A CASE STUDY OF A HUNGARIAN-ENGLISH BILINGUAL GIRL'S LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLISH FROM BIRTH TO THE AGE OF ELEVEN

" […] angolul úgy hangozik, mintha az 'utál' is szép lenne."

" […] in English 'utál' [hate] sounds as if it were nice too."

Thesis booklet

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University of Pécs

2023

Topic and research aim

The transition and change of regime in Hungary in 1989 brought about the booming demand for spoken foreign languages, stimulating the usage of individual resources both in formal and informal contexts and directing attention towards autonomous and family-oriented second language acquisition (Larsen-Freeman, 2018; Velasco, 2020) in natural settings. The climate of interculturalism coupled with introducing English as the mostly taught foreign language in public education accentuated the importance of plurilingual competence and generated the need for teaching English to children at an early age even in Hungary where monolingualism used to be the norm. Parents more than ever tended to feel responsible for providing their children English language learning opportunities seeing these as an important investment for their children's future by giving them an intellectual asset to achieve educational success and better life prospects (Norton Pierce, 1995; Norton, 2000; Rokita-Jaśkov, 2015). The imperative for foreign language proficiency, predominantly for English gave rise to the idea of integrating English in our home and prompted me to research my daughter's Sarah's English development in our own home-established bilingual environment.

My dissertation, a longitudinal qualitative study of my research, is aimed at understanding my participant's, Sarah's reaction to bilingualism focusing on her reliance on English as a second language (L2) in mediating communicative intent and self perception. To provide answers to my research questions I applied the discourse analytical approach to analyse Sarah's L2 development based on the data collected between her ages of eight months and eleven years. Sarah is 24 years old in 2023, immersed in a Hungarian and English-speaking environment, has been exposed to these two languages from birth. Regarding English she had limited community support for the simple reason that her family is Hungarian and lives in Hungary. English is mediated by her parents, primarily by me, her mother, and other native and non-native speakers of English who belong to the family's extended social network.

To create solid foundation, complete with favourable conditions to facilitate second language acquisition, a carefully established language boundary pattern was observed inspired by the One Language at a Time, that is the One Time of Day One Language, One Activity One Language. Certain situations, places and people were related to Hungarian whereas other domains e.g., free play, bedtime readings, reports on who what did during the day, were reserved for English to appropriate for the family language use system, norms and agenda. The discourse analytic approach to documentation and analysis of language-related episodes within

Sarah's free and spontaneous interactional exchanges focuses on (1) her interlanguage development at the lexical, morphological, syntactical, and pragmatic level; (2) the communicative intentions underlying her code-switching and language preference and (3) her identity formation and her perception of her identity formation in the dual language acquisition process.

My longitudinal single case study research is to reveal how bilingualism complemented Sarah's linguistic repertoire and to what extent it added to enhance communication and negotiating her identity. In my attempt to investigate my participant's L2 development I addressed the following research questions:

(1) How does Sarah's L2 development manifest itself in terms of lexicon, morphology, syntax, and pragmatics over ten years in her changing context?
(2) How does Sarah integrate English into her discourse to convey her meaning?
(3) What categories can be identified in Sarah's communicative intentions?
(4) How does her English development shape her identity?
(5) What categories can be identified in Sarah's identity development?

Although descriptions and explanations of inner cognitive and psychological processes and mental representations of language go beyond the scope of my inquiry, the empirical data enabled me to offer an insight in her communication strategies. I hope that the analysis of my participant's language use contributes to providing a complex picture of what can happen in SLA.

The structure of the doctoral thesis

My dissertation consists of two parts: a theoretical and an empirical part. The theoretical part aims to show how my specific case can be placed in a broader theoretical context. At the beginning in chapter 1 I present the background of the case, the significance, and the rationale of the research. Chapters 2-4 provide the theoretical framework of the investigated topic.

In the empirical part, in chapters 6-8, I present and discuss the findings of my investigation. According to the foci highlighted in the research questions I identify important patterns and themes in the analysed data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Duff, 2007) and try to make those patterns evident. While clarifying specific communicative intentions, I group the analysed utterances and discourse samples labelled as excerpts according to Baker's (2006), Cekaite and Björk-Willén's (2012), Gafaranga's (2012), Norton's (2000) and Pavlenko's (2006) categories.

