

Robert Mayr - Jonathan Morris: Social and Psychological Factors in Bilingual Speech Production

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Social and Psychological Factors in Bilingual Speech Production is a book of ten articles from the Special Issue published online in the open-access journal Languages (ISSN 2226-471X). The book features ten studies that perceptively analyse how social and psychological variables impact bilingual speech production. After a brief account and introduction from the book's editors, the book presents the ten articles that constitute the Special Issue. The articles are organized as follows: a) Articles 1-2 explore the speech patterns of bilingual children within the context of their minority language; (b) Article 3 investigates two phonological processes of adult heritage speakers in three different age groups; (c) Articles 4-6 explore the distinctive accents emerged by new speakers within the context of minority languages in bilingual societies; and (d) Articles 7-10, which focus on adults, rather than children, as L2 learners and the role their L2 experience plays in shaping their L1 speech patterns. Authored by a group of experts from universities worldwide, this publication offers an insightful account of variables affecting the distinct pronunciation patterns of bilinguals. This issue constitutes a welcome addition to the vibrant field of bilingual speech processing and development.

In their introduction, Mayr and Morris provide a useful review of both internal and external linguistic factors perceived as influencing the pronunciation patterns of bilinguals. They explain how the articles can contribute to our understanding of the central role extra-linguistic factors play in the speech productions of bilinguals across various settings. An overview of the individual articles then follows this part of the introduction. This introduction is important and worth taking the time to process as it provides readers with the necessary background knowledge to understand the following articles.

The first article investigates how mothers' cultural orientation is associated with children producing accurate speech sounds in English and Spanish in Spanish-speaking homes in Southern California. Single words, including Spanish and English consonants and vowels, were elicited from the children using picture prompts. The results showed a significant relationship between the mothers' orientation towards Anglo-American culture and children's accuracy on English consonants and vowels, whereas no such relation was found for children's accuracy in Spanish.

The second article examines how the age of acquisition influences the perceived accent of German-Russian bilingual children in Germany. Native Russian and German listeners rated German and Russian speech extracts from the children's narratives by employing an accent rating task. The results revealed that the older

children's accents sounded more native in German than the younger bilinguals, although that was not the case for Russian.

The third article examines whether the two processes of vowel reduction and deletion in naturally-occurring speech differ between homeland (in Calabria) and heritage (in Toronto) speakers. Collecting word-final vowel outcomes from the two groups of speakers using interviews and analysing them auditorily, the researchers discovered that the heritage speakers reduced and deleted word-final vowels.

The fourth article assesses the extent to which neofalantes' changes in speech production are enough for Spanish-Galician bilingual listeners to identify their accents and whether their linguistic background affects their ability to identify the accent. The results revealed that listeners could not recognize the neofalantes' as Spanish-dominant or Galician-dominant, suggesting that it has to be considered a new emergent variety in the community.

The fifth article investigates how adult new speakers perceive their Welsh pronunciation and the challenges faced in producing their Welsh speech. An online questionnaire was employed for data collection. The results demonstrated that the participants perceived their pronunciation as less native and that their proficiency in Welsh was a determining factor in perceiving their accents. They reported that vowel length and unshared consonants with English were the two main features that posed difficulties to them.

The sixth article examines how three social factors are associated with /r/ productions of Welsh-English bilingual speakers from two distinct communities divergent in their use of Welsh as a community language. Analysing the data collected through interviews and wordlist tasks from young Welsh-English bilingual speakers demonstrated differences in producing /r/ in both languages when comparing the two communities.

The seventh article investigates the extent to which the length of residence variable of Foreign Domestic Helpers in an L2 (Arabic) setting affects their Arabic perception and production. An AX discrimination task and a production task indicated that length of residence played no significant role in FDH performance in any of the tasks.

The eighth article compares the L1 (English) segments of a group of late English–Austrian bilinguals who moved to Austria in adulthood in two different situations, that is, in a situation where both languages are highly activated as well as in a unilingual language mode, and monolingual native speakers in England. Using an online reading task, the participants produced sentences that were analysed acoustically. The results demonstrated that participants did not show a difference when producing the experimented sounds in the non-code-switched situation.

The ninth article investigates the impact of learning a foreign language on the phonetics of one's L1 by comparing Portuguese and English words beginning with plosives produced by L1 Portuguese speakers learning English as a foreign language. Recruiting monolingual native speakers of Brazilian Portuguese as a control group, the researchers discovered that the learners produced Portuguese /b and g/ with a longer voicing lead than the monolinguals. Moreover, cross-linguistic interactions reflected in similar English and Portuguese plosives were found.

The final article investigates Arnold Schwarzenegger's speech development in both his languages, Austrian German and English, longitudinally. The VOT durations of his word-initial plosives and the formant frequencies in his L1/L2 monophthongs were measured in different time slots using data collected from interviews. The results indicated that his late L1/L2 productions of voiceless plosives became very similar, as was the case for his L1/L2 monophthongs.

Taken together, the ten articles in this reprint are all empirical and use a wide array of research designs that are particularly impressive and useful. Overall, this book is a valuable resource and should be appealing to those seeking to keep themselves up to date with the latest developments in the field of speech productions of bilinguals.

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