AFFECTIVE TEACHING FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING: A CASE-STUDY

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1. Affective teaching for effective learning: A case-study

1.1. A debate began in Spain 2001 questioning the principles of monolingual schooling and the effectiveness of compensatory education for children whose families aim at allowing demanding forcing them to become *Spanish*-English bilinguals, when, in the majority of cases, these mentioned families only reach low levels of competence, if any, in English, and what is more, these children's three environments very seldom speak English fluently. By three environments I mean:

- first or closest: rest of the family;
- second or micro-world: "urbanización", play-park, and district;
- third or institutional: nursery[2], play-ground Primary School.

Needless to say, I am not referring to institutions such as the British School where linguistic, extralinguistic and cultural education in English, as a whole, is offered and a high percentage of parent's/parents' first language is English.

A second alternative provision can be found in other bilingual schools (3-18 year-olds) which simultaneously teach in Spanish and in English.

Since this particular child's situation has not yet reached this schooling, the case-study tries to merely reflect the way in which this 3 y.o. child has been affectively and methodologically taught English in a total Spanish environment reflecting what his linguistic development has been, both in comprehension and production of English.

Such a brief presentation I have considered as essential in order to frame the case study which follows, which, I admit, only represents a very restricted number of Spanish children but *which is growing fast and* must be regarded as a non-stoppable

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2 Fortunately I need not use the dreadful Spanish term: "guardería". Are we to assume that babies and young children are "guardados"?

trend: English as a Foreign Language English as a Second Language taking place in the world. Most relevant too is the purpose of the whole article; it is aimed at showing that a foreign (alien) language can be understood and produced basing the teaching of that second language not on the amount of time the child is exposed to the second language but to a certain methodology, previously planned out, designed, thoroughly thought out and steadfastly carried out.

It may be suggested that this is not the natural way to acquire a language; I might agree. I am not claiming it is. My experiment only reveals that an average baby child can effectively learn when affectively and in common-sense manner. I will start with the more professional and practical one:

- To describe and analyse what has happened exactly in this process of learning English within a Spanish environment. The process thus cannot be included in a complete bilingual acquisition process unless exposure to English has taken place from the moment of birth up to the present.

- I should like, then, to mention some peculiarities of the study. It is subject to the following restrictions:

    a) it deals only with one "informant";

    b) it does not include recorded material owing to two factors: lack of the baby's parents' permission, and my certainty about the artificiality of such procedure;

    c) it does not claim to be comprehensive on the topic since the parameters shaping the case could be considered somehow unusual;

    d) it does not consider other study-cases (on purpose);

    e) the readers of this article are required to accept that all features and examples are authentic;

    f) as I mentioned before it could be considered as a backwards shift: teaching a baby how to acquire a foreign language (where the terms *teach*, *baby*, *acquire* and *foreign* overlap or even collide);

    g) it takes into consideration that Spanish-English bilingualism in 2002 Spain, and the necessity –for better or worse– of communicating in English worldwide, will reinforce the child's linguistic development.

A main objective has encouraged me to undertake this absolutely personal and consequently very engaging task: to help my first grandson to sense and apprehend the wonderful feeling of possessing a double, and thus wider, *Weltanschauung*.

1.2. At present, the great majority of experts, teachers, methodologists, linguists, pedagogues, and psychologists still agree with Lado's (1974) traditional assumption that the bilingual child, who can function in two language environments, is more skilled; however other professionals of the above mentioned fields, and quite a lot of literate parents are worried over the possible fact that:

a) babies growing up bilingually start "speaking" later than monolinguals;

b) these children perform worse in intelligence tests, whichever language they are tested in; and

c) as a consequence, their familiar, societal, academic degree of communicative competence becomes lower or slower.

On the other hand, Hansegard (1998) coined the terms "semilingualism" or "double semilingualism" describing it as a status in which a child can function in two languages but is really proficient in neither.

At this stage of research on the topic (2002), the above mentioned assumptions can be analysed at two independent levels: first, the standard of linguistic competence demanded by the community, Spanish in our case, and second, the child's individual abilities (not genetic) which tentatively I could roughly divide into:

a) amount of lexis,
b) grammatical correctness,
c) automatism,
d) creativity, or to quote Jaakkola (1998) "neologising capacity",
e) mastery of cognitive functions, and
f) degree of personal meanings.