I trace back the formations, transformations of my participant's identity during the acquisition process using Cekaite and Björk-Willén's (2012), Gafaranga's (2012), Norton's (2000) and Ricento's (2005) reconceptualization of the relationship between second language acquisition (SLA) and identity formation. At the end of the dissertation, I write about the limitations of the research and reveal ideas on how and on what grounds my research can be further developed. The appendices comprise the transcripts and coding of the excerpts I used for analysis in the empirical part of the dissertation.

In Chapter 1, I overview the literature to see scholarly opinion about the importance of single case studies in SLA research and explain why my single case is worth investigating. I outline the conceptual framework adopted in this thesis emphasizing that it is a cross disciplinary framework which builds on linguistics, sociolinguistics, anthropology, social and cultural psychology. To offer a clear understanding of Sarah's language learning context I give a detailed description of the case history where I provide all necessary information about Sarah's personality, the family, the community, the motives, the doubts, and considerations of making a foundation for Sarah's the dual Hungarian and English language acquisition.

Chapters 2 outlines the key concepts and provides definitions of terms. I draw on the literature to clarify the distinctions between acquisition and learning, first and native language, second language and foreign language. Here I deal with the relationship between age and language outcomes 'age effects' approach (DeKeyser, 2012; Nikolov, 2009) as the reconceptualization of the Critical Period Hypothesis introduced by Lenneberg (1967). I give an account of the main language acquisition theories to emphasize the interrelationship between first language acquisition (FLA) and second language acquisition (SLA). Pragmatics and discourse analysis provide the theoretical framework for my analysis; therefore, I describe the philosophy, the scope, and considerations of these two approaches and explain how they are related to one another.

Chapter 3 deals with the conceptualization of bilingualism. To describe the complexity and diversity of bilingualism, first I draw on both theoretical and empirical research in the field to reveal who is considered bilingual and what constitutes a bilingual person. In my attempt to identify distinguishing features and attributes of a bilingual I discuss bilingualism from three different perspectives, from the competence-based, use-based, and holistic perspectives. Communicative competence, a notion emerging as central to understanding language use either in mono or multilingualism is discussed in the same chapter. Code-switching (Meisel,1994), interference (De Houwer, 1990), interlanguage (Nemser, 1972) and translanguaging (Bonacina-Pugh et al., 2021, Meisel, 1998; Wei & Lin, 2019) are also addressed as relevant linguistic phenomena in bilingualism and SLA. I also give a brief overview of child second language acquisition research.

Chapter 4 concerns learning and communication strategies as they are reflected in learners' language use and behaviour. I set out to define, identify and categorize different communication and learning strategies language users and learners apply. To show the distinguishing criteria for strategy I present the widely adopted definitions and taxonomies Bialystok, 1990; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995; Cohen, 1998; Dörnyei, 2005; Faerch & Casper 1983; Oxford, 1990; Tarone, 1988). I use the term translanguaging (Bonacina-Pugh et al., 2021; Li Wei & Lin, 2019) to refer to multilinguals' (1) dynamic and functionally integrated use of their different languages and (2) their 'fluid languaging' and 'cross-communication', i.e., moving beyond language boundaries.

Chapter 5 deals with the methodological background and is a detailed description of the research design. I identify the type of the research and the research questions; I give all the necessary information including the participant and the data collection procedures. I explain why case study is the most appropriate method for my inquiry and why it justifies applying two overlapping methodologies of data collection: (1) the ethnography of communication and (2) discourse analysis. I write about the circumstances of data collection and reflect on how my data collection procedures and the long duration of the research modified and determined the evaluation methods. I report on the limitations with reference to the internal and external validity of my research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Duff, 2007) and give an account on my doubts and concerns throughout my work. Also, I emphasize the immense importance of fulfilling ethical requirements of scientific research.

Chapter 6 concerns Sarah's L2 development between her ages of eight months and eleven years focusing on her code-switching behaviour, appeals and references to L2 at different levels of mastery and at different levels of language (e.g., morphological, lexical, syntactic). I deal with her English lexicon in the holophrastic stage (8-18 months) and explore her formation of past tense, questions, and negatives. I present examples of several interlanguage and intralanguage mistakes and illuminate her early code-switches to explore how and why L2 appears in her talk and what levels of language are affected. The code-switches presented in chapter 6 are mostly used to compensate for inadequate language proficiency but there are examples of her using code-switching as achievement strategies to enhance communication.

