LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN INUKTITUT-ENGLISH BILINGUALS

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OVERVIEW

Guiding Question: Is stable bilingualism possible in an aboriginal language context with encroaching majority languages?

1. Current Language Situation
   • demographics, strong L1 acquisition, future prospects

2. Preschool Simultaneous Bilinguals
   • code mixing, cross-linguistic influence

3. School-Aged L2-Learner Bilinguals
   • L1 proficiency after school onset, language use choices

4. Long-Term Prognosis
   • depends on language use choices made at home and school
PART 1: CURRENT LANGUAGE SITUATION
ESKIMO-ALEUT LANGUAGE FAMILY

- spoken in Siberia, Alaska, Canadian Arctic, Greenland
- 8 main languages, many dialects
- 137,000 speakers overall; 29,000 in Canada (2001 census)
## Eskimo-Aleut Language Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>% Inuit Population who are Speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Siberia</td>
<td>very few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>26% - 48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Canada</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Canada</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenland</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Factors Involved:**
- development of writing system and literacy
- L1 support in schooling

(Dorais 1990, 1992; Statistics Canada 1996)
### CANADIAN INUIT LANGUAGE HEALTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Inuit who...</th>
<th>All Inuit</th>
<th>Children age 2-15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have Inuktitut as first language</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Inuktitut at home</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can understand/speak Inuktitut</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can converse in Inuktitut</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- highest rates of any Canadian aboriginal language
- one of few aboriginal languages with chance of long-term survival
- high L1 proficiency in Nunavik preschoolers (Allen, Crago, etc.)

(Statistics Canada 2001)
L1 INUKTITUT + MAJORITY LANGUAGE ⇒ BILINGUALISM OR LANGUAGE SHIFT?

• 440/18605 (2%) in Nunavut reported as simultaneous bilingual (Inuktitut and English/French) in 2001 census
• all other Inuit (up to age ~50) become bilingual through schooling and community / media exposure to English and French
SCHOOL LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

• grades K-2: instruction in Inuktitut in most communities
• grades 3+: instruction in English or French, with Inuktitut for subjects like physical education and religion
• in recent years, some content subjects partially taught in Inuktitut

• in large communities (1000+), options for instruction in English and French from grade K
• in some communities, options for instruction in Inuktitut through grade 4 or 5

OTHER LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Community
- Inuktitut: low prestige situations (home, socializing, menial work)
- English/French: higher prestige situations (specialized work)
- English lingua franca even though anglophones minority (5-35%)
- non-Inuit rarely learn more than a few common words of Inuktitut

Media
- average home has at least 2 TV sets
- watch average of 3.25 hours per day, only 35 mins in Inuktitut
- community radio in Inuktitut, regional news reports in English

(Taylor & Wright 1990; Dorais 1989, 1996)
BILINGUALISM OR LANGUAGE SHIFT?

- 440/18605 (2%) in Nunavut reported as simultaneous bilingual (Inuktitut and English/French) in 2001 census
- all other Inuit (up to age ~50) become bilingual through schooling and community and media exposure to English and French
- danger of language shift and eventual loss of Inuktitut because of the prevalence and prestige of English/French
- this type of language shift has occurred in other Inuit regions within one generation
- high community value for Inuktitut, but enough support?
WHAT DOES CHILD BILINGUALISM LOOK LIKE?

• simultaneous bilinguals - on the front lines
  • confusion? language infiltration? - mixing, influence
  • French-English bilinguals: no confusion
  • Inuktitut-English: ????
    • prestige difference, not OPOL, different structures

• later bilinguals - more L2 exposure
  • peer and societal influences
PART 2:
PRESCCHOOL SIMULTANEOUS BILINGUAL ACQUISITION
### INUKTITUT LANGUAGE STRUCTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Inuktitut</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word Order</strong></td>
<td>subject - object - verb</td>
<td>subject - verb - object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modifier-Noun Order</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Omission of S and O</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morphemes per Word</strong></td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verb/Noun Inflection</strong></td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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- *e.g.* Siturautii-kkani aitsi-si-gama.
- *[sled-my] get-PRESENT-1]*
- ‘I will **get my sled.**’ (Child 2;9)
### Inuktitut Language Structure

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E.g. **Siturekaunii-kkani aitsi-si-gama.**

[sled-my get-PRESENT-1]