These two levels do not go hand-in-hand with 2002 Spain FL$_s$ policy. We are in fact moving, though rather slowly, from EFL towards ESL; however, contradictorily, a great part of our society stills considers languages other than Castillian, be it Catalonian, Galician, Euskera, French, Italian, etc., are *foreign* languages, in the sense of alien. Hopefully School curricula and University syllabuses are attempting more and more strongly to produce bilinguals. One must expect that the Ministry of Education, together with University Boards[3], will ask specialists in this field to design more than one model of bilingual instruction in order to meet the various groups' needs, now

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[3] Especially Exchange Programmes.

sharply divided by multiple factors; probably number one being the concept of FL Teacher Training; Vega (2001) considers it vital to pass from the actual situation of FL Teacher Training, and specifically future teachers of English as a Second Language receive deeper psycho-socio-pedagogical instruction and compulsory in-training periods, as well as reviewing Anderson's (2000) *cliché* "teacher appraisal".

I should like to point out one particular feature I find positively relevant in relation to developing bilinguals S-E from today onwards. Obviously, society will be assimilating, then supporting this idea of encouraging bilingualism; however, it will take time before teenagers, university students and especially adults (those for ex., attending classes at the EOI or commercial academies) start accepting the idea –first stage to feel intrinsically motivated– that all human beings are capable of speaking two or more languages. Still in 2002 Spain, a great number of learners of English are motivated so extrinsically only, and perceive English and its cultures so far removed from themselves that obviously, becoming competent and proficient in any kind of English is seldom achieved. In Rea-Dickins' & Germaine's (1998) words "the price of everything and the value of nothing".

I will start by revising the way in which different stages of SLA Bilingualism can be determined. Some solutions have already been explored:

- Meisel, Clashen & Pieneman (1981) suggested that LA (L_1 or Bilingualism?) is not a linear process, and thus as a result process not every change in a child's production necessarily represents a move to a new developmental stage. For them, L_2 acquisition (bilingualism?) is a sequence of strictly ordered evolving phases in which some structural features represent increasing and maturing changes while others shape variation within a single rank. The fluctuation, then, becomes the result of the child's choice of communication strategies.

- Wode (1989) catalogued the various devices used for a given item in a chronological order.

- Martohardjono & Flynn (1995) state that while most language professionals – theorists and teachers alike– will attest to the fact the L_1 does play some role in L_2 acquisition, the extent to which a child's L_1 affects the L_2 acquisition process has been an ongoing debate since the rise of error analysis and creative construction in the '60s, and the issues have only somewhat changed over the years.

- Braidi (1999) determined the stages of L$_2$ acquisition as based on the frequency of occurrence of the three linguistic components.

- Actual work within the UG paradigm, as we could hear at the Conference on "Language Universals" (UNED, Faculty of Philology. Madrid, May 2002.) explores similar issues in terms of UG principles. In this particular case, the question becomes whether or not the UG parameters that constrain language acquisition are accessible to a bilingual learner, since recent developments are shifting the focus from that point to what the initial state of bilinguals' grammars is (that is, what parts of UG babies bring with them/are innate) to their future process of learning both, or a third or fourth languages.

- White (2000) has been exploring the nature of developing language grammars, as well as the final states of interlanguage knowledge, what, in my opinion, could easily be applied to this child's case.

- And finally, as I can deduce from Brown (2000), in the period between birth and 3 years old, young children hardly experience any degree of difficulty with respect to the acquisition of more than one phonological system, whereas babies receiving input in two (or thre…?) languages consistently achieve native competence across the full range of subtle and complex phonological properties of these languages; the older they become, the more difficulties start turning up in relation to the pronunciation and intonation patterns of the languages. I daresay that other factors, in addition to the previously referred to UG operating more or less successfully (probably different learning mechanisms) may lead to certain degrees of failure in attaining native-like competence.