Chapter 6 provides a partial answer to the first research question but in my attempt to answer the first research question, I also relied on the findings reported on in chapters 7 and 8.

In chapter 7 I present communicative intentions mediated through Sarah's bidirectional (L1-L2 and L2-L1) code-switches and identify patterns in them to answer the first, second and third research questions. The child's writings and the discourse pieces labelled as excerpts explore the child's naturally occurring interactions with different interlocutors, parents, siblings, and peers. The presented categories of the analysed communicative intentions correspond to pragmatic categories. Communication intention is a central concept in pragmatics theory in the sense that pragmatics views language as a joint activity of the speaker-hearer, extensively relying on mediating and interpreting communicative intentions. I do not attempt to go deeper into elaborating communicative intention as a mental state. My analysis focuses on the various code-switches Sarah uses to convey her intended meanings. I discuss code-switching as a part of a broader, multifaceted construct termed as communicative competence and consider code-switches as manifestations of my participant's strategic and pragmatic competence, representing two subcomponents of communicative competence. I base my discussion on the model introduced by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995).

In chapter 8, to answer the fourth and fifth research questions I investigate the dialectic relation between Sarah and her social environment by exemplifying how she constructs and reconstructs her sense of self through two languages. I emphasize the complex and dynamic character of Sarah's identity and reveal the imbalances in her self-perception. I give examples of her multiple memberships (Mirzaie & Parhizkar, 2021; Ricento, 2005; Velasco, 2020) and subject positions (Norton, 2000), her reflections on her own imagined and actual identity in various situations. These examples are meant to show how her positive and negative identifications and feelings modify and influence group affiliations and her attitude to her second language. To underpin my claim, I exemplify that depending on the numerous effects and feedback she receives from her social environment she develops versatile and sometimes contradictory needs and motivations. She demonstrates different degrees of self-esteem. Sometimes she positions herself as an incompetent, illegitimate L2 user, whereas in other instances she occupies a much more powerful bilingual subject position.

In the final part of my dissertation, in chapter 9, I describe the findings of the research, summarize my conclusions drawn from my case study and identify the significance and innovation of my research. Despite the limitations of the study, I explain to what extent it meets the requirements of internal and external validity. A separate section is devoted to the strategies I applied to meet ethical requirements and my practices of dispersing doubts and imbalances throughout the entire process of the research work. I also summarize the possible implications of my study for second language learning and teaching.

Table 1 – The phases of the research with the relevant focus of analysis

	Research question	Data sources	Method of analysis
Phase 1 - Sarah's L2 development – lexicon, morphology, syntax, pragmatics Exploratory study (2000-2009)	(RQ1): How does Sarah's L2 development manifest itself in lexicon, morphology, syntax, and pragmatics?	1.Sarah's naturally occurring discourses 2.Sarah's writings (diary notes, letters)	Discourse analysis Qualitative content analysis
Phase 2 - The integration of L2 in Sarah's discourse (2000-2010)	(RQ2): How does Sarah integrate English into her discourse to convey her meaning? (RQ3): What categories can be identified in Sarah's communicative intentions?	1.Sarah's naturally occurring discourses 2.Sarah's written documents, (diary notes, letters) 3.My observation field notes and reflections 4.Sarah's real-time reflections 5.Sarah's elicited comments 6.Follow-up interviews with Sarah, her siblings, the interlocutors, the informed fellow parents, and teachers 7.Semi-structured retrospective interviews with Sarah 8.The colleagues' end of research notes and reflections	Discourse analysis Speech act analysis Qualitative content analysis

Phase 3 – The role of L2 in Sarah's identity (2002-2012)	(RQ4): How does her English development shape her identity? (RQ5): What categories can be identified in Sarah's identity development?	1. Sarah's naturally occurring discourses 2. Sarah's writings (diary notes and letters) 3.My observation-field notes 4.Sarah's real-time views, comments 5.Sarah's metalinguistic comments 6.Sarah's follow-up reflections 7.Semi-structured retrospective interviews with Sarah 8. Follow-up interviews with Sarah, and her siblings 9. My informed colleagues' and friends' end of research notes and reflections	Discourse analysis Speech-act analysis Qualitative content analysis

