



**Annick De Houwer and Lourdes Ortega (Eds.),  
*The Cambridge Handbook of Bilingualism*  
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019,  
ISBN 978-1-107-17921-9, 664 pages**

*The Cambridge Handbook of Bilingualism*, edited by Annick De Houwer and Lourdes Ortega, is a welcome recent addition to the renowned series of Cambridge Handbooks in Language and Linguistics. The volume, as the editors state in the *Introduction*, presents a broad spectrum of research focusing on individual bilingualism in a lifespan perspective. More specifically, the editors' intention in their selection of topics is to offer a developmentally oriented and socially contextualized perspective on the learning, use, and unlearning of more than one language or language variety.

The volume consists of 27 chapters divided into six parts, a list of references, a language index, an index of place names and a subject index. The volume is dedicated to the memory of Jules Ronjat, a pioneer in bilingualism research, and Richard Schmidt, a second language researcher. This, together with the professional background of the editors, as well as the selection of authors, emphasizes the extent to which the perspectives of bilingualism and second language acquisition research are interconnected and makes the volume interesting and relevant for researchers in both fields.

In the Introduction, subtitled Learning, Using and Understanding More than One Language (pp. 1–12), the editors present their perspective on bilingualism. Their approach to bilingualism is inclusive, that is, it includes all languages and language varieties, learned in instructed contexts or informally acquired, that an individual can at least understand to a minimal degree in whatever modality (spoken, written or signed), regardless of the precise number. It is developmentally oriented, by which they mean that bilingualism is a lifetime experience that involves the learning, use, maintenance, and unlearning of

languages at different stages. This approach is also socially contextualized, as it demonstrates how social contexts and societal language ideologies affect bilingual outcomes. Last, but not least, it is dynamic and multidimensional as it provides insights from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

Part I, *Bilingual Learning and Use at Five Stages of Life*, comprising five chapters, discusses aspects of bilingual development and use at different life stages. In chapter 1, *Becoming Bilingual in Early Childhood* (pp. 15–35), Serratrice discusses bilingual language development in early childhood, that is, since birth until the age of six. The chapter traces bilingual development from the beginnings of speech discrimination, focusing next on vocabulary acquisition and grammatical development. The discussion in this chapter includes the development of language-specific gestures and touches upon the issue of language differentiation. Chapter 2, *Bilingualism from Childhood through Adolescence* (pp. 36–58), by Bigelow and Collins, focuses on school-age bilingualism, children and youth in dual language contexts. The chapter carefully analyzes the situation of migrant children learning a majority language at school, language majority children becoming bilingual in immersion contexts, language rights and language education of speakers of minority, heritage and indigenous languages, as well as language use in the community and digital spaces. Chapter 3, *Young Bilingual Adults* (pp. 59–75) by Gonçalves, is focused on global hybrids, that is, young mobile adults in a range of contexts, underscoring the fact of global mobility in this generation. In chapter 4, *Bilingualism in Midlife* (pp. 76–100), Singleton and Pfenninger discuss the maintenance of two languages into adulthood, heritage languages, and bimodal bilingualism. The main focus of the chapter, however, is the role of age of acquisition and differences between child and adult second language acquisition. In this context, they include a detailed discussion of evidence of successful adult L2 learning of indigenous and regional languages, successful adult foreign language learning and successful learning by cultural and economic migrants. The last chapter in this part, *Language and Older Bilinguals* (pp. 101–115) by Goral, addresses a number of issues related to age-related changes in language use and processing as well as the processes of second language learning and first language loss in healthy older bilingual adults.

Part II, *The Larger Contexts of Bilingualism*, consisting of four chapters, elucidates the role of societal language ideologies and contexts. In chapter 6, *Ideologies of Language, Bilingualism, and Monolingualism* (pp. 119–134), Fuller defines language ideologies as “ideas about language structure and use that index political and economic interests of individuals and the social groups and nations to which they belong” (p. 119). Further on, she discusses monoglossic, standard, and pluralistic ideologies, noting how dominant language ideologies shape language practices and policies. In chapter 7, *Bilingualism and the Law* (pp. 135–151), Angermeyer discusses various aspects

of bilingual legal-lay communication, emphasizing how language ideologies and, in particular, implicit assumptions made about language, bilingualism, and translation, manifest in the legal sphere. In chapter 8 (pp. 152–172), Lo Bianco discusses Language Planning and Policies for Bilingualism, mainly in the Australian context, demonstrating that the practices of language policy making in education are affected by policy makers' knowledge about bilingualism and arguing for rights-based language education that fosters proficiency bilingualism for all children. The final chapter in Part II, *The Economics of Bilingualism* (pp. 173–190) by Grin, presents research in the emerging field of economics of language, providing evidence for the complex link between individual and collective bi- and multilingualism and economic (dis)advantages, and argues that “there are no economic reasons for advocating linguistic uniformity over linguistic diversity” (p. 187).