Once again swimming between L$_2$ acquisition and bilingualism I will provide an overview of a number of points related to the way in which children, usually from 20 months old onwards, acquire the syllable structure; it is not the ability (or lack thereof) to produce an individual segment that results in one or two language accents; a bilingual is able to combine the segments in the sequences demanded by either language. Thus, one of my aims was to carefully examine the development of syllables this child started to produce at this linguistic stage in English –considered in my experiment a pseudo L$_2$– in terms of the interaction of the child's Spanish syllable structure with principles of prosodic organization. All throughout the experiment it is especially relevant to look at

the interface (I should say, to "listen to") between segmental features and syllable structure in order to consider this process as a possible route along which problems occur.

The child's actual competence still lies on producing a) morphological forms (inflectional affixation, phonological modification to a lexeme, and Saxon Genitives), b) simple clauses, and c) two more elaborated structures. The upward step or relation of morphological forms to syntactic competence as the mental representation of syntactic phrase structure, what Chomsky (1995), citing Jespersen, refers to as "a notion of structure", began only one month ago.

Following with the *Separation Hypothesis*, which remains at the heart of the problem of characterizing grammatical development in bilinguals, a small quantity of phrases, clauses and sentences have been presented to the child with slight changes of lexical items but applied to quite a different range of situations.

The question of how a vocabulary of about 50,000 words (Aitchinson, 1993) is the average a native speaker of English possesses has to do with the fact of how these words are represented in the mind and how they are accessed in L_1 comprehension and production. Presently this aspect occupies a central position in psycholinguistic research. This research domain has served as a place in which psychologists, linguists, neurologists and pedagogues can share findings, models, and insights that affect our conceptions/s of human cognition and language ability. There is implicit agreement among researchers that understanding how lexical knowledge is organized is the key to understanding the overall organization of language in the mind because lexical knowledge lies at the core of the language system. This is the respect Libben (1994) points out as accounting for the centrality of the bilingual lexicon in the study of bilingual cognitive organization, understanding the term "bilingual", as Kroll & De Groot did (1997), to refer to children who can understand produce more than one language. This relatively unrestricted definition allows me to address three issues concerning the organization of this child's two languages rather than trends concerning older children's L_2 development:

a) relationship quantity to quality of input,
b) methodology put into practice,
c) contexts of situation.

a) First month: two-hour period every day, at the same time of the day; second to fourth months: one hour every day, at different moments of the day; fifth to eighth months: three hours twice a week, eighth to twelfth months: six hours once a week; after his first year: eight hours weekly. Obviously the number of hours not only implies a higher amount of linguistic input, but also nearly all possible situations in the child's daylife. One specific exception was waking up time in the morning (waking-up after his *siesta* hearing English spoken from the very beginning). Friday mornings began when X was 32 months old, and include two different contexts: breakfast time, and taking him to school. It is impossible to specify other minor details, due to the lack of time and space. They are however very relevant to the process. I mean, four one/two-week periods in holidays staying in three different places.

b) The methodology, sourcing in my knowledge upon certain fields of Linguistics, based on my experience as a teacher of English as a foreign language, enlightened by years in charge of the area "Methodology of TEFL", at the UCM, benefiting from constantly encountering experts on the matter, the vital fact of keeping learning other languages, common sense, and a very high degree of intrinsic motivation and emotional interest has enabled, and hopefully, capacitated me to schedule this task as follows:

c) contexts of situations: his home; his neighbourhood; three relatives' homes; his nursery; a hotel; summer-holiday house.

Vocabulary has very often served as the primary concrete exemplification in the elaboration of theories of L_1 acquisition, and also of models of organization of two languages in one mind, as well as when analysing the role played by acquisition and use in shaping this cognitive framework too. From De Bot (1993) to Green (1998), researchers in bilingual literature on lexical processing have often pointed to the centrality of the mental lexicon within their perspective research domains. I agree with Libben (1994) that monolingual and bilingual lexical processing data cannot (should not?) be considered in isolation. This argument can be found at the core of the specific proposal that Libben's *Homogeneity Hypothesis* advances.

2. Case study

X is the first male-child of a Spanish couple aged 26 and 28 when the baby was born. Both are middle-class professionals.

He has a degree in Business Management, is very competent in German and English (he uses both languages at work) and can manage very well in French. He has lived in different European countries and in Canada for periods not exceeding one year. He started learning German as L_2 when he was seven; next year he started learning English and French at school. It is important to point out that he is extremely conscious of his tasks and duties and that, up to a great extent, he enjoyed learning both at school and the University. However, he was *never* intrinsically motivated towards or interested in foreign languages and even now, I daresay, he accepts the utility and usefulness of speaking four languages although this fact produces in him no particular pleasure.