The case history

Our goal with the dual (Hungarian, English) language family context was to create favourable conditions for our children to cope with communicational challenges in our multilingual environment. Having families of mixed nationalities among our relatives, and native English-speakers in the circle of our friends provided regular exposure to L2 from her birth. We assumed that the timing and the conditions offering a combination of maturational, affective, cognitive, and social factors would positively affect the language outcome. Based on recent research on 'critical or sensitive period' (DeKeyser, 2012; Nikolov, 2009) we knew that early exposure to L2 alone would not make Sarah a successful language learner, yet we hoped that early acquisition would provide her with different ways of internalizing knowledge. As a tool for interpersonal interactions the second language would aid her in developing a functional and holistic approach to language and would facilitate emotional associations in language acquisition. The most challenging part of our endeavour was making English usage a family routine. Allocating consistent time management to use the second language at home was a key. As a family we used a language boundary system where we all agreed to adjust our home routine so we could use English, the second language, consistently in certain situations and places in consideration of the language competence of those with whom we needed to interact.

Theoretical background

Due to the cross-disciplinary background of my research a multidimensional approach to inquiry was applied bringing together perspectives on SLA from the fields of pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and social psychology. These three dimensions emerged as central to understand individual variation in language performance and are closely related because in-depth exploration of individual linguistic progress is inseparable from the socio-cultural context that a particular individual is immersed in. The theoretical frame of my linguistic investigation is pragmatics as it focuses on the social aspect of language use and the linguistic behaviour of language users. The pragmatic and discourse analytic approach (Grice, 1975; Lazaraton, 2002; Searle, 1969; Shiffrin, 1994) proved to be the relevant theoretical background to analyse my participant's code-switching practice and interpretations as tightly interwoven with and based on the context-embedded situative meanings. The social psychological and individual difference research dimension also emerged as essential to understand and explore Sarah's perceptions, motivation, attitudes, and identity in her developing bilingualism.

The pragmatic function

As I am concerned with the pragmatic function of code-switches, I base my discussion on two Gricean assumptions: (1) communication is a joint activity of the speaker and hearer, which involves the exchange of communicative intentions; (2) a single utterance can convey a range of meanings depending on to whom it is directed and in what context (Grice, 1975, p. 50). I refer to code-switches as a specific skill relating to the bilingual's pragmatic competence, the ability to select language according to the interlocutor, the context, and the topic of conversation (Meisel, 1994,). The analysed L1-L2 and L2-L1 code-switches, and metalinguistic comments can be described as speech acts to emphasize that some utterances are more than simple statements of saying something. They do not only describe or report something but can be considered as a part of doing something by saying something (Austin,1962). The fact that language is created spontaneously by individuals during interaction affects the way speaker production and hearer comprehension are interpreted. (Kecskés, 2016, p.4).

Strategic language use

Before describing the different communicative intentions in Sarah's language use, I needed to consider the construct of strategy. Cohen (1998) emphasizes the element of choice provides a complementary strategic tool in multilinguals' linguistic repertoire. Oxford (1990), Bialystok (1991), Cohen (1998) and Dörnyei (2005) define intentionality as another prerequisite of strategic language use. In his critical overview of the literature on strategy Dörnyei (2005) claims that temporality is a relevant criterion for distinguishing learning and communication strategies. Learning strategies can be described as an attempt to ground long-term competence effective for a longer period whereas communication strategies are employed to solve a momentary communication problem. Affective strategies as a subset of indirect language learning and language use strategies in Oxford's (1990) and Cohen's (1998) taxonomies are employed to regulate and gain control over emotions, attitudes, and motivation about learning. Bonacina-Pugh et al. (2021), and Wei and Lin (2019) introduce the term *translanguaging* to refer to multilinguals' systematic technique utilized in coping with communication difficulties stemming from second language knowledge imprecision. In their conceptualization, the systematic and functional use of two languages, moving between languages boundaries offers a unique linguistic repertoire to communicate effectively.

