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LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN BILINGUALS' MIND: INSIGHTS FROM CASE STUDIES

Abstract: The present article deals with a number of themes that pertain to culture and language relation in bilingual reality, most notably how bilingualism is defined and classified in the literature, and how bicultural bilinguals' languages and cultures are interconnected. In the subsequent research part, the reported data formed the basis for conclusions supported by two-year observation and interviews of 4 Spanish-English bilinguals. The case studies allowed to gather information regarding their linguistic and cultural behaviour and how they identify themselves both linguistically and culturally. Each case study is discussed and conclusions on parallel points along with dissimilarities between accounts of the linguistic and cultural reality experienced in both languages are outlined.

Key words: bilingualism, Mexican-Americans, individual bilingualism, bicultural, language and culture

Introduction

The articulation of bilingualism and biculturalism into commodity culture is a certain confirmation of the escalating centrality of these phenomena to many communities. Yet, a pragmatic exploration in the natural sciences is beset with numerous problems in defining these multidisciplinary terms as they draw from linguistic, psychological, sociological and pedagogical perspectives (Błasiak-Tytuła 2011:22; Skutnabb-Kangas 2012:140).

Many researchers (e.g. Grosjean 2008; Kurcz 2005; Davies 2003; Grimes 2000) confirm the above by stating that it is difficult to capture bilingualism into strict semantic compartments. Thus, one may conclude after Altarriba and Heredia (2008:4) that research into this field should proceed with the emphasis on its description, not definition, since the researchers' objective is not necessary to define this term, but to "unpack all that comes with it" (ibid.). For Błasiak-Tytuła

(2011:36) bilingualism is best regarded as a continuum at which one end is a monolingual speaker, while at the other – an individual who has acquired both languages in a naturalistic way (mostly in childhood period) and who is best described as speaking the first and the second language fluently. What is important to note is the fact that between extreme monolingualism and full bilingualism there exist various types of bilingual speech (Figure 1). In theory, this kind of ambi- or equilingualism is regarded as ideal, yet rare in practice (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981:77; Weinreich 1953:6).

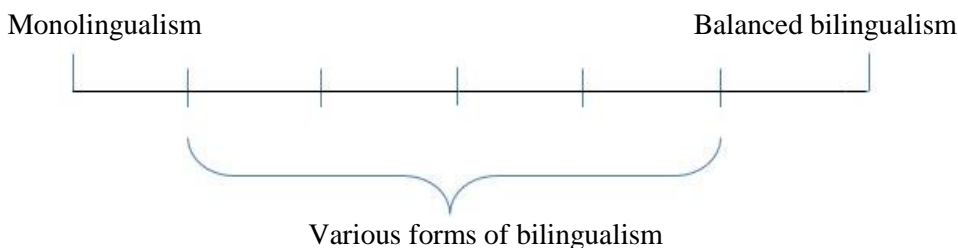


Figure 1. Monolingualism-bilingualism continuum
(own elaboration based on Blasiak-Tytula 2011:36).

Hoffmann (1991) and Baker (2006) use the term *individual bilingualism* in reference to an individual speaker, who is aware of and uses more than one linguistic code. Individual bilinguals include speakers who voluntarily decided to become elite bilinguals or people willing to assimilate into a second/other language to improve their socioeconomic situation abroad; people who study a foreign language at school; speakers born in bilingual families, communities or countries for whom bilingualism represents the norm of living; and those who have become bilingual due to the external factors such as political, social, or economic pressure (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981:75). The debate over the crucial elements of the nature of individual bilingualism has long been developed around seven determinants: language competence, cognitive organisation, age, acquisition of a given language, second language community presence in the habitat, socio-cultural status and cultural identity (Hamers and Blanc 2000:31). Nonetheless, Bee Chin and Wigglesworth (2007:18) narrow the list down to five main variables: linguistic competence degree, contextual situation, age, domain and social belonging. As the authors emphasise, social identity, attitudes towards society or social groups, demographic aspects and the organisation of both linguistic systems in the bilingual's mind all are significant contributors to the individual bilingualism processes and form the basis of inquiry on bilingualism itself.

