This updated and revised edition of Hamers and Blanc's successful textbook presents state-of-the-art knowledge about languages in contact from individual bilinguality to societal bilingualism. The book is both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary in approach, and analyses bilingualism at individual, interpersonal and societal levels. Linguistic, cognitive and sociocultural aspects of bilingual development are explored, as are problems such as bilingual memory and polyglot aphasia. Hamers and Blanc analyse the relationship between culture, identity and language behaviour in multicultural settings, as well as the communication strategies in interpersonal and intergroup relations. They also propose theoretical models of language processing and development, which are then applied to bilingual behaviour. Other topics reviewed include language shift, pidgins and creoles, language planning and bilingual education.

This new edition reflects the changes in the theoretical approaches to bilingualism since the late 1980s and includes sections on language attrition, languages in contact and neuropsychological aspects of bilinguality. The book will be invaluable to students, teachers and scholars interested in bilingualism in a range of disciplines including psycholinguistics, linguistics, the social sciences, education and language planning.

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Bilinguality and Bilingualism

Second edition

Josiane F. Hamers and Michel H. A. Blanc

Université Laval, Québec and Birkbeck College, University of London
Contents

List of figures viii
List of tables ix
Foreword to the second edition xi
Preface xiii

Introduction 1

1 Definitions and guiding principles 6
1.1 Definitions 6
1.2 General guidelines to language behaviour 8
1.3 Conclusion 23

2 Dimensions and measurement of bilinguality and bilingualism 25
2.1 Dimensions of bilinguality and bilingualism 25
2.2 Measurement of bilinguality and bilingualism 33
2.3 Conclusion 49

3 Ontogenesis of bilinguality 50
3.1 Bilinguistic development 52
3.2 Ontogenesis of early consecutive bilinguality 65
3.3 Gestural/articulated bilinguality 72
3.4 Sensitive-age hypothesis 74
3.5 Language attrition and bilinguality 76
3.6 Conclusion 79

4 Cognitive development and the sociocultural context of bilinguality 82
4.1 Bilinguality and cognition 82
4.2 Cognitive consequences of bilinguality 85
4.3 Social networks, language valorisation and literacy: the socio-cultural interdependence hypothesis 100
4.4 Conclusion 108

5 Social and psychological foundations of bilinguality 110
5.1 Processes of language development 110
5.2 The development of bilinguality 123
5.3 Conclusion 133

6 Neuropsychological foundations of bilinguality 135
6.1 Hemispheric preference and language behaviour 136
6.2 Techniques for measuring cerebral preference for language 137
6.3 Neuropsychological development of bilinguals 139
6.4 Hemispheric preferences and the signing bilingual 156
6.5 Conclusion 157

7 Information processing in the bilingual 162
7.1 Language storing and processing in bilinguals 162
7.2 Models of bilingual information processing 183
7.3 Non-verbal behaviour of the bilingual 193
7.4 Conclusion 196

8 Social psychological aspects of bilinguality: culture and identity 198
8.1 Language and culture 198
8.2 Cultural/ethnic/ethnolinguistic identity 200
8.3 Bilinguality and ethnolinguistic identity 209
8.4 Bilinguality, perceptions and attitudes 222
8.5 Social psychological aspects of L₂ acquisition 228
8.6 Conclusion 239

9 Social psychological aspects of bilinguality: intercultural communication 241
9.1 Speech/communication accommodation 242
9.2 Communication strategies in intercultural interaction 251
9.4 Conclusion 271

10 Societal bilingualism, intergroup relations and sociolinguistic variations 273
10.1 Origins of societal bilingualism 274
10.2 The role of language in intergroup relations 275
10.3 Sociolinguistic variations in language-contact situations 292
10.4 Implications of language-contact phenomena for linguistic theory 307
10.5 Language planning 310
10.6 Conclusion 315