Part III, *Contexts for Bilingual Learning and Unlearning*, consisting of five chapters, provides more in-depth insights into some typical routes into bilingualism. Chapter 10, *The Nature of Exposure and Input in Early Bilingualism* (pp. 193–212), while focusing on bilingual children, discusses important distinctions relevant to researchers in various fields of second language acquisition and bilingualism research, relating to the quality and quantity of input and different ways of measuring the length and intensity of exposure. In chapter 11, *Becoming Bilingual through Additive Immersive Programs* (pp. 213–232), Juan-Garau and Lyster discuss various types of bilingual education programs, that is, various types of immersion programs, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), and Study Abroad (SA) in terms of learning outcomes and the role of affective factors. In chapter 8, *Foreign Language Learning from Early Childhood to Young Adulthood* (pp. 233–249), Muñoz and Spada discuss a range of issues related to second language acquisition in instructed contexts, beginning with focus on meaning and form as optimal FL instruction, through optimizing input, to ways of enhancing input in classroom instruction. A separate section is devoted to very young learners. Chapter 13, *Supporting Bilingualism in Adult First-Generation Migrants* (pp. 250–266) by Simpson, starts with a presentation of the language learning contexts of bilingual migrants and then discusses policy and pedagogical support for the migrant adult language learners. The final chapter in this part, *Unlearning and Relearning of Languages from Childhood to Later Adulthood* (pp. 267–285) by Keijzer and de Bot focuses on L1 maintenance and attrition in children and adults, and relearning the L1 by international adoptees and heritage language speakers.

Part IV, *The Dynamics of Bilingualism across the Lifespan*, contains four chapters with varying themes relating to language acquisition and use. Chapter 15, *The Measurement of Bilingual Abilities* by Treffers-Daller (pp. 289–306), is another methodological chapter, after Meir and Armon-Lotem, focusing on

issues fundamental to bilingualism research. Concerned with measurement, Treffers-Daller first attempts to define bilingual abilities, and then discusses selected approaches to measuring vocabulary and syntactic abilities in two languages. The chapter by Biedroń and Birdsong, *Highly Proficient and Gifted Bilinguals* (pp. 307–323), deals with the question of talent in language learning and focuses on polyglots and hyperpolyglots, savants, and young interpreters. The next chapter by De Houwer, *Language Choice in Bilingual Interaction* (pp. 324–347), provides an exhaustive overview of research on language choice in real-time, face-to-face dyadic interactions. Chapter 18, *First Language Attrition: From Bilingual to Monolingual Proficiency?* (pp. 349–365) by Köpke, is a comprehensive review of research on language attrition with a clear focus on methodology of attrition research.

Part V, *Bilingualism Research across Disciplines*, containing five chapters, was meant by the volume editors to provide insights from disciplines usually not associated with bilingualism research, which was a fairly difficult task, as the other parts contain numerous chapters from disciplines other than linguistics or psychology. The first chapter in this part, “*Bilingualism and Clinical Linguistics*” (pp. 369–389) by Hammer and Edmonds, provides an overview of characteristics and assessment of language deficits in typical disorders in bilingual children and adults, as well as intervention programs. In chapter 20, *Doing and Undoing Bilingualism in Education* (pp. 390–407), García and Tupas, beginning their discussion with Fishman’s (1977) distinction between elite and folk bilingualism, provide an overview of educational programs and practices that either foster bilingualism or promote monolingualism in bilingual minority students, eventually making a case for translanguaging pedagogies for minoritized learners. In the next chapter, *Second Language Acquisition as a Road to Bilingualism* (pp. 408–434), Ortega provides an overview of second language acquisition research in the context of bilingualism studies with a special emphasis on crosslinguistic influence. This is followed by a discussion of success in adult L2 learning, L2 learning in the context of migration and in academic contexts. The last chapter in this part, *Bilingualism in Neurolinguistics: From Dynamic to Static Approaches* (pp. 466–479) by Hernandez, provides an overview of neurolinguistic findings on bilingualism, including a discussion of the most recent models of bilingual brain representation.