Bilingualism and emotionality

Authors (Baker, 2006; Cekaite & Björk-Willén, 2012; Cromdal, 2013; Gafaranga,2012; Hamers, 2004; Kamalanavin, 2011; Lugossy, 2003; Nikolov, 1999; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2006; Ricento, 2005) call attention to the dynamic nature of language learners and to the role of lived subjective experiences in the language learning process. Pavlenko (2006) studying emotionality of language emphasizes that bilingual speakers' code-switching behaviour depicts a kind of divergence from the conventionalised language use, for the simple reason that they have two systems to satisfy their communicative needs. The relationship between emotionality and language choice can be studied in multilinguals' code-switches and interactions and can be categorized according to the communicative intentions they serve. Her data illustrate that language choice is purposeful, code-switches are used to convey affective meanings. Bilinguals' and multilinguals' code-switching practices underscore that code-switching is not always attributed to the speaker's laziness, negligence, or insufficient language competence. They are not accidental slips of tongue, on the contrary, in most cases there is purpose or logic behind switching languages. Inter-group relations, the extent an individual and their environment value a specific language, momentary communication challenges and personal needs among others may also have a major effect on language choice.

Method

Data analysis is interdisciplinary in nature (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It falls within the scope and tradition of linguistic ethnography in the sense that it combines linguistic analysis with ethnographic insights obtained from retrospective interviews and participant observation. Linguistic ethnography is best suited to my purposes as it represents a broad view on language use and aims to provide information about my participant's lived experiences. My twofold epistemological position as a case study researcher and a mother facilitated my interpretive inquiry. My motherly role fostered a climate of mutual trust and enabled me to reflect on my approach as an ethnographer who participates in the participant's daily life. My consistent personal presence encouraged my participant to talk openly about her experience and contributed to having insights into her perceptions of the events. The fact that both data and analysis were created from shared experience and relationship provided favourable conditions to explore why and how things happened. The emic view enabled me to explore and explain the nuances of Sarah's dual language acquisition. It also gave me a better understanding of most of what I experienced, as well as motivated me and Sarah to participate. In order to meet the requirements of scientific research I implemented several strategies available for the qualitative researcher. I checked the accuracy of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) using triangulation, member-checking, using thick or rich description of the case, providing self-reflection, presenting negative information, spending prolonged time in the field, using peer-debriefing and external auditors (p.196).

Setting and the participant

My longitudinal exploratory study is aimed at understanding my single participant's, Sarah's second language acquisition and focuses on her reliance on English as a second language in mediating communicative intent and negotiating self-perception between her ages of eight months and eleven years. We assigned at least half an hour a day to family discussions regarding personal accounts of school and work-related issues and experiences of the day. English-related activities (family discussions, joint-readings, board games, bedtime stories, songs, recitation of song lyrics, checking siblings' homework) occupied a significant and usual part of our daily life and triggered extensive involvement of English in our spare time when we were together after school and work.

Data collection

Data for the research were drawn from multiple sources, they were collected with the help of (1) participant observation and field notes, (2) the participant's naturally occurring discourses and reflections; (3) semi-structured retrospective interviews conducted with the child, and (4) other documents such as the child's writings e.g., personal gift letters and drawings. Data were collected in natural settings in the form of audio-recordings and field notes of retrospective interviews and spontaneous discourses using interview protocols and observational checklists. Interactions were tape-recorded on a monthly basis over a ten-year timespan at home and in some other informal settings where Sarah felt comfortable with the presence of her friends and family members. I frequently consulted with friends raising their children in multilingual communities and investigated scientific approaches to case studies. During the process of collecting data and authoring my longitudinal study as well as after its completion I consulted with colleagues and fellow researchers with relevant professional background. The whole study covered a period of eleven years from Sarah's ages of eight months to eleven years.

The findings of the study

The communicative intentions presented in the excerpts illuminate that Sarah's L2 use and code-switches embedded in language-related episodes (1) serve as a complementary set of linguistic forms to convey and differentiate communicative functions and intentions and (2) generate social sites (i) to regulate, understand, and gain control over her and her interlocutor's language use and behaviour, emotions, attitudes, opinions, and motivation; (ii) to seek and find opportunities to practise and improve L2, (iii) to negotiate her progress in L2 and orientations to bilingualism and (iv) to get reinforcement, encouragement, reward and distinguished attention. When analysing Sarah's English development, patterns have been identified pertaining to her language preference, appeals to L2 and identity transformations, as they were displayed, mediated, and negotiated in bi-directional L1-L2 and L2-Ll code-switches in naturally occurring oral interactional exchanges.