X's mother has a degree in Law and is writing her doctoral Thesis on International Women Refugees' Rights. She speaks English very efficiently. She spent a year and a half in Ireland.

Both of them have standard Castilian accent. The family lives 18 miles north of Madrid. A Central-American very well-mannered young girl lives with them, being in charge of the household, from very early on Monday till Friday afternoon. This girl entered X's life when the baby was 1 month old. Her speech is somewhat different, both in terms of phonological features and intonation patterns, though a comparatively amount of her vocabulary differs from that of the parents', differs from that of. When X was four months old, he was taken to a Nursery, opposite his home, for a couple of hours per day. That, of course, allowed him to hear others' speech, but all in Spanish. Spanish was also the language he constantly heard in his environment: neighbours, play-park, family and parents' friends. With one exception. Myself.

From the moment of birth, over a 70-month period, all my relationship with the child has taken place in English[4]. For 90% of the time, only the two of us; very seldom together with others, who addressed me in Spanish and whom I *always* addressed in English.

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[4] Later on I will specify the amount of hours spent with the child.

3. Comprehension process

(Authentic examples ranging from unique items to a sample of them)

It could be checked up by the fourth month, by means of specific reactions of body language when hearing the words or patterns referring to these specific things or people.

In his eighth month, he clearly performed three acts related to English speech, differentiating them from actions required in Spanish.

On his first birthday, he could recognise 32 lexical items, carry out 8 imperatives, and identify 3 colours.

When he was 28 months old, the number of objects or pictures/photos of people whom he could identify had risen to 49; questions or commands being acted had risen to 17; he could differentiate 7 colours and 3 numbers; he distinguished 5 video tapes by film names; he understood Saxon genitive after 4 names.

On his second birthday: compound (two/three item words) lexical items: 72; orders, commands, requests, petitions: 22; colours: 9; numbers: 6; video tapes: 7.

Two months before his third birthday (precisely now): he already recognises four types of subordinate clauses: relative, conditional, causal, and final ones; indirect speech; double Saxon Genitive; retrospective questions; implication of doubt; 228 full lexical items; three modal verbs; opinions; 9 colours; "some"/"any"; 10 numbers; 16 videotape names; four adverbs.

Key point: he has heard me three times in Spanish. Extremely brief and simple clauses/sentences. This takes me to the next phase in the project: he will hear me in his L_1 (Spanish) extremely seldom, though never addressing him in that language.

4. Types of input

4.1. Childbirth

a) repetition of the following items addressed to him:
- *hullo honey,*
- *good, right,*
- *yes my boy!*
- *come on love!*
- *there you are!*

- here's mamá!
- here's papá

b) continuous natural speech addressed to his mother.

4.2. By the cradle

a) repetition of items above mentioned:

- hullo honey,…

b) introduction of:

- hey my little boy;
- my dear one;
- where's my child?;
- sleep, love, sleep!;
- are you hungry? yes
- are you sleepy? Yes
- are you happy? yes
- are you wet? Yes

c) same questions followed by *yes*, X's hungry, sleepy, happy, wet;

d) alternatives for X: my baby's/my child's/little boy's[5].

e) same questions followed by: No;

f) same questions followed by: No, X's not hungry/sleepy…

4.3. Other places at home

a) Introduction of:

my baby/child/ little boy/X's going to
> *- drink his bottle of milk*
> *- drink some water*
> *- sleep for a while*
> *- come up with Y* (myself)
> *- go back to the cradle*
> *- get cleaned/washed*
> *- I'm coming, Y's coming, here's Y*
> *- Good night!*
> *- Let's have a bath*
> *- Finished!*

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[5] Most of the expressions are finished by 'X', 'my child', 'love', 'dear' or 'honey'.

- That's it!

- All right!/very well!

- X's/my baby's/my child's/ my little boy's little hand/fingers/ belly…
(later on) *feet, face*

- Here's your dummy/bottle of milk/your teddy bear/pretty elephant/clean nappy/ some water/fruit juice

- Is it broken?/No it's not broken!

