

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact

Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The Bilingual Child

How does a child become bilingual? The answer to this intriguing question remains largely a mystery, not least because it has been far less extensively researched than the process of mastering a single first language.

Drawing on new studies of children exposed to two languages from birth (English and Cantonese), this book demonstrates how childhood bilingualism develops naturally in response to the two languages in the children's environment. While each bilingual child's profile is unique, the children studied are shown to develop quite differently from monolingual children. The authors demonstrate significant interactions between the children's developing grammars, as well as the important role played by language dominance in their bilingual development.

Based on original research and using findings from the largest available multimedia bilingual corpus, the book will be welcomed by students and scholars working in child language acquisition, bilingualism and language contact.

VIRGINIA YIP is Professor in Linguistics and Modern Languages at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

STEPHEN MATTHEWS is Associate Professor in Linguistics at the University of Hong Kong.

This book is supplemented by material available on the web at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/lin/book/bilingualchild/>

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact

Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact

General Editors:

SALIKOKO S. MUFWENE,

University of Chicago

Editorial Board:

ROBERT CHAUDENSON, *Université d'Aix-en-Provence*

BRAJ KACHRU, *University of Illinois at Urbana*

LESLEY MILROY, *University of Michigan*

SHANA POPLACK, *University of Ottawa*

MICHAEL SILVERSTEIN, *University of Chicago*

Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact is an interdisciplinary series bringing together work on language contact from a diverse range of research areas. The series focuses on key topics in the study of contact between languages or dialects, including the development of pidgins and creoles, language evolution and change, world Englishes, code-switching and code-mixing, bilingualism and second language acquisition, borrowing, interference, and convergence phenomena.

Published titles

Salikoko Mufwene, *The Ecology of Language Evolution*

Michael Clyne, *The Dynamics of Language Contact*

Bernd Heine and Tania Kuteva, *Language Contact and Grammatical Change*

Edgar W. Schneider, *Postcolonial English*

Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews, *The Bilingual Child*

Further titles planned for the series

Guy Bailey and Patricia Cukor-Avila, *The Development of African-American English*

Maarten Mous, *Controlling Language*

Clancy Clements, *The Linguistic Legacy of Spanish and Portuguese*

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact

Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The Bilingual Child

Early Development and Language Contact

Virginia Yip

Chinese University of Hong Kong

Stephen Matthews

University of Hong Kong



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact

Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521544764

© Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews 2007

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2007

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Yip, Virginia, 1962–

The bilingual child: early development and language contact / Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews.

p. cm. – (Cambridge approaches to language contact)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-521-83617-3 (hardback)

ISBN-10: 0-521-83617-4 (hardback)

ISBN-13: 978-0-521-54476-4 (pbk.)

ISBN-10: 0-521-54476-9 (pbk.)

1. Bilingualism in children. 2. Language acquisition. 3. Languages in contact.

I. Matthews, Stephen, 1963– II. Title. III. Series.

P115.2.Y55 2007

404'.2083 – dc22 2007006787

ISBN 978-0-521-83617-3 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-54476-4 paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact

Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

For our children:

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength . . .

Psalm 8:2

「...從嬰孩和吃奶的口中建立了能力...」

詩篇第八章第二節

Contents

<i>List of tables and figures</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Series editor's foreword</i>	xii
<i>Preface</i>	xiv
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xvii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xxi
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Research questions	5
1.3 The ecology of bilingual development	7
1.4 The Hong Kong speech community	9
1.5 Bilingual development and language contact	12
1.6 Mechanisms of language contact	14
1.7 Summary	19
1.8 Overview of the book	20
2 Theoretical framework	22
2.1 Epistemological status of bilingual acquisition	22
2.2 The logical problem of bilingual acquisition and the poverty of the dual stimulus	30
2.3 Language differentiation in bilingual acquisition	33
2.4 Language dominance in early bilingual development	35
2.5 Cross-linguistic influence in bilingual development	37
2.6 Input ambiguity and learnability	44
2.7 Vulnerable domains in bilingual development	49
2.8 Bilingual development and language contact	50
2.9 Summary	54
3 Methodology	56
3.1 Methodologies in the study of bilingual acquisition	56
3.2 The Hong Kong Bilingual Child Language Corpus and other data for this study	63
3.3 Quantitative measures of bilingual development: language dominance and MLU differentials	72
3.4 Other indicators of language dominance	81
3.5 Conclusions	84
	vii