My findings comprise sufficient underpinning to state that Sarah's SLA despite the non-native control is realistic and powerfully complements (having no more obstacles than) classroom-based instructed learning. The early exposure to English has added to her fluid languaging (Bonacina & Pugh, 2021; Wei and Lin (2019) in the meaning that she operated two languages as a unique and integrated linguistic repertoire to communicate successfully and effectively. She applied a variety of reduction, achievement strategies (e.g., literal translation, foreignizing, code-switching, self-monitoring, appeals for help, meaning negotiations). The underpinning of her advanced actional and strategic competence is her successful conveyance of pragmatic functions through well-placed code-switches often realized in speech acts (Oxford, 1990, Celce-Murcia at al.,1995). These code-switches embedded in various linguistic elements (e.g., homophones, puns, euphemism) increased the illocutionary power of her utterances, thus persuaded the interlocutor to act and react according to her expectations.

To answer RQ 1 the data presented in chapter 6 illustrate that Sarah went through almost the same order of acquisition as native English children but displayed approximately a two-year delay in acquiring the investigated properties of L2 (Brown, 1972; Clark, 2003, p.194; Krashen, 1979; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). The occurrence of the past participle irregular to mark past tense at the age of four might seem a kind of divergence from native English acquisition yet, it does support the familiarity principle. The fact that I often used past participle forms in our discourse, explains her preference for past participle irregular forms to mark past tense despite the complexity of the element. As a clear sign of overgeneralization, she used words and inflections from both of her languages before acquiring their conventional meaning (Clark, 2003, p. 153) and applied L2 elements onto L1, rather than the other way round. Chapter 6 is an overview of her L2 development and language contact phenomena at the lexical, morphological, and syntactic level. The selected examples illuminate that Sarah used L2 for the regulatory-instrumental, rather than for the referential function (Jacobson, 1960; Halliday, 1973) from an early age, as early as the holophrastic phase of language acquisition.

As for RQ 2 and 3, the data drawn from Sarah's English usage confirm that L2 has become a language of strategic importance and code-switching has been used as a strategic tool to convey and interpret communicative intentions. Code-switches often realized in and associated with speech acts were employed to both compensate for competence deficiencies and enhance communication. Sarah adopted English to express communicative intentions (e.g., reconcile the interlocutor, change the interlocutor's mood, redirect the conversation, etc.). Integrating L2 enhanced the pragmatic effect of her utterances and added to making her message more effective. The analysed excerpts in this chapter are aimed to explore (1) what sorts of code-switches were applied to mediate and interpret communicative intentions; (2) what motivated code-switches in Sarah's language use and (3) which language was considered as appropriate in each discourse. To group Sarah's communicative intentions invoked in her language alternation practice I identified five categories of communicative intentions shown in table 1 below.

Table 1 - Categories of communicative intentions conveyed in Sarah`s L1-L2 and L2-L1 code-switches and the descriptions of the categories.