Turning to defining the term *biculturalism*, Grosjean (1982; see also 2008) offered three factors to describe the bicultural person, specifically: taking part in life of the two cultures, adapting his/her languages, attitudes, etc. to these cultures,

and combining some aspects of these cultures. Interestingly, as in the case of language dominance, one may speak of *cultural dominance* in bilinguals as they tend to favour one of the two cultures they live in. Nguyen and Benet-Martinez (2007) echo Grosjean's point of view by claiming that bicultural people are exposed to the two cultures and, therefore, synthesize both of them into one behavioural repertoire. According to the authors, biculturals are able to switch between cultural schemas, standards and behaviours in response to cultural prompts. What may be also observed is that biculturals are prone to the so-called *blend phenomenon* – they can be identified by the two aspects: an adaptable and controllable one allowing them to adapt to a given situational context and a more static, such as the blend of features from the two cultures, that is always present and cannot be adjusted and modified to a specific situation (Grosjean 2015:575). This blend phenomenon is far less apparent in the linguistic component of bicultural bilinguals. While combining linguistic systems by code-switching and borrowings is frequent, the actual mixing of languages is not so common in the case of individual bilinguals.

Language and culture

Trying to describe language and culture relation, the research into the cultural background in the 19th century perceived language as an interpretation of reality (e.g. Breal qtd in Błasiak-Tytuła 2011:64). 20th-century scholars investigated the linguistic system in terms of an autonomous phenomenon, which is isolated to non-linguistic factors (e.g. Saussure qtd in Maduro 1987:19).

According to Bartmiński (2006:14-16), everything depends on the correlation of a specific element to the other components at a given point in time since, irrespective of terminology, the meaning of a word *chair* in English is connected to the fact that the English language system has created the form *chair* for the individual user to provide this word with an arbitrary meaning and, at the same time, to enable its use in a conventional way. Therefore, it is evident that culture and language are directly interconnected which leads to an open debate among linguists whether language use is dependent on how people live, think and construct their culture. The above may be acknowledged in a branch of functional linguistics – cognitive linguistics. The terms *functional* and *cognitive* highlight the assumption that a linguistic system is formed by the functions attributed to language by its users. The most crucial is the language ability to express human cognition, experience, or, most generally, culture. The linguistic system chosen for communicative objectives is “in the form it has and in the substance it communicates” (Langacker 2008:4). What Narrog (2010:408) adds is that “language-specific terminology and structure are the diachronic product of their users' activities in specific cultures as well as societies”. Thus, language is one of the most significant components of culture.

Anusiewicz et al. (2000:21) claim that linguistic systems reflect a hierarchy of values and a system of meanings. As the researchers further point out, language itself contains a model of the world and affects the way people shape their view of the reality surrounding them. This social experience encoded in language allows the speaker to rule on or evaluate the reality around him/her (Tokarski 2001:343).

As the above overview suggests, at least in the area of language-culture studies, the connection between the two is positive, indisputable, if not absolute. Bartmiński (2006:15-16) proposes three basic relational possibilities:

- 1) language and culture are analog (language < > culture): the way in which linguistic system is used and the way the world is seen/experienced reflect each other;
- 2) language is determinant of culture (language > culture), language usage governs the way the world is seen/experienced;
- 3) language is a derivative of culture (language < culture); the way the world is seen/experienced determines the way in which language is used.

In this regard, the persistent question is as follows: what is bridging language and culture together? For Błasiak-Tytuła (2011:173), bilingualism allows having two tools for self-fulfilment. Bilinguals can create a free and individual identity. In other words, they become a person in two different communities. The knowledge of two linguistic systems helps to escape from a one-sided picture of the world. In this regard, the answer to the question stated above is exceptionally direct: it is the human element – the mediatory concept of *homo loquens* – that brings culture and language together. Both experiencing and acting community and individual form values which are at the core of a language. Bartmiński (2006:10-11) agrees with the previous researcher by adding that culture and language interconnection is centred both upon the human individual and collective aspect as the ultimate aim has always been to arrive at the speaking subjects, their perception, the way they conceptualise the world, mentality and value system.

It is against this framework, that analysis was conducted on individual bilingualism among Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles in the years 2018–2019. Four respondents participated in the research study: Gabriela, María, José, and Daniel. All of them were immigrants who emigrated to Los Angeles, USA. The subjects were selected based on their high proficiency in both Spanish (their first language) and English (their second language). As truly bilingual speakers they were able to fully express their linguistic and cultural encounters in Los Angeles.