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact

Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii	List of contents	
4	<i>Wh</i> -interrogatives: to move or not to move?	87
4.1	<i>Wh</i> -interrogatives in English and Cantonese	88
4.2	<i>Wh</i> -interrogatives in bilingual children	93
4.3	Emergence and order of acquisition of <i>wh</i> -phrases in English and Cantonese: bilingual and monolingual children compared	104
4.4	Discussion: language dominance, input ambiguity and asymmetry	119
4.5	<i>Wh</i> -in-situ in contact languages	123
4.6	Conclusions	126
5	Null objects: dual input and learnability	133
5.1	Null objects in adult Cantonese	134
5.2	Null objects in English: cross-linguistic influence and learnability	136
5.3	Input ambiguity and language dominance	147
5.4	Null objects in Singapore Colloquial English	152
5.5	Conclusions	152
6	Relative clauses: transfer and universals	155
6.1	Introduction	155
6.2	Development of pronominal relative clauses in the bilingual children	162
6.3	The emergence of postnominal relatives in English	170
6.4	Accounting for transfer	174
6.5	Relative clauses in Singapore Colloquial English	181
6.6	Conclusions	184
7	Vulnerable domains in Cantonese and the directionality of transfer	189
7.1	Placement of prepositional phrases in bilingual children's Cantonese	190
7.2	Dative constructions with <i>bei2</i> 'give' in bilingual children's Cantonese	200
7.3	Bidirectional transfer in verb-particle constructions in bilingual development	216
7.4	Conclusions	223
8	Bilingual development and contact-induced grammaticalization	227
8.1	Contact-induced grammaticalization	228
8.2	<i>Already</i> as marker of perfective aspect	235
8.3	<i>Give</i> -passives and replica grammaticalization	239
8.4	<i>One</i> as nominalizer	248
8.5	Discussion	251
9	Conclusions and implications	255
9.1	Theoretical issues	256
9.2	Methodological issues	260
9.3	Implications for first and second language acquisition	260
9.4	Implications for language contact	261
9.5	Prospects for future research	262
	<i>References</i>	265
	<i>Index</i>	287
	<i>Author index</i>	292

Tables and figures

Tables

1.1	English grammar in contact with Chinese at societal and individual levels	<i>page</i> 13
1.2	Language contact phenomena at individual and societal levels	17
2.1	Syllable-final consonants in Cantonese and English	35
3.1	Background of six bilingual children	64
3.2	Number of files and number of child utterances produced by six children in the Hong Kong Bilingual Child Language Corpus	67
3.3	Mean MLU and MLU differentials in six bilingual children	80
4.1	Distribution of English <i>wh</i> -in-situ questions in Timmy, a bilingual child and Eve, a monolingual child	97
4.2	English in-situ <i>what</i> and <i>where</i> questions in six bilingual children	102
4.3	Developmental order for English <i>wh</i> -words in monolingual children	105
4.4	Developmental order for Cantonese <i>wh</i> -words in eight monolingual children in Cancorp	105
4.5	Age of first emergence of English <i>wh</i> -words in four Cantonese-dominant bilingual children	106
4.6	Age of first emergence of Cantonese <i>wh</i> -words in four Cantonese-dominant bilingual children	106
5.1	Frequency of null objects in the English of a monolingual child, Adam	139
5.2	Frequency of null objects with seven transitive verbs in the English of a monolingual child, Adam	139
5.3	Frequency of null objects with five transitive verbs in the English of six bilingual children	142