- Where's the dummy/teddy-bear/pretty elephant/clean nappy/the bottle of water/some warm milk? Here, it is! Then applied to objects around.

- ¡papá! where's papá? here's papá

- ¡mamá! where's mamá? here's mamá

- W's (carer) *leaving, good bye W, W's left!*

- In-out (first my lip balm stick, then, applied to some toys, finally to different names of toys)

- Who's coming? Papá/mamá's coming!

- Time to / have a bath

- That's the telephone (as it rings) *ringing hullo, that's X/Y*

- Later on

- Not yet

- Forward-backwards (applied to toys)

- On-off (applied to clothes)

- On-off (applied to lights first, then to the TV set, then to the cooker, finally to the microwave)

- Some more?/Will you have some more?/No more? Y (first applied to water/milk, then to juice, later on to food, finally to different food)

Outdoors:

- Let's go for a walk/X and Y are going for a walk

- Open the door/Y's going to open the door/gate

- Close the door /Y's going to open the door/gate

- Press the button/ "

- Let's Wait for the lift

- "Open the gate/close the door/gate

- "down we go!/down we go

- It's cold out here!/windy/nice/warm/hot

- Thank you! (when the house keeper lets the gate open)

- Good-bye (when we part)/ *Bye-bye*

- The big bus the big green bus look at the big green bus look, the big green bus' coming!/The big green bus's going!

- Hullo children! can you hear the children? the children are playing would you like to play with the children?/Y's going to play with the children

- *Mind the step!/branch/your head*
- *Slowly/do not haste/not so quickly*
- *How many cars/children/people/babies!*
- *We've to stop   the light is red*
- *Now we can cross   the light is green*
- *Stop, Y! the light is red/not yet, Y!*
- *Shall we go to the play park?*
- *Can I help you?* (with toys)/*shall I help you?*
- *Shall we go back home?*
- *On the other way round*

5. Production level (as it will noted, rather late and very poor language)

a) 16th MONTH:

[pɔː]: (myself)

['wɔta]: water

['hʌlɔu]: hullo

['bɔukən]: broken

['dʌmi]: dummy

b) 17th MONTH:

['pitifʌn]: pretty elephant

['bʌ'bʌi]: bye-bye

[kliːn]: clean

['ka]: car

c) 18th MONTH:

['bi'giːn]: big green

[luːk]: look

[kiːs]: keys

['næpi]: nappy

[bib]: bib

[puʃ]: push/pull

d) 19th MONTH:

[bə'naːnə]: banana

[fuːt]: fruit

['jɔːgɔː]: yoghourt

[mɔː]: more

['nɔu'mɔː]: no more

['kəidlə]: cradle

['lɔ:di]: lorry

['kɔ:'lʌm]: (calling me)

e) 22th MONTH:

It was not until he was 22 months old that he started to produce two-item words: this was the order:

['tʌm 'fɔ: 'mʌ 'baeθ]: time for my bath

['gud 'nait] good night

['pɔ:s 'blu: 'ka]: (my blue car)

['ʌtʌ 'fʌua:]: another flower

f) From 26th MONTHS OLD:

['nɔu 'deti 'nau]: not dirty now

['wʌn't n'diʌda:]: one after the other

['ri:d 'ta'geda:]: let's read a book together

['pitəɹ 'pæn 'dɔgis]: asking me to watch "Peter Pan" and "The Doggies" tapes

[plʌʃ 'wɔ:təɹ]: I'm going to splash the water (when having his bath)

['bæ 'bæ 'bæ ' ʃi:p 'hæ 'eni 'wu:l?]: ba, ba, black sheep, have you any wool?

['wɔ:t 'ʃæl u: 'widən 'səiləɹ 'mɔ:ɹ niŋ?]: what shall we do with the drunken sailor, early in the morning?

['lai 'daun 'fi: 'tʌp]: (I want to play) "lie down and feet up"

Now that X is 34 months old, he can only produce 16 more clauses, and just two sentences. From these ones there are three questions and two negative forms.

['raid 'də 'litlə 'hɔ:ɹs]: I want to go and ride the little horse

['bed tu'gə'də:ɹ 'sin 'bæ 'bæ 'bæ 'ʃi:p]: Let's go to bed together and sing 'Ba, ba...'

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