Accommodating to the established language separation rules - The excerpts of this category give evidence of Sarah`s constant self-regulation and self-identification in bilingualism to show that she has definite expectations and knowledge on who, where, when speaks Hungarian or English. Deviations from the locally established language share patterns give her opportunity to discuss the relevance of the preferred language and redefine her conception of bilingualism and the bilingual identity.
Expressing emotional attachment - Sarah's appeals to English often signal emotionality. The excerpts of this category underpin that using L2 offers her versatile and sophisticated ways to have and generate effective emotional power in her listener's mind. The excerpts suggest that some English-related episodes represent a unique atmosphere of privacy and family integrity where L2 marks and constitutes intimacy. English is used to express overcharged emotions (Gafaranga, p. 2012, and p.501.).
Conciliating the interlocutor - Identifying the situation and the interlocutor's mood by language use - Disciplining -The excerpts under this category are suggestive of the fact that Sarah identifies the situation and the mood of the interlocutor based on their language behaviour (choice and preference) and it modifies and reconstructs Sarah`s language appropriating process. Switching languages has a conciliating effect and enhances rapport with the interlocutor by powerfully relying on and benefitting from the shared personal styles and preferences. She can rely on the fact that they both accept the local norms not only for interpreting a specific discourse event but can also generate the expected reaction and discourse behaviour, (laughter, amazement or embarrassment) in the interlocutor. She realized that I was more lenient in English L2 was used in relaxed activities, in favourable conditions when sufficient time and attention were devoted to her. She switched to English to soften me and reach consolidation. Code-switches had a conciliating effect and are meant to influence the interlocutor and elicit the expected behavioural response These speech activities demonstrate how Sarah criticizes others' biased and disrespectful attitude towards her.
Topic abandonment and tricking -Topic abandonment serves as a conversational repair (Cekaite & Björk-Willén, 2012). These are examples of Sarah's subjective commentary and diversion from the topic of conversation, which is meant to mitigate the interlocutors' resentment and dissatisfaction over her untoward behaviour. The excerpts of the category are used as additional resource in the organization of conversational repair (Gafaranga, 2012) to compensate for limited expertise in the language of schooling and giving true opinion. Sarah's rerouting correction practice serves as a strategic tool to counterbalance and mitigate the interlocutor`s outright unmodulated manner.
Injecting humour- Humour in Sarah's discourse is a tool to ease tension, to win attention, to control power relationships beyond self-serving entertainment. It is an effective tool to control communication and a manifestation of self defence. Humour contributes to generating the expected discourse behaviour, laughter, amazement, and embarrassment in the interlocutor.

I came to realize that bilingualism had a long-lasting effect on narrow family relationships and strengthened mother-child bonding. Integrating English in our daily communication has formulated a kind of alliance between the family members perceiving English as a contributor to intimacy and family integrity. Sarah`s accounts on her self-perception reveal that she has benefitted from the dual linguistic environment, her English satisfied her own personal ambitions, attracted the interlocutor's attention, and offered additional opportunities to earn respect and appreciation. She learned that her social environment, especially me, awarded her distinguished appreciation, a different kind of attention for the use of L2, which gave her a strong motivation to continue using and learning L2. She described her bilingualism as extra knowledge, as something `cool`, and perceived herself as being a successful language learner (Nikolov, 2000, p. 37) despite her transitional unwillingness to use English.

To answer RQs 4 and 5 I intended to explore Sarah's identity development. The analysed discourses illuminate that the way she felt about herself and her progress in L2 was a true reflection of her fluid and heterogeneous identity (Cekaite & Björk-Willén's, 2012; Norton, 2000, Pavlenko, 2006, Pawliszko, 2016). The various feedback she received from her social environment influenced her self-concept in general, but peers exerted the strongest impact on her self-image, which phenomenon is consistent with scholarly findings (Cromdal, 2013; Gafaranga, 2012).

Based on how Sarah experienced her own language acquisition process and identity development, I identified six categories. Table 2 presents the categories displaying Sarah's orientation to her bilingual identity.

Table 2 - Categories of Sarah`s identity transformations and the descriptions of the categories

Group affiliation and allegiance -The excerpts under this category are language-related exchanges considered as manifestations of Sarah`s sense of belonging to show how she creates alliances and allegiances on the spot through her language choice (Greenwood, 1998). The ways of regulating, identifying, and redefining herself in the cultural group, in the peer group, depend on her personal needs and interests. Sarah`s individual struggle to reach the respectful position of a sufficiently competent speaker of English is a recurrent phenomenon in the discourse pieces presented here.
Handling negative feedback - asking for justification and reinforcement - She monitored and evaluated her learning process in terms of L2 in response to her social environment's feedback and found opportunities to identify deficiencies. She consulted and involved more competent language