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact
Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x	List of tables and figures	
5.4	Frequency of null objects in the Cantonese of two bilingual children, Timmy and Sophie	143
5.5	Distribution of null objects in English verb-particle constructions in six bilingual children	144
5.6	Distribution of null objects in English verb-particle constructions in two monolingual children, Peter and Allison	145
6.1	Age of first emergence of subject and object relative clauses in Cantonese and English diary and corpus data in three bilingual children	162
7.1	Placement of Cantonese locative PPs with <i>hai2</i> 'at' in six bilingual children	194
7.2	Placement of Cantonese locative PPs with <i>hai2</i> 'at' in eight monolingual children in Cancorp	195
7.3	Placement of Cantonese locative PPs with <i>hai2</i> 'at' in six bilingual and six monolingual children	195
7.4	Non-target placement of Cantonese locative PPs with <i>hai2</i> 'at' in six bilingual children	196
7.5	Distribution of locative PPs with <i>hai2</i> 'at' in two adult Cantonese corpora and the Hong Kong Bilingual Child Language Corpus	198
7.6	Frequency of Cantonese full <i>bei2</i> 'give' datives in six bilingual children	206
7.7	Frequency of Cantonese full <i>bei2</i> 'give' datives in eight monolingual children in Cancorp	207
7.8	Age of first emergence of Cantonese full <i>bei2</i> 'give' datives in six bilingual children	209
7.9	Age of first emergence of Cantonese full <i>bei2</i> 'give' datives in eight monolingual children in Cancorp	209
7.10	Distribution of lexical NPs and pronouns in four Cantonese-dominant bilingual children's English verb-particle constructions	221
7.11	Distribution of lexical NPs and pronouns in two non-Cantonese-dominant bilingual children's English verb-particle constructions	221
7.12	Distribution of lexical NPs and pronouns in the English verb-particle constructions in two monolingual children, Peter and Allison	222

Figures

2.1 Relationship between cross-linguistic influence and transfer	<i>page</i> 38
2.2 Structural overlap between two grammatical systems	47
2.3 Input ambiguity within a grammar	47
2.4 Input ambiguity with two languages in contact	47
3.1 Sample English transcript at age 2;10;15	69
3.2 Sample Cantonese transcript at age 1;10;16	70
3.3 Timmy's MLU (2;01;22–3;06;25)	76
3.4 Sophie's MLU (1;06;00–3;00;09)	77
3.5 Alicia's MLU (1;03;10–3;00;24)	78
3.6 Llywelyn's MLU (2;00;12–3;04;17)	78
3.7 Charlotte's MLU (1;08;28–3;00;03)	79
4.1 Longitudinal development of Timmy's English <i>what</i> -in-situ questions (2;01–3;06)	98
4.2 Frequency of English in-situ <i>what</i> and <i>where</i> questions in six bilingual children	99
5.1 Percentage of null objects in the English of a bilingual child, Timmy	140

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact

Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Series editor's foreword

The series *Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact* was set up to publish outstanding monographs on language contact, especially by authors who approach their specific subject matter from a diachronic or developmental perspective. Our goal is to integrate the ever-growing scholarship on language diversification (including the development of creoles, pidgins and indigenized varieties of colonial European languages), bilingual language development, code-switching and language endangerment. We hope to provide a select forum to scholars who contribute insightfully to understanding language evolution from an interdisciplinary perspective. We favour approaches that highlight the role of ecology and draw inspiration both from the authors' own fields of specialization and from related research areas in linguistics or other disciplines. Eclecticism is one of our mottoes, as we endeavour to comprehend the complexity of evolutionary processes associated with contact.

We are very proud to add to our list *The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact* by Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews, a most authoritative book that combines the latest scholarship on language contact and child language development in a multilingual setting. It has the distinction of being based on the most extensive longitudinal database on the subject matter to date, involving a relatively large population of children studied over a long period of time, and contributing to the relevant research areas insights from an examination of typologically and genetically quite unrelated languages: Cantonese and English. Three of the protagonists are the authors' own children, whose speech constitutes the core and largest part of the database. These data are compared with those obtained from children in similar bilingual families, in inter-peer interaction settings which generated the most naturalistic and reliable data an investigator can collect. This book presents findings from this unique gold mine.