Research design

Aims. The objective was to determine how bicultural bilinguals' languages and cultures are connected. Information on language dominance, linguistic proficiency of interlocutors and social contexts of Spanish/English use drew

from 4 Mexican-American bilingual participants, allowed for determining parallel points along with dissimilarities between accounts of the linguistic and cultural reality experienced in both languages and cultures.

Participants. 4 Mexican-American bilinguals aged between 26–38 (2 females and 2 males) informed the present study.

Method. Data was gathered mainly by interviews conducted individually via Skype. In addition, online correspondence with the use of Messenger and WhatsApp communicators enabled to gather written material. The Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (LEAP-Q) was supported by self-reported data on listening, reading, speaking and writing, in English and Spanish language.

Gabriela’s bilingualism. Gabriela (26) emigrated to Los Angeles in 2006 due to economic reason after graduation from Universidad Autónoma del Carmen. Currently, she is working as a website graphic designer. After her arrival to Los Angeles, Gabriela encountered difficulties adapting to the new environment and culture. Before immigration, she had been convinced that her English was sufficient for a fluent communication. Gabriela comments that “at the beginning, I did not understand American native accent and all Americans were speaking too fast, [...] so I was adopting a whole year to this new environment and it was after that time that I became familiar with my second language – English”. Gabriela describes herself as bilingual. She defines bilingualism as the skill to use two languages in daily communication. The participant in the study is also perceived as a bilingual person by her environment and most Mexicans with whom Gabriela communicates in Los Angeles are also bilingual. The informant began studying English at the age of 8 in artificial conditions – in the primary school in Puebla. After constant practice, she achieved an advanced level of English and became proficient in reading, speaking and listening but less so in writing. Depending on the area of life, Gabriela chooses either one or two linguistic codes (Table 1).

Table 1. Language usage related to Gabriela’s spheres of life.

Sphere of life	Linguistic preference
Work	English
Family	Spanish
School/university	Not applicable
Friends	Spanish/English
Church	Spanish
Neighbours	English

The respondent has contact with English and Spanish in varying degrees through the mass media and other means of communication (Table 2).

Table 2. Gabriela's language preference related to mass media.

Mass media	Linguistic preference
Radio	English
Television	Spanish
Cinema	English
Press	English
Internet	English/Spanish
Text messages	English/Spanish
E-mail	English/Spanish

The interviews indicate that knowledge of two languages does not pose any problems for Gabriela. Yet, there are troublesome situations in which the respondent mixes the two linguistic systems: "There are some circumstances during which I am adopting bad code. I do it unconsciously, for example when I visit my family in Mexico, I talk to the shop assistants in English". The code-switching between Spanish and English, at the beginning, was seen pejoratively by Gabriela. Only after some years, she realised that this is the norm, and she often borrows and adds Americanisms¹ when communicating with compatriots in Los Angeles. The Mexican immigrant also reveals that she feels different when using Spanish and English: "If I am angry or sad, I would rather choose my native language to express emotions. I think that I sound more detached and professional in English. So it is a kind of shift in my behaviour when I use different languages". When asked if her English or Spanish skills have become poorer as a result of language mixing, Gabriela replies: "I do not think so. Both Spanish and English are very important for me. Yet, there are some situations in which I would have problems with recalling the exact word, especially if it is custom-related. I am not proud of it." (Table 3). Gabriela would like her children to be bilingual or multilingual. This, as stated by the respondent, would improve their living conditions.

Table 3. Gabriela's linguistic skills (self-assessment).

Linguistic competence in Spanish Language	Proficiency level
Listening	C2
Reading	C2
Speaking	C2
Writing	C2

¹ "A word, phrase, or other language feature that is especially characteristic of the English language as spoken or written in the United States" (Stavans 2000:556).