Part VI of the volume, *Bilingual Connections*, comprises four chapters and links to related research areas. The first chapter in this part, *Bilingualism and Sign Language Research* (pp. 483–509) by Tang and Sze, provides a detailed review of bimodal bilingualism research. Chapter 25, *Bilingualism and Bidialectalism* (pp. 510–523) by Chevrot and Ghimenton, provides a sociolinguistic, variationist account. Chapter 26, *Bilingualism and Language Contact* (pp. 524–543) by Aalberse and Muysken introduces the related perspective of contact linguistics. The final chapter, *Bilingualism and Multilingualism*

(pp. 544–560) by Quay and Montanari, espouses the perspective of those multilingualism researchers who emphasize the difference between bilingualism and multilingualism.

Chapter 22 in Part V, *Bilingualism in Cognitive Science: The Characteristics and Consequences of Bilingual Language Control* (pp. 435–465) by Paap, merits a separate discussion. The chapter aims to provide a concise overview of psycholinguistic research on bilingualism. The discussion in this chapter begins with an overview of research and models of bilingual lexical processing, psycholinguistic language and task switching studies. The final sections discuss autobiographical memories, research on emotions and moral judgements. These accounts are rather uncontroversial. However, in sections 3 and 4 Paap decides to take an issue with the executive function and linguistic relativity research respectively. While Paap is well-known among bilingualism researchers for his stance on the bilingual executive function advantage hypothesis (e.g., Paap & Greenberg, 2013), the debate seems far from being over, and excluding other viewpoints on the contentious issue is a significant oversight on the part of the volume editors. While discussing linguistic relativity, on the other hand, Paap reviews a number of behavioral experiments conducted by Athanasopoulos, overlooking the event-related potentials study by Thierry, Athanasopoulos, Wiggett, Dering, and Kuipers (2009) on categorical perception of color, which leads him to the mistaken conclusion that “language affects post-perceptual judgements” (p. 459) but not pre-attentional perception. This view is simply untenable in light of available empirical evidence (Mo, Xu, Kay, & Tan, 2011; Maier, Glage, Hohlfeld, & Abdel Rahman, 2014; cf. Ewert, 2016 for a discussion of bilingual categorical perception) and perpetuates another myth in a field of study that already abounds in them.

All in all, the volume provides a balanced overview of the numerous complementary perspectives on the growing interdisciplinary field of bilingualism research. The only field that seems to have been somewhat neglected by the editors is psycholinguistic research on bilingual language processing, where several complementary perspectives could have been presented instead of one.

By presenting a vast scope of bilingualism research, the volume provides a very welcome introduction to the diverse research areas for bilingualism researchers as well as other language professionals. The excellent editorship makes all the chapters readable to a non-specialist. It is also easy to see how the different chapters interconnect, giving evidence that the multidisciplinary bilingualism research is a field of study in its own right.

The volume also demonstrates the close interconnection between bilingualism and second language acquisition research. The authors of numerous chapters: Singleton, Lyster, de Bot, Treffers-Daller, Muñoz, Ortega, Biedroń, Birdsong or Köpke, are well-known to second language researchers, while Part III of the volume is especially relevant for language teachers.

## References

- De Houwer, A., & Ortega, L. (Eds.). (2019). *Cambridge handbook of bilingualism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ewert, A. (2016). Space, motion and thinking for language. In V. Cook & Li Wei (Eds.), *Cambridge handbook of linguistic multi-competence* (pp. 376–402). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fishman, J. A. (1977). *Bilingual education: Current perspectives*. Arlington: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Maier, M., Glage, P., Hohlfeld, A., & Abdel Rahman, R. (2014). Does the semantic content of verbal categories influence categorical perception? An ERP study. *Brain and Cognition, 91*, 1–10.
- Mo, L., Xu, G., Kay, P., & Tan, L.-H. (2011). Electrophysiological evidence for the left-lateralized effect of language on preattentive categorical perception of color. *PNAS, 108*(34), 14026–14030.
- Paap, K. R., & Greenberg, Z. I. (2013). There is no coherent evidence for a bilingual advantage in executive processing. *Cognitive Psychology, 66*(2), 232–258.
- Thierry, G., Athanasopoulos, P., Wiggett, A., Dering, B., & Kuipers, J.-R. (2009). Unconscious effects of language-specific terminology on pre-attentive color perception. *PNAS, 106*(11), 4567–4570.



<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2771-0278>

*Anna Ewert*

*Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań,  
Poland*