Students of various aspects of language contact must be asking any subset of the following questions and others: Are children really perfect language learners? If they are, do they manage to keep separate the systems of the different languages to which they are concurrently exposed? If they are not, to what extent do their transfer phenomena differ from those of adult L2 learners? What particular insights can the study of such a population contribute to scholarship

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact

Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Series editor's foreword

xiii

on community-based language contact phenomena, such as the emergence of creoles and indigenized Englishes? Can the labels 'L1' and 'L2' apply to situations of bilingual child development, or is it more appropriate to speak of 'dominant' and 'subordinate' languages? Are these situations inherently different from those in which the child is exposed to different dialects of the same language? Will having a dominant language affect the direction of transfer from one language to the other? Is there some sort of division of labour in the way one language influences the other, for instance, morphology in one case but syntax in the other, one particular aspect of syntax in one language but another in the other language? What is the role of the social ecology in determining language dominance in bilingual children? In such populations, to what extent does one child replicate another, and under what particular conditions?

These are among the many questions that Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews address in this exciting book. Even if some readers disagree (on some details) with the authors, they will find substantive information and theoretical challenges prompting them to rethink their own positions. In my own personal case, with my own bias that 'language acquisition' is a misnomer for what is otherwise a 'system-construction' process by the learner, I have enjoyed learning more about how competition and selection operate in a multilingual feature pool and what ecological factors influence the young learner's selections. I am more convinced now that language boundaries are more real to the linguist than they are to the speaker, although the latter aims at speaking one rather than the other language on a particular occasion. There must also be some constraints on how elements from separate languages can be combined into a new system (not necessarily along the lines sought by students of code-switching), and *The Bilingual Child* addresses this kind of issue. By the same token it seems necessary to distinguish between, on the one hand, features imported intact from the other language into the one intended to be spoken and, on the other, those modifications that are taking place in a particular language because the structures of the languages in contact are partly congruent.

This book, to which I do more justice by enumerating some of the questions it addresses than by attempting to summarize, is a rich addition, with new sets and kinds of data, to the literature on language contact. I am sure most scholars tired of repetitions of the same kinds of data that do not question established positions will be happy with *The Bilingual Child*, especially because its tenor is also non-polemical. I feel especially privileged that the authors chose Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact as the venue to disseminate their findings.

Salikoko S. Mufwene, *University of Chicago*

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact

Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

Compared to mastering a single language, the process of becoming bilingual in the child's first few years of life has been much less comprehensively studied, and therefore remains all the more enigmatic and intriguing. The title of this book, *The Bilingual Child*, is intended to refer generically to a child who learns two languages in early childhood. The book tells the stories of how six children became bilingual in Cantonese and English given exposure to both languages from birth. We provide a detailed account of how childhood bilingualism develops naturally in response to the two languages in their environment. This intimate account is presented through our dual perspectives as parent-researchers continuously observing and participating in our own three children's bilingual experience.

Parents and researchers alike often raise basic questions such as the following about children's bilingual development:

- Are two languages too many for a child?
- Do children confuse the two languages?
- Can they be equally proficient in both?
- If children have a 'language instinct' as has often been suggested, how does this instinct cope with two languages at the same time?

While the book reports an abundance of research findings, we also hope to alleviate some typical concerns of parents and demonstrate that two languages are not a burden for a child, and that children have the ability to differentiate the two languages from early on. They can develop high proficiency in both, though one language may develop ahead of the other. To account for this ability we appeal to a *bilingual instinct* which enables the child to develop two languages in response to dual input in the environment. With developing knowledge of two languages, young bilingual children are able to produce language forms and functions of stunning complexity as a result of integrating features from two grammars. We shall show that the product often comes about through the interaction of two language systems, reflecting language-specific properties and universal factors.

Though the children studied grow up bilingually in Hong Kong, their experience should in many ways transcend the specificities of this particular context

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact

Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

xv

and speak to the bigger picture of how children become bilingual. The findings reported here are based on a large-scale multimedia corpus which documents the bilingual development of the six children from age one to four and a half and is now in the public domain. Many of the examples discussed in the book come to life when heard or seen on digitized audio and video files, demonstrating the interactions of the bilingual children in real-life contexts. We have also made use of diary data collected by ourselves in the case of our own children. The combination of corpus and diary data yields a rich database from which the strength of our arguments is derived.