Linguistic competence in English Language	Proficiency level
Listening	C2
Reading	C2
Speaking	C2
Writing	B2

Gabriela sees herself as a bicultural person, although she feels more Mexican than American. She strongly believes that Americans, when compared with Mexicans, have a different attitude to life and completely dissimilar behavioural patterns. These differences may be particularly observed during Christmas Eve and Easter celebrations. In general, Gabriela’s approach to Americans and her new place of settlement is positive. She describes herself as a Mexican person living in the United States and does not intend to return to Mexico. When asked to describe her situation as an individual using two different linguistic systems and living in two different cultures, Gabriela indicated her state on the proposed scale (by the use of the symbol *) as it is shown in Figure 2:

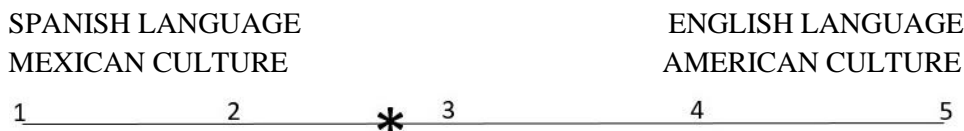


Figure 2. Gabriela’s sociocultural situation (self-assessment).

The first respondent can be summarized as a fully bilingual person who uses both languages to the same degree. Lower proficiency in the second/other language, creates some communication issues for the speaker. Even though Gabriela prefers to use English in her daily life, she judges herself as being culturally attached to Mexican culture.

María’s bilingualism. María (38) arrived to Los Angeles in 2004 for personal and economic reasons and she works as a nurse at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. The respondent started English learning when she was 10 in secondary school in Zacatecas, Mexico. At present, María works in an English-speaking environment and attends a post-graduate course in English Philology at California University. The informant has many friends of American or Mexican origin and during communication, she chooses either one or both languages depending on the spheres of life (Table 4) and interlocutors. María has contact with English and Spanish via mass media and other social communication platforms (Table 5).

Table 4. Language usage related to María's spheres of life.

Sphere of life	Linguistic preference
Work	English
Family	Spanish
School/university	English
Friends	Spanish/English
Church	Spanish
Neighbours	English

Table 5. María's language preference related to mass media.

Mass media	Linguistic preference
Radio	English
Television	English/Spanish
Cinema	English
Press	English
Internet	English/Spanish
Text messages	English/Spanish
E-mail	English/Spanish

The Mexican immigrant sees herself as bilingual. Her environment perceives her in the same manner. As she points out, *bilingualism* is a skill to communicate in two languages and the majority of her Mexican immigrant friends are also bilingual. Regardless of being proficient in both linguistic systems, María is Spanish-dominant (Table 6). She claims to never have any language difficulties (also with pronunciation due to her Mexican accent) when communicating with Americans – in conversations with María via Skype, there are hardly any linguistic interferences.

Table 6. María's linguistic skills (self-assessment).

Linguistic competence in Spanish Language	Proficiency level
Listening	C2
Reading	C2
Speaking	C2
Writing	C2
Linguistic competence in English Language	Proficiency level
Listening	C2
Reading	C1
Speaking	C2
Writing	C1

The informant frequently changes language codes within longer expressions and individual syntactic structures. When asked to complete the questionnaire, she replied: “I will do it today, *prometon* (I promise)”. María also alternates and uses changed forms of Spanish expressions and words during a conversation with other Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles: “I very often use a combination of two languages, Spanish and English. For me, it is something normal among people who live abroad and who speak both languages every day”. The informant sees using borrowings from English as something natural: “It’s very difficult to translate some Spanish concepts. It is much easier to use the English equivalent in some domains of life”. When asked if she always translates Americanisms into Spanish, María answers: “Not at all. It is sometimes impossible to describe American reality with the use of Spanish”.

Drawing on María’s ratings of the impact of bilingualism on her life, María sees the knowledge of two linguistic systems as something that cannot interfere or create issues. The respondent also admits to mixing the linguistic systems consciously as she perceives this process as a natural phenomenon for bilingual speakers. When asked about the personal value of Spanish and English, she responds: “Both languages are equally significant for me and I respect both of them. Spanish is my native language and English, on the other hand, lets me better understand the world around me”.

María has two children aged 11 and 5 and she raised them to be bilingual because “it will help in realisation of their dreams and goals in the future; [...] bilingualism makes life easier. Knowledge of foreign languages is a prerequisite in today’s world. Without knowing at least two languages you cannot achieve success”. What the interviewee adds is that being bilingual impacts one’s self-esteem and helps to better understand other cultures and nationalities. Bilingualism not only teaches tolerance and openness but also has a great influence on mental and personal development. “Bilingualism enriches the vision of the world. It fosters collaboration between people and between nations. It allows you to see the world in many ways”, summarizes María.

