

Paper proposal for FLaRN 2014

Catrin Bellay

PhD student at Nantes University, France

Centre de Recherches sur les Identités Nationales et l'Interculturalité.

Title: Forms, functions and contexts of bilingual children's reuse of phrases from input.

In this paper I present the results of a longitudinal diary study of bilingual first language acquisition in a family of four siblings. The focus is on examples, in the children's linguistic production, of phrases they encountered in input. A particular form of input was isolated for attention: storybooks, songs, nursery rhymes, television and film for children. I propose a categorisation of the examples according to their form, function, and context of production. Analysis of the data reveals two forms of phrase reuse: verbatim repetition, where the form of the reuse exactly mirrors that of the original phrase, and adapted rephrasing, where the original phrase has been altered in some way. Four functions of phrase reuse are identified: verbatim quote, rephrased quote, verbatim borrowing, and rephrased borrowing. The difference between a quote and a borrowing resides in the speaker's intention to refer to the original phrase or its source. A quote, whether verbatim or adapted, includes awareness of the phrase's status as a quote and possibly shared knowledge of the source text. Borrowings do not carry this shared knowledge, the speaker does not intend to refer to the phrase's source and, it is argued here, is possibly not even aware herself that the phrase has been borrowed. The degree of a speaker's awareness of the relationship with an input phrase is difficult to ascertain. However, thanks to the parent-researcher's detailed knowledge of the subjects and their linguistic experience, it is possible to make informed intuitive judgements about the functions of phrase reuse, often with additional information about the context in which the utterances occurred. The examples of phrase reuse can occur as a response to the previous utterance, the conversational context, or the thematic context; one of these elements triggers the memory of a phrase, leading to its reuse.