Though each bilingual child's linguistic and cultural background as well as developmental profile is unique, the process they go through shows some common features that set them apart from monolinguals in interesting ways. In children with one language developing ahead of the other, features of the stronger language often find their way into the grammar of the other language. But the interaction is by no means a one-way street: features of the weaker language also influence the grammar of the stronger language in certain respects. Thus transfer in both directions is found in bilingual development.

Our sub-title, *Early Development and Language Contact*, represents an interdisciplinary effort to integrate insights from two fields. The two languages to be learned may be said to be in contact in the bilingual child's environment as well as in the mind of the child. Throughout the bilingual child's development, there are clear and systematic signs that the two language systems interact with each other, shaping the child's overall development. Looking beyond bilingualism at the individual level, we draw parallels between bilingual development in children with bilingual and multilingual communities. In cases such as those of Singapore Colloquial English, Hawaiian Creole English and other creole languages, contact between languages gives rise to new languages with similar features to those we observe in children's bilingual development. A second theme of this book is therefore that of languages in contact. We know that languages influence each other. But how does this actually happen? What does the development of bilingual children tell us about the interaction of the languages in contact? Do bilingual children themselves play a role in spreading features from one language to another? To illustrate these possibilities, we shall see that the English our bilingual children produced bears striking similarity to the English spoken in Singapore, known as Singapore Colloquial English, which is born of a multilingual situation in which several varieties of Chinese are prevalent in the environment. This suggests that the way Chinese and English interact in the mind of the child may shed light on the way the same two languages have interacted in multilingual societies such as Singapore.

In the age of globalization, contact between individuals and between communities has become intensified and the bilingual experience will become the norm in many children's early development. In writing this book we hope to

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact

Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xvi Preface

raise the awareness of the assets of being bilingual and help bilingual children to affirm and appreciate their dual heritage – especially those born of parents from two different languages and cultures.

The process of language development has often been described as an odyssey, suggesting a journey full of mystery and excitement. We invite the reader to share the highlights of our discovery in the bilingual child's journey toward active bilingualism in the following chapters.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact

Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

The research findings reported in this book come from a series of projects that have spanned over a decade of work, beginning serendipitously when our first bilingual child was born. The gestation period for this book has necessarily been a long one, as it took some seven years to produce three bilingual children and another few years to put our ideas together and write up the book. It has taken three ‘co-authored’ bilingual children to witness the process of bilingual development in a close and intimate manner. When we see the structures appear in the first, then the second, and followed by the third child, it is immensely gratifying to confirm the pathway taken by these children on their way to bilingualism. We feel compelled to share what we have observed with interested readers.

We thank Salikoko Mufwene for welcoming this book to the CALC series. Sali has been a source of immense inspiration and support as editor and scholar in many interdisciplinary fields. His meticulous comments have rendered our book much more readable and coherent. Brian MacWhinney has been indefatigable in his pursuit of excellence: we thank him for being the architect behind our multimedia bilingual corpus, his interest in bilingual acquisition and his constructive comments on our manuscript.

Thanks are due to many leading scholars working in different frameworks ranging from emergentism to generative grammar for discussing our work with us, notably Joan Bybee, Stephen Crain, Fred Genesee, François Grosjean, Usha Lakshmanan, Jürgen Meisel, Johanne Paradis, Bonnie Schwartz, Carmen Silva-Corvalán, Rosalind Thornton and Marilyn Vihman. William O’Grady, whose unusually wide spectrum of scholarly expertise spans these frameworks has generously offered insightful comments and suggestions on the entire manuscript. We would like to pay special tribute to the late Rudolf de Rijk, who together with Virginia de Rijk-Chan, produced the definitive Basque Grammar, and whose interest in Cantonese grammar and appreciation of our work has been most inspiring.