Based on the above statement, it is obvious that the informant declares herself to be both bilingual and bicultural. The concept of *biculturalism* is defined by María as belonging to two different cultures. María echoes Gabriela’s opinion by highlighting that the Mexican and American lifestyles, although they share some features, are in many respects fundamentally dissimilar (e.g. the way people spend free time with family and celebrate). When asked for elaboration, she points out: “I think I am more American in terms of my excessive exuberance, a different sense of humour. I even unintentionally adopted the way Americans greet each other – in a very informal style. I excessively use ‘How are you, honey?’ regardless of the circumstances”.

These and similar comments suggest that María does not feel inferior as an immigrant. She has never experienced discrimination by Americans. As she reveals, immigration is an opportunity to secure a better future for her and her family as

well as to learn about another culture/language. Nevertheless, homesickness and longing for a family are negative sides that deserve to be recognised. When asked to outline her situation as a person using two different languages and living in two different cultures, María chose (by the use of the symbol *) the midpoint on the scale (Figure 3).

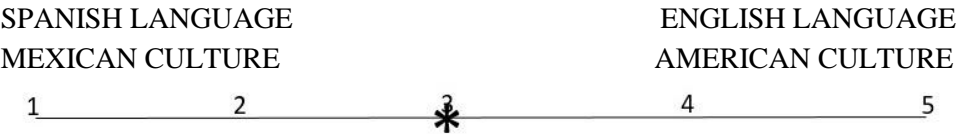


Figure 3. María’s sociocultural situation (self-assessment).

To sum up, the second respondent is an example of a bicultural bilingual. María perceives herself as emotionally attached to two languages and cultures. Nevertheless, as she confessed at the end of the interview, it took her some years to admit to her bicultural status.

José’s bilingualism. José (29) emigrated to America due to economic reasons in 2005 after graduating from high school in Mexico. At first, he experienced a language barrier in Los Angeles because of his foreign accent and vocabulary specific to the region of south-west Mexico. The man started to learn English at the age of 7 (private tutoring in Mexico). Currently, as a postgraduate student, José studies English at the University and uses both Spanish and English to different degrees in his everyday life (Table 7) and through mass media (Table 8).

Delving further into the field of general competence in English and Spanish allows labelling José as a bilingual person despite his rather weak self-assessment in English. The informant himself describes *bilingualism* as the skill to use two languages every day and claims that his neighbours also describe him as a truly bilingual person. Despite being proficient in both languages, the informant judges Spanish to be more developed than English (Table 9). The interviews data collected present a valid argument for reporting speech-related problems when José uses English.

Table 7. Language usage related to José’s spheres of life.

Sphere of life	Linguistic preference
Work	English
Family	Spanish
School/university	English
Friends	Spanish
Church	Spanish
Neighbours	Spanish

Table 8. José's language preference related to mass media.

Mass media	Linguistic preference
Radio	English
Television	English
Cinema	English
Press	English/Spanish
Internet	English/Spanish
Text messages	English/Spanish
E-mail	English/Spanish

Table 9. José's linguistic skills (self-assessment).

Linguistic competence in Spanish Language	Proficiency level
Listening	C2
Reading	C1
Speaking	C1
Writing	B1

Linguistic competence in English Language	Proficiency level
Listening	B2
Reading	B1
Speaking	B2
Writing	B1

The informant reveals that in some situations he mixes both languages and it helps him to communicate. According to José, his Spanish is not impoverished. Even though both languages are valued by José, he admits that it is more difficult to express himself in English. Interestingly, the respondent often uses Americanisms as some words are more suited to the realities of American life than their Spanish equivalents. What José adds is that not all Americanisms can be literally translated into Spanish. The informant declares that if he has children in the future, he will facilitate their education in both languages.

