L1 maintenance. As in an earlier study (Chumak-Horbatsch, 1991), the present findings show that even in a school which teaches and supports L1, negative L1 attitudes and L1 loss are evident. Further it has shown that L1 as a school subject does not serve to strengthen L1. Looking ahead, one can predict that when L1 is no longer a school subject, further L1 loss is inevitable.

Three considerations relevant to minority language research have emerged from the present study. Firstly, additional sources of data, such as children's language-related contributions, must accompany parental reporting, which, on its own, is restrictive and inaccurate. Secondly, detailed information about parental language knowledge and use is important in the investigation of minority language children's behaviors. Such *funds of linguistic knowledge* (Gonzales, Moll, & Amanti, 2004) can provide important background information in the study of minority children's linguistic behaviors. Finally, the specification of the *X-only* descriptor of minority homes, it is hoped, will lead to the addition of data sources to ensure accuracy in dual language investigations.

This study concludes with a reminder to minority parents that they play a pivotal role in the maintenance of the home language. They would do well to follow Fishman: to commit themselves to the L1 maintenance task, to adopt reasonable maintenance strategies, to work on extending their children's L1 exposure, to avoid the *X-only* claim and to acknowledge the very real presence of L2 in their homes. If they do all of this, if they take on this *hardest part* – then their children will grow in two languages and confidently navigate their two language worlds.

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