We are grateful for the opportunity to present our work at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, where we thank Mike Tomasello for his kind invitation and Angel Chan, Peter Cole, Bernard Comrie,

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact
Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xviii Acknowledgments

Stefan Gries, David Gil, Martin Haspelmath, Gabriella Hermon, Elena Lieven and Daniel Stahl for stimulating discussion. At the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology at La Trobe University in Melbourne we thank Bob Dixon and Sasha Aikhenvald, Randy LaPolla, Dory Poa and Peter Bakker for their hospitality and helpful feedback. At the Society for Pidgin and Creole Linguistics, we have benefited from discussion with Dany Adone, Bao Zhiming, Adrienne Bruyn, Clancy Clements, Genevieve Escure, Claire Lefebvre, Sarah Roberts and Armin Schwegler. We had the privilege of presenting different chapters at various institutions and international conferences at which we have benefited from discussion and feedback: Beijing Foreign Studies University, Cornell University, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Max Planck Institute of Evolutionary Anthropology, University of British Columbia, University of Hawaii, University of Oregon, University of Southern California, the International Symposium on Contemporary Linguistics, International Symposium on Bilingualism, Second Language Research Forum, and the Language Acquisition and Bilingualism Conference in Toronto.

We thank our former Research Assistants and graduate students who have contributed to our projects. It has been our pleasure working with these young talents at both of our universities. At the Chinese University of Hong Kong: Angel Chan, Winnie Chan, Lawrence Cheung, Gene Chu, Chloe Gu, Simon Huang, Victoria Lam and Linda Peng Ling Ling. Uta Lam has been tremendously resourceful and reliable in her technical support. Graduate students at the University of Hong Kong have included Betty Chan, Chen Ee San, Stella Kwan, Regine Lai, Bella Leung, Ingrid Leung, Michelle Li, Richard Wong and Emily Yiu. Further contributions have come from students from the Cognitive Science Programme at the University of Hong Kong: especially Antonio Cheung, Helen Ching, Samantha Ho, Elaine Lau and Fiona Leung.

We thank our mentors William Rutherford, Jacqueline Schachter, Bernard Comrie and John Hawkins, who have nurtured our interest in grammar, language typology, processing, language acquisition and learnability. Over the years we have enjoyed the friendship and fruitful collaboration of many colleagues, especially Umberto Ansaldi, Lisa Cheng, Samuel Cheung Hung-Nin, Mary Erbaugh, Huang Yue Yuan, Shin Kataoka, Cream Lee, Li Ping, Li Wei, Lisa Lim, Yasuhiro Shirai, Siok Wai Ting, Rint Sybesma, Tan Li Hai, Tang Sze-Wing, and the phenomenal team at CUHK: Gu Yang, Jiang Ping, Thomas Hun-Tak Lee, Gladys Tang and Yap Foong Ha.

This book could not have been written without the unwitting support of our children Timmy, Sophie and Alicia. We thank Kathryn, Llywelyn and Charlotte, their parents and caregivers who participated in our longitudinal study. We thank the Almighty God for the gift of all these wonderful bilingual children. Members of the extended Yip family have been backing us up every step of the way with

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact
Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

xix

their powerful prayers and unlimited support. We express our deepest gratitude to each of them, the children's grandmother Liu Yuk Chun, grandparents Jan and Alan Matthews, their uncles and aunts: Patrick Yip and Linda Lee, Peggy Yip, Dan Yip and Kennis Lam, their cousins: Lulu, Kasen and Darren for providing the best possible nurturing environment for the children to grow up in. We would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Timmy on being awarded first prize by the HKSAR government as 'Hong Kong Budding Poet 2005–06' and 'Poet of King George V School'. We feel blessed and privileged to have combined our research with family life, spending quality time with our children, participating in the recording sessions and keeping a precious diary record of their language development. The vivid images and cheerful laughter that come with the documentation of their childhood bilingualism will be preserved as an indelible testament for posterity. It is difficult to think of a more rewarding research topic than to study one's own children.

Finally we have been fortunate to enjoy the support of our institutions and their funding organizations. The research reported in this book is fully supported by a series of grants from the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China (Project Nos. HKU336/94H, CUHK4002/97H, CUHK4014/02H and CUHK 4692/05H) and direct grants from the Chinese University of Hong Kong (2001/02, 2003/04).