11 Bilingual education 318
11.1 Literacy and language planning in education 318
11.2 Definitions and typologies of bilingual education 321
11.3 Factors conditioning bilingual education 323
List of contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.4 Bilingual education programs</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.5 Bilingual education and form-function mapping</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.6 Conclusion</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

Notes

Glossary

References

Subject index

Author index

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# Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.1</td>
<td>A general model of language behaviour</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.1</td>
<td>Schematic representation of the compound–coordinate distinction</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.1</td>
<td>Cognitive effects of different types of bilinguality</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.2</td>
<td>The sociocultural and cognitive dimensions of the additive–subtractive continuum</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.1</td>
<td>Sociocognitive model of language development</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.2</td>
<td>Schematised representation of the compound and consecutive form–function mappings</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7.1</td>
<td>The two models of the bilingual’s memory</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7.2</td>
<td>Double-coding model adapted to bilingual memory</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7.3</td>
<td>Asymmetric storage models</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8.1</td>
<td>Social psychological model of L₂ acquisition</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8.2</td>
<td>Schematic representation of individual motivational processes</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9.1</td>
<td>Equivalence constraint rule in bilingual code-switching</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10.1</td>
<td>Unidimensional model of language shift</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11.1</td>
<td>The myth of the bilingual handicap</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables

Table 2.1 Summary table of psychological dimensions of bilinguality | 26
Table 11.1 Trilingual education pattern in India | 327
Foreword to the second edition

Since writing the foreword for this remarkable work, I realise how quickly time flies by and how research accumulates. It is difficult, except for the dedicated, to keep up to date and to realise that research has branched out into new and unpredictable domains. One can’t help but get a broader education from a book like this one because it brings the reader up to date on bilingualism with a realisation of the depth of the subject, from old to new research. However, what may surprise the reader most is that bilingualism has become something more than multidisciplinary: it reviews in detail how psychologists, sociologists, ethnographers, linguists and informationists each present their views of the phenomena of bilingualism.

What is new is that the field has become interdisciplinary, that is, even though all sorts of specialists are focusing on the bilingual and the processes of bilingualism, only a few keep up with and know about more than one or possibly two neighbouring disciplines. Few think about bilingualism in an integrated, interdisciplinary manner. With that aim in mind, this book is completely rewritten and even better than the 1989 edition. In one of their conclusions, Josiane and Michel place us ahead of time by sketching out what an adequate, more complete description of bilingualism is likely to be. We glean what their view of the superstructure is likely to look like, and that’s where this work gets really exciting.

The superstructure itself has been constructed and described from the first chapter on. There is no rush in their basic descriptions; the authors patiently and comfortably (from the reader’s view) take each research effort apart fully, pointing out its potentials and its limitations. Sometimes it seems that the limitations overwhelm the positive aspects of a study, and this might be discouraging to young researchers or researchers-to-be. The authors are, however, essentially kind about research: with its apparent faults, the research attempt is often all that is available for superstructure building, and it is used, tentatively, in the construction. The authors realise, of course, that they are describing a particular feature, one part only, and that their own theories will be open to higher-level critiques. Research on bilingualism need not, therefore, be watertight to be useful, even though the
authors show their appreciation when a more complete, more basic study has to be relied on.

How has the superstructure they have in mind come about? It seems that it is based on an attractive assembly of elements within a single discipline; these become the ultimate fundamentals. Each research attempt in the past or in the present derives from a presumed fundamental, and each fundamental has to pass the test of being tried and tested. This means that it has to be rigorously conducted, made public and made repeatable. In scientific terms this means that research of value has to be methodologically tight and show reliability. Thus, researchers-to-be will find much they can do within their own discipline (or possibly two or three disciplines) that they have invested time and energy in. What this book shows them is how the more integrative, interdisciplinary theories yet to come will be able to construct more and better fundamentals from within each discipline. This will aid them in their attempts to understand the fascinating world of bilingual behaviour. Incidentally, no one within a single discipline theory is likely to cover all the explanations that are needed. The psychologist, linguist or biologist is likely to realise that bilingualism – or language itself – must be more than some type of complex ‘instinct’; nor will concepts like social-class differences, ethnolinguistic backgrounds or even sociolinguistic experiences by themselves be adequate explanations. This book therefore gives us believable notions of what bilingualism actually entails. It educates the reader beautifully.