users and other authorities of knowledge to determine her linguistic identity and to find ways to tolerate imbalances in the L2 learning process Reactions to peer-initiated criticism give a better understanding of Sarah's regaining entitlement to use her second language. References to shared language use habits with native and native speakers' compensation strategies to counterbalance insufficient language competence raise her self-esteem, give her distinguished attention and credibility. The excerpts under this category show Sarah's reporting on peer criticism, her perception of the relative nature of language use, her conceptualization of language expertise and her sense of self in the language learning process.
Highlighting deficiencies and asymmetries in second language knowledge - The excerpts in this category demonstrate Sarah`s discussions of her feelings, doubts, and individual struggles in the L2 learning process. The impact of peer comments triggered the strongest motivation to discuss, assess and improve her L2 competence. Language-related episodes of peer criticism confirmed that the peers' labelling her an incompetent L2 speaker encouraged Sarah to reflect on and define her own L2 competence using her bilingual role-model friends' viewpoint as a reference. The excerpts of this category are suggestive of the fact that Sarah's two languages filled different roles and functions. L1 was often used as a reference point to assess proficiency in L2, whereas L2 was used for pragmatic differentiation i.e., to generate a chilling or surprising effect in the interlocutor.
Defining group boundaries - Preserving alliance and privacy The excerpts of this category present peer group negotiations are social sites for building local social order, values and norms that regulate one another's conduct and group-belonging. The excerpts give an insight in how verbal exchanges constitute social relations in the local social order, sometimes reinforcing intimacy and solidarity with the group members, sometimes depriving someone from their in-group status and ousting them from the group. She uses L2 to align with the community to form alliance and privacy or, on the contrary, to distance herself from the group
Getting authority - The excerpts exhibit the process of Sarah's taking advantage of her own L2 expertise. We can witness Sarah`s conceptualization and interpretations of making distinctions in terms of language competence. The episodes exemplify her contesting for the position of the competent L2 user through her efforts to win a respectful position in the circle of peers. These are social sites where Sarah, due to her L2 expertise, tends to gain entitlement to control the situation and speak up for herself. Learning that her L2 knowledge was highly respected and well-appraised Sarah was capable of repositioning herself as a self-confident user of L2 who became powerful enough to win the in-the-know position in terms of L2.

Finding ways to enhance learning strategies -The excerpts in this section are manifestations of Sarah`s understanding of the importance of L2 knowledge. The excerpts are suggestive of her understanding that her English knowledge is an additional asset, which is acknowledged by legitimate, authorized, and competent users of L2, such as native peers and schoolteachers. The verbal declarations of her self-evaluation and self-reflections are vivid descriptions of the dynamic and sometimes contradictory character of her bilingual self. At the same time, the excerpts outline the image of a responsible, proactive, reflexive L2 learner, who constantly monitors her learning. Sarah reveals multiple interpretations of her bilingual childhood mostly depending on the feedback she gets from her social environment.

Sarah's accounts give the impression that the development of her bilingual self was not easy. Her changing attitude towards her second language give evidence of her struggling personality, The dual linguistic context in fact generated sites of conflicts between her desired and learner identity, which called for addressing, discussing, reorganizing, and transforming her views of language and made her revisit her self-concept as a language learner.

Regarding Sarah's psychological-ethical conflicts in the bilingual context, it can be stated that her assimilation to the family established bilingualism was relatively smooth, at the age of ten she became outright proud of the situation. Exposure to English outside the classroom enhanced her language proficiency but it was primarily beneficial for attitudinal and motivational reasons (Nikolov, 2000, p, 22), which underpins what Nikolov (2000) concluded from her empirical research:

….it is possible that an early start contributes to young learners' attitudes and motivation, which later ensure good proficiency… SLA is a life-long enterprise, both proficiency and willingness to maintain it and develop it further are crucial.' (Nikolov, 2000. p. 34) …In the long run it is not the actual gain that matters, but learners' attitudes towards language learning and their own perception as successful learners' (Nikolov, 2000, p. 37).

Limitations of the research and implications for further research

Although my study focusing only on one person does not provide sufficient data for generalizing, the outcomes of my research bear with importance. My observations at the individual level provide useful data about individual features in the process of SLA, which constitute a valuable contribution to individual differences research. The study explores a particular case of second language acquisition in a non-native environment, which has been an under researched area, and a less focused aspect of the field. Although the applied data collection instruments contribute to the multiple insights we can derive from the analysis, further research is needed to find out to what extent the findings are relevant for other young learners in a similar context. The discussion of young learners' L2 use as well as the investigation of some newly emergent aspects of SLA, e.g., the learner's willingness to speak the L2 in a quasi-monolingual environment and the impact of the public view on establishing and sustaining family-oriented bilingualism with non-native control warrant further explorations. Qualitative and mixed-method analyses of linguistic items indexing emotions in the individual learner's discourse, investigations of the positive-negative connotation of bilingualism drawn from the analysed dataset could be transformed into the topic of a successive study.

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