The Mexican immigrant has difficulty with recognizing himself as bicultural. Although José adopts a positive attitude to Americans and American culture, when asked more detailed questions, he discloses that the Spanish culture is “at a much higher level”. He is very proud of his Mexican origin and declares a desire to return to Mexico. When asked to define the sociocultural status, José pointed to (by the use of the symbol *) the following position on the scale (Figure 4):

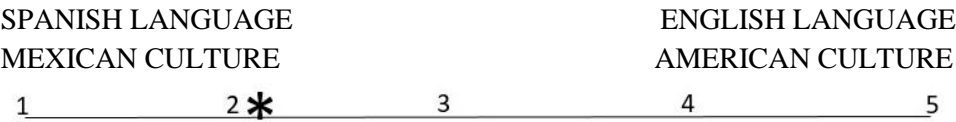


Figure 4. José’s sociocultural situation (self-assessment)

Even though José’s linguistic situation may be classified as bilingual, the sociocultural sphere of his life is dominated by Mexican traditions and the Spanish language. The immigrant speaks Spanish and English on a daily basis but he prefers to use Spanish in more intimate situations (in church, at home, with friends and family). In stark contrast to Gabriela’s situation, his language preference is related to low proficiency in English. Although being reluctant to admit to his bicultural status, José claims to take an active part in both cultures. When asked additional questions, the respondent reveals that American customs have a great impact on his daily life.

Daniel’s bilingualism. Daniel (31) immigrated from Mexico in 2004 due to economic reasons. The fourth respondent started learning English at the age of 14 (late bilingualism) and continued in high school in Mexico (artificial bilingualism). Daniel recalls numerous communication problems upon his arrival to Los Angeles, especially those caused by misunderstanding of the American accent. Currently, the interviewee speaks, writes and reads in Spanish and English. The use of two languages by Daniel is conditioned by a given sphere of life summarized in Table 10. The Mexican immigrant has contact with English and Spanish to a varying degree via mass media (Table 11).

Table 10. Language usage related to Daniel’s spheres of life.

Sphere of life	Linguistic preference
Work	English
Family	Spanish
School/university	Not applicable
Friends	Spanish/English
Church	Not applicable
Neighbours	English

Table 11. Daniel’s language preference related to mass media.

Mass media	Linguistic preference
Radio	English
Television	English
Cinema	English
Press	English
Internet	English/Spanish
Text messages	English/Spanish
E-mail	English

Daniel defines *bilingualism* as the proficient use of two languages. The further interview process confirms that not only the respondent himself but also his friends identify Daniel as a bilingual person. When the linguistic ability is conflated with emotionality, Daniel’s speech is dominated by Spanish (Table 12).

Table 12. Daniel’s linguistic skills (self-assessment).

Linguistic competence in Spanish Language	Proficiency level
Listening	C2
Reading	C2
Speaking	C2
Writing	C2

Linguistic competence in English Language	Proficiency level
Listening	C1
Reading	C1
Speaking	C1
Writing	C1

As the interviewee further points out: “Thanks to the knowledge of the two languages people can better understand the culture of a society. Personally, I treat both languages with respect: Spanish is my native language, English is the native language of people in the city where I live now”. Daniel claims that bilingualism enhances socialisation experiences by enabling him to communicate with American society. At the same time, the respondent experiences difficulty in changing codes and sometimes forgets words in Spanish. Based on Daniel’s narrative, one may presume that the most common reason for forgetting proper expressions is the lack of use of the word over a long period of time. The concept of code-switching is not alien to the respondent: “I try not to switch between the codes, mix the languages and use borrowings. I really pay attention to what I say and in which language – especially, when I talk with a family member from Mexico; [...] I try not to avoid such linguistic faux pas”. Nonetheless, ironically, even though Daniel is against using a mixture of English and Spanish, he used the French expression in his comment above. When confronted, he confessed that it was done unconsciously.

Daniel may be described not only as bilingual but also bicultural – he has learnt the linguistic expressions and properties associated with American culture. According to this Mexican immigrant, there are more similarities than differences between the Mexican and American culture. His attitude toward the American nation is very positive. When asked about returning to the country of origin,

Daniel gives a negative answer. The respondent has never experienced any discrimination in America. He enumerates positive sides of immigration, e.g. finding a well-paid job, acquiring the language of the host country, being familiar and experience the culture of the inhabitants of the country of residence.