I still believe (as I did in 1989) that no one else could have written such a book. Nor could any pair of others have done the job so well. It takes the fortunate and exceptional backgrounds of these particular scholars to do it. Josiane Hamers, a cognitive psychologist interested in the psycholinguistic aspects of bilingualism, spent her formative years in Belgium, a society where the social battle raged between Flemish and Walloon people. She then came to Montreal for graduate work, researching and teaching in a new society where an English–French social battle entertains her now. The fortunate part is the similarly rich background of Michel Blanc, and this is what makes this writing pair unique. Michel’s formative years were spent in France, and his professional experiences in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics were in London. He has very likely been endlessly entertained by the social stereotypes of French and British people that fly back and forth across the Channel. He has now settled in the hills of Umbria in central Italy where his triculturality starts to develop. What a pair they make!

We have to congratulate them and thank them for the splendid education they offer us in this new edition.

Wallace E. Lambert

*Annecy-le-Vieux*
Preface

This second edition is an updated, revised and restructured version of the first edition originally published in 1989. All chapters have been altered. We have deleted two chapters: the one on second language acquisition has now been omitted because the explosion in the amount of research necessitates a book on its own; however, we have retained some important aspects, integrating these into other chapters; for example, the social psychological processes at work in second language acquisition are discussed in Section 8.5 and communication strategies in second language learning in Section 9.2.2.3. The other deleted chapter is that on interpretation. We believe that the field is more relevant to cognitive psychology but has little to do with bilingual processing.

Owing to the rapid changes in the theoretical approaches and the increase in experiments and studies in the field, a number of chapters have been split up. Former Chapter 1 has been split into two chapters: Chapters 1 and 2. In addition to the definitions of bilingualism, the new Chapter 1 presents theoretical guiding principles which we follow throughout the book. The new Chapter 2 deals with the dimensions and measurement of bilinguality and bilingualism. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are concerned with bilingual development and its consequences and in Chapter 5 we propose a social cognitive interactional model of bilingual development. Chapters 6 and 7 review the state of the art in the neuropsychology of bilinguality and the bilingual’s information processing. Social psychological and interpersonal aspects are treated in Chapters 8 and 9, while Chapter 10 looks at societal bilingualism. Finally, Chapter 11 is concerned with language planning in education and with bilingual education.

In our revision work we have also taken into account the public and personal comments and criticisms addressed to the first edition, although on the whole we have been greatly encouraged by these comments and criticisms. Lastly, we have learned from our own research findings.

Our special thanks go to Wallace E. Lambert who read the first draft of the manuscript and whose useful comments and sound advice helped us improve the quality of this book. We also gratefully acknowledge the
comments and encouragement of our colleagues, in particular Richard Clément, Zita De Koninck and Itesh Sachdev. We are thankful to our research assistants, Isabelle Barrière, Ouafaa Zouali and M’hammed Abdou, for their work on the bibliography and the figures.

We especially thank Georgette Hamers, Donna Lamping and Aurora Restaino for their continuing interest, support, encouragement and patience. Our special thanks go to the Département de Langues et Linguistique at the Université Laval for its support and to the Department of Applied Linguistics at Birkbeck College, University of London for its hospitality, to Jim Tyson and Giordano Castagnoli for their technical assistance. At Cambridge University Press, thanks are due to Andrew Winnard (commissioning editor), Martin Mellor (copy editor), Ann Mason (proofreader) and Karl Howe (senior production controller). Last but not least, we are extremely grateful to Qirul, Libellule and Bidule for their unconditional feline support which inspired us so much throughout the writing of this book.

We alone accept full responsibility for the shortcomings of the book.

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