‘I will get my sled.’ (Child 2;9)
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- e.g. **Situraautii-kkani aitsi-si-gama.**
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| e.g.                           | Situraautii-kkani aitsi-si-gama. 2.5 / word |
|                                | [sled-my get-PRESENT-I]              |
|                                | ‘I will get my sled.’ (Child 2;9) 1 / word |
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<td>1000+</td>
<td>8</td>
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**Example:**

- **INUKTITUT:** Siturautii-kkani aitsi-si-gama.
  - [sled-my get-PRESENT-1]
  - ‘I will get my sled.’ (Child 2;9)
- **ENGLISH:** I will get my sled.
  - (Child 2;9)
STUDY 1 - CODE MIXING


- use words/phrases from both Language A and Language B together in one utterance
  e.g. Where is my zapato? [zapato = shoe]

- common fear that mixing means random use of two languages
- grammatically constrained in adults; many constraints proposed
- not clear when children acquire constraints

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

- 6 Inuktitut-English bilingual children
- aged 1;8 to 2;11 at onset, taped for one year
- 5 children have two bilingual Inuit parents
- 1 child has English-speaking father and bilingual mother
- naturalistic data collected via videotape

(Allen, Genesee, Fish & Crago 2002)
### FREQUENCY OF MIXING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>No. Utterances</th>
<th>% Inuktitut Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caregivers</td>
<td>16674</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>8081</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Rate of mixing similar across children and caregivers
- Rate of mixing similar to other studies on child code mixing
- Children use more English-only utterances than caregivers do (also true for each child individually)

(Allen, Genesee, Fish & Crago 2002)
DO MIXES FOLLOW CONSTRAINTS?

Nonce Borrowing (Poplack, Sankoff & Miller 1988)
• one word from Language A inserted into utterance of Language B
• inserted word follows grammar of Language B

Code Switching (Poplack 1980)
• multi-morpheme fragment in each language
• codes switched where surface structures are equivalent
• each fragment grammatical in own language

(Allen, Genesee, Fish & Crago 2002)
MIXES OF TAGS AND QUOTATIONS

• 36.4% for adults; 32.7% for children

e.g. **Look**, ikaju-nngi-tuq.
[he’s not helping]
‘Look, he’s not helping.’ (Child 3;8)

e.g. “**You bad boy**” la-juq.
[he said]
“‘You bad boy,’ he said.’ (Adult)

Constraint: Not relevant (no grammatical relationship)

(Allen, Genesee, Fish & Crago 2002)
MIXES OF ENGLISH INTO INUKTITUT

- 51.5% for adults; 48.7% for children

E.g. Atausi-mik **cookie-liur-tuq**?
[one] [make]
‘Is he making one cookie?’ (Child 1;11)

E.g. Mushy-u-**nngi-tu-ru lu-alu**-runa.
[this little one isn’t]
‘This little one isn’t mushy.’ (Adult)

Constraint: mixed word A follows grammar of sentence B

(Allen, Genesee, Fish & Crago 2002)
MIXES OF INUKTITUT INTO ENGLISH

- 2.6% for adults; 6.8% for children

  e.g. I see nartiq.

  [seal]
  ‘I see a seal.’ (Child 3;5)

  e.g. We’ll apaapa.

  [eat]
  ‘We’ll eat.’ (Adult)

Constraint: mixed word A follows grammar of sentence B

(Allen, Genesee, Fish & Crago 2002)
MIXES OF PHRASES IN BOTH LANGUAGES

- 6.0% for adults; 7.1% for children

E.g. miki-gili-laar-tanga-una by next summer anyways.
   [this will be too small for him]
   ‘This will be too small for him by next summer anyways.’
   (Adult)

E.g. one candy langa-vunga?
   [I will have]
   ‘Will I have one candy?’
   (Child 3;8)

Constraint: Each phrase follows grammar of own language.