Daniel was also asked to define his sociocultural situation as a person using two different languages and living in two diverse cultures. He indicated the following place (by the use of the symbol *) on the proposed scale (Figure 5):

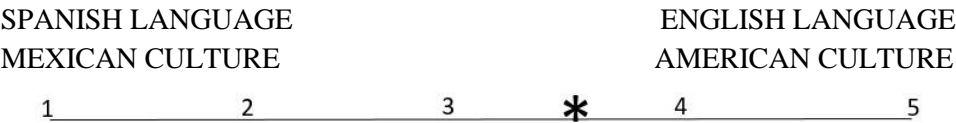


Figure 5. Daniel’s sociocultural situation (self-assessment).

In stark contrast to the previous interviewees, Daniel exemplifies a strong attachment to American customs and traditions. Although he sees himself as bicultural, his American culture preference is evident on the scale above. Moreover, the mass media used by the respondent are dominated by English.

Discussion

In the context of Mexican assimilation in the structure of the Los Angeles community, cultural contacts and bilingualism are becoming a more and more absorbing field for modern-day linguistic studies. The diversity of scientific descriptions of this phenomenon together with its assessment by individual users of both languages, confirm that bilingualism is a process, not a permanent situation – a continuum with different forms for different units, which are frequently characterised by varying levels of linguistic and communicative skills in the first and second language. The interviewees’ comments suggest that a truly bilingual person is competent in both linguistic codes (often also in a third linguistic system which is a blend of these two languages) to a degree suitable for their needs and for proper functioning in the environment in which he/she lives.

Mexican immigrants who took part in the study, use both languages and their varieties in different areas of everyday life and declare that both have high value for them. The English language was used mainly in work, in shops, in local offices, whereas the Spanish language is chosen primarily during immigrants’ visits to their country of origin and in certain formal situations in Los Angeles where a monolingual model of communication is consciously chosen by the speaker. The respondents turn to a mixture of the two languages for everyday contacts when they choose the bilingual model of communication, resulting in numerous linguistic interferences such as borrowings and code-switching.

Interestingly, what was observed during interviews is the language loss phenomenon (see: Grosjean 2010). Some of the respondents' domains of language use were considerably reduced, if not simply absent over the years. According to the participants in the study, as they no longer were sure about their knowledge of the language and to avoid mistakes, Mexican immigrants choose another language. Most of the interviewees were conscious of the state of their language attrition and some even felt guilty about it.

On the basis of the findings, it can also be concluded that Mexicans living in Los Angeles identify themselves with the American culture through specific aspects (kinship, language, nationality, education, attitudes, etc.). This identification is a direct reason for changes in immigrants' self-perception and their own identity redefinition – a cross-border identity hybrid shaped on the junction of two different cultures. It is possible to conclude from this evidence that it is often a long process for bicultural bilinguals to realize and accept both their biculturalism and bilingualism. In fact, since the scholarly explanation of bilingualism as the regular use of two or more languages is broadly accepted, bilinguals are still hesitant to define themselves as bicultural. Nevertheless, the participants in the present study behaved biculturally, that is, they were adapting to the context they were in. In fact, Ervin (1964) stated something very similar when she proposed that a shift in language is associated with a shift in social roles and emotional attitudes. By employing different language with different persons and in different situational contexts, the use of each linguistic system may be associated with a shift in a large array of behaviour, such as social roles and emotional attitudes. As it was revealed during interviews, both the context/environment and the interlocutors cause bicultural bilinguals to change their attitudes, emotional input and behaviours (along with language), and not their language as such. Given that, further research in this area should focus on how bicultural bilinguals behave (the same or different?) in the two cultures separately, that is in a monocultural mode and in bicultural mode.

Conclusion

In the present article, a number of topics connected to bicultural bilinguals were addressed, most notably how bicultural bilingualism is defined in the literature. Furthermore, bicultural bilinguals' linguistic and cultural behaviour was examined and conflated with identification both in linguistic and cultural terms. Even though the study shed some light on the linguistic and the cultural mechanisms of these individuals, not a lot of research was conducted on combined linguistic and cultural ensemble which would treat them not just as the sum of two languages and cultures, but having their own linguistic and cultural competency different from that of

bilinguals who are not bicultural and from that of biculturals who are not bilingual. The future descriptive, experimental as well as theoretical examination in this field hopefully will enable a better understanding of bicultural bilinguals as they really are – complete and exceptional linguistic and cultural beings.

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