July 2006, Hong Kong

Parts of chapters 1 and 2 were first published as 'Early bilingual acquisition in the Chinese context', in the *Handbook of East Asian Psycholinguistics* Vol. I, ed. Ping Li, Li-Hai Tan, Elizabeth Bates and Ovid Tzeng, Cambridge University Press (Yip 2006, pp. 148–162). Some materials in chapter 3 were published as 'Assessing language dominance in bilingual acquisition: a case for Mean Length Utterance differentials', in *Language Assessment Quarterly* (Yip & Matthews 2006, 3: 97–116). An earlier version of chapter 5 was published as 'Dual input and learnability: null objects in Cantonese-English bilingual children', in *Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium on Bilingualism*, eds. James Cohen, Kara McAlister, Kellie Rolstad and Jeff MacSwan, Cascadia Press (Yip & Matthews 2005, pp. 2421–2431). Parts of chapter 6 were published as 'Relative clauses in early bilingual development: transfer and universals', in *Typology and Second Language Acquisition*, ed. Anna Giacalone Ramat, Mouton de Gruyter (Matthews & Yip 2002, pp. 39–81) and 'Relative clauses in Cantonese-English bilingual children: typological challenges and processing motivations', in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (Yip & Matthews 2007, 29: 277–300).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact

Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xx Acknowledgments

All of the above chapters are reprinted here in substantially revised versions with the kind permission of Cambridge University Press, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Cascadia Press and Mouton de Gruyter. The picture of Sophie Matthews, Alicia Matthews and Virginia Yip on the book cover appeared in the 30 September 2003 issue of *East Week* magazine, published in Hong Kong and is reproduced with the kind permission of the publishers.

Abbreviations

APS	Argument from the Poverty of the Stimulus
ASP	aspect marker
BFLA	Bilingual First Language Acquisition
BSLA	Bilingual Second Language Acquisition
Cancorp	The Hong Kong Cantonese Child Language Corpus
CHAT	Codes for the Human Analysis of Transcripts
CHI	child
CHILDES	Child Language Data Exchange System
CL	classifier
CLAN	Computerized Language Analysis
COP	copula verb
CP	complementizer phrase
CPE	Chinese Pidgin English
CRD	Constituent Recognition Domain
DEM	demonstrative
DO	direct object
DOC	double object construction
DP	determiner phrase
DUR	durative marker
EC	empty category
HCE	Hawaiian Creole English
HKCAC	The Hong Kong Cantonese Adult Language Corpus
IL	interlanguage
INT	interjection
INV	investigator
IO	indirect object
IP	inflectional phrase
LF	Logical Form
L1	first language
L2	second language
MLU	Mean Length of Utterance

xxii List of abbreviations

MLUw	Mean Length of Utterance in words
Mx	grammatical category x in a model language M
N	noun
NOM	nominalizer
NP	noun phrase
NPAH	Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy
OV	object verb
PASS	passive
PFV	perfective
POSS	possessive
PP	prepositional phrase
PRED	predication marker
PRT	particle
PTCP	participle
R	recipient
RC	relative clause
RVC	resultative verb complement
Rx	grammatical category x in a replica language R
S	subject
SAI	subject – auxiliary inversion
SCE	Singapore Colloquial English
SFP	sentence-final particle
SLA	second language acquisition
SLI	Specific Language Impairment
SVC	serial verb construction
SVO	subject verb object
T	theme
TRS	transitive verb
UG	Universal Grammar
V	verb
VAC	verb-adverb construction
VO	verb object
VP	verb phrase
VPC	verb-particle construction
2sg	second person singular
3sg	third person singular

Conventions used in the examples taken from the transcripts

[>]	overlap follows
#	pause between words

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-54476-4 - The Bilingual Child: Early Development and Language Contact
Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

List of abbreviations xxiii

< >	repetition of words in the utterance
[//]	retracing with correction
[/]	a speaker begins speaking, stops and then repeats the earlier material
xxx	unintelligible string of words