(Allen, Genesee, Fish & Crago 2002)
MIXES FOLLOW CONSTRAINTS

• vast majority of mixes follow established constraints:
  • 96.5% for adults; 95.3% for children
• only small percentage don’t follow constraints - performance?

  e.g. Avani-it-tuq your tuttiaria?
    [it is there] [pencil]
    ‘Is your pencil there?’ (Child 2;8)

  e.g. anaana-it work?
    [your mother]
    ‘Is your mother working?’ (Adult)

(Allen, Genesee, Fish & Crago 2002)
CONCLUSION

• children’s code mixing does not mean language confusion
• mixed utterances follow linguistic constraints
• mixed utterances are sensitive to language differences
  • few mixes with phrases in each language - because few points where surface structure of two languages is identical
• distinct grammatical systems even when mixing languages

STUDY 2 - CROSSLINGUISTIC INFLUENCE
(Zwanziger, Allen, & Genesee, 2005)

• use the grammar of language A when speaking language B
  (= transfer in L2 literature)

  e.g. English:  √ fix Daddy’s chair  ?? fix the chair of Daddy
   Spanish:  * repara papi silla  √ repara la silla de papi

• studied in several language pairs, in different constructions

(Zwanziger, Allen & Genesee 2005)
SUBJECT OMISSION

**English**
- overt subjects usually required (e.g. *John* ate the cake.)
- subject omission allowed in imperatives and certain colloquial instances (e.g. ____ Eat the cake!)

**Inuktitut**
- overt subjects only required for emphasis or disambiguation
- subject omission allowed in all other instances

**Previous Studies**
- Juan-Garau & Perez-Vidal 2000, Catalan-English, no influence
- Paradis & Navarro 2004, Spanish-English, influence (but maybe due to atypical input)

(Zwanziger, Allen & Genesee 2005)
SUBJECT OMISSION IN MONOLINGUALS

**English**
- age 1;6-2;7: 26% - 55% omission
- age 2;7-4;0: 5% - 11% omission

**Inuktitut**
- age 1;0-2;0: 100% omission
- age 2;0 – 3;6: 85% omission

PREDICTIONS

If no crosslinguistic influence

• subject omission rates similar to monolinguals in both languages

If crosslinguistic influence

• subject omission rates different from monolinguals in one or both languages

(Zwanziger, Allen & Genesee 2005)
ENGLISH UTTERANCES

(1) Obligatory Subjects (n=552)
   Steve want that one?  (PN 3;5)
   I can do it.  (SA 2;7)

(2) Non-obligatory Subjects (n=427)
   Catch it.  (MT 3;3)
   Wanna see me?  (SA 3;2)

(3) Obligatory but Omitted Subjects (n=31)
   ∅ Left this as a boat in a boat.  (AI 2;0)
   ∅ Is done is gone.  (AI 3;9)

(Zwanziger, Allen & Genesee 2005)
## COMPARISON TO MONOLINGUAL ENGLISH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monolingual</th>
<th>Bilingual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early Stage</strong> (to 2;6)</td>
<td>26%-55%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Later Stage</strong> (2;7 +)</td>
<td>5%-11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Zwanziger, Allen & Genesee 2005)
(1) With Subjects (n=123)

illu sukku-tu
house be.broken-it
‘The house is broken.’

(2) Subjects Omitted (n=747)

Ø iqalu-lauju-nggi-tugut
catch.fish-PAST-not-we
‘(We) did not catch any fish.’

(Zwanziger, Allen & Genesee 2005)
## COMPARISON TO MONOLINGUAL INUKTITUT

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(to 2;0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later Stage</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2;1 +)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Zwanziger, Allen & Genesee 2005)
CONCLUSION

- no clear evidence for crosslinguistic influence in subject omission - bilinguals follow same developmental patterns in each language as monolinguals

- no evidence that children get confused in grammar when learning two languages, even when those languages have very different structures and status

- bilinguals possess significant knowledge of the differing target language patterns in their two languages

(Zwanziger, Allen & Genesee 2005)
PART 3:
TRAJECTORY OF BILINGUALISM
AFTER SCHOOL ENTRY
WHAT HAPPENS AFTER SCHOOL ENTRY?

- Nunavik school policy - additive bilingualism: “to develop a curriculum that embraces and preserves native traditions, culture, and language, and prepares students for active participation in the modern world” (Kativik School Board 1985)

- parents: progressive decline in child Inuktitut after school entry

- adults: children losing interest in Inuktitut language and culture, losing L1 proficiency as a result of L2 schooling

STUDY 1- EFFECT OF LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION
(Wright, Taylor, & McArthur, 2000)

- Longitudinal study of Inuktitut conversational and academic language proficiency of all Inuit children in grades K - 2 in largest community in Nunavik.

- Three groups of monolingual native speakers of Inuktitut:
  1. K-2 in Inuktitut
  2. K-2 in English
  3. K-2 in French

- Tests administered beginning and end of each academic year.
  - Conversational: vocabulary comprehension, picture naming, ...
  - Academic: story comp. w. inference, sentence completion, ...

(Wright, Taylor & McArthur 2000)
## INUKTITUT ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OF INUIT CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language of Instruction</th>
<th>Inuktitut</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade K, fall</td>
<td>15.83</td>
<td>14.27</td>
<td>14.95</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade K, spring</td>
<td>30.55</td>
<td>27.79</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1, fall</td>
<td>30.33</td>
<td>20.29</td>
<td>22.27</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1, spring</td>
<td>55.48</td>
<td>31.18</td>
<td>35.94</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2, fall</td>
<td>55.72</td>
<td>28.60</td>
<td>32.48</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2, spring</td>
<td>69.44</td>
<td>34.90</td>
<td>44.42</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar pattern for conversational language proficiency although differences not as large

(Wright, Taylor & McArthur 2000)
CONCLUSIONS

• Inuit children in second-language instruction show disruptions in the development of their first language
• instruction in Inuktitut can prevent or reduce this subtractive effect
• not simply the effect of being taught in a second language - English-speaking children from the same community with French instruction did not show the same effect

• after grade 2, all instruction is in English or French - what happens then?

(Wright, Taylor & McArthur 2000)
STUDY 2 - EFFECT OF YEARS OF EXPOSURE
(Allen, Crago, & Pesco, in press)

- fear: grade 8 (5 years of L2 instruction) < grade 3 (no L2 instruction)
- fear: large communities (more L2 exposure) < small communities (less L2 exposure)
- studied narrative production of 3 participants in ea. of 6 groups:
  - age: grade 3, grade 8, adult
  - community size: small (~250), large (~1000)
- frog story (Mayer 1969)

(Allen, Crago & Pesco in press)
EXAMPLES

Grade 3, Large
Qimmi-lu surusi-lu tupa-gamik asiuji-juuk nirlinauja-mik.
‘When the dog and the boy woke up, they lost the frog.’

Adult, Small
‘During the morning when the dawn was breaking, he woke up to look at his frog that wasn’t there anymore.’

(Allen, Crago & Pesco in press)
MEASURES

• Fluency (words per narrative)

(Allen, Crago & Pesco in press)
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• Lexical Diversity (different morphemes per narrative)

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- Grammatical Difficulties (dual marking, case, transitivity)

(Allen, Crago & Pesco in press)
MEASURES

- Fluency (words per narrative)
- Lexical Diversity (different morphemes per narrative)
- Grammatical Complexity (mean length of words in morphs)
- Grammatical Difficulties (dual marking, case, transitivity)
- Narrative Structure (time setting, descriptive detail)

(Allen, Crago & Pesco in press)
RESULTS

• only one measure (mean length of words) suggests language does not develop between grade 3 and 8

• several measures suggest differences between small and large communities
  • words per narrative greater in small communities
  • lexical diversity greater in small communities
  • more grammatical errors in large communities

• findings are suggestive but inconclusive, further (better controlled) study is needed

(Allen, Crago & Pesco in press)
STUDY 3 - LANGUAGE USE IN IQALUIT
(Dorais & Sammons, 2002)

• language used with spouse/children, parents/siblings/friends
• interviews with:
  • 126 school children (101 Inuit, 20 English, 5 French)
  • 76 adults (51 Inuit, 20 English, 5 French)
### CHILD USE OF INUKTITUT IN IQALUIT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>With Parents</th>
<th>With Siblings</th>
<th>With Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inuit</td>
<td>K-4</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8-11</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Heritage</td>
<td>K-4</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- lots of use of English, especially in high school
- but … most children in Iqaluit still fluent in Inuktitut

(Dorais & Sammons 2002)
GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

• Inuktitut monolingual and simultaneous bilingual speakers start out with a strong command of Inuktitut
• exposure to the majority language (English/French) through community and schooling clearly leads to greater use of that language
• this exposure also leads to stagnation of conversational and academic language proficiency in Inuktitut
• strong danger that it will lead to decline in Inuktitut, with possible loss
• nonetheless, many indicators from simultaneous bilingual preschoolers and K-2 children instructed in Inuktitut that stable bilingualism is possible if supportive choices are made in home and school language use
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REFERENCES - 1


REFERENCES - 2


