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DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN MULTILINGUAL VS. MONOLINGUAL LEARNERS: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM A COMBINED METHODS LONGITUDINAL CASE STUDY

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Abstract

A longitudinal case study involving three successful language learners, (1 bilingual boy, 1 bilingual girl and 1 monolingual girl) was conducted in order to observe how language learning strategies develop across languages and whether bilingual learners' use of strategies differs quantitatively and qualitatively from that of monolinguals when learning English L3. The study also investigated the effect of the bilingual learners' gender on strategy use. The data was collected through combined research methods: the SILL questionnaire (Oxford, 1990), the LSUI inventory (Cohen, Oxford & Chi, 2006), semi-structured interviews, verbal reports (Cohen, 1996) and task product analysis (Bialystok, 1990a; Abraham & Vann, 1996). From the results of the study it can be stated that the bilingual learners used more strategies more frequently than the monolingual one. Differences were also observed in strategy use between the male and female bilingual learner with the female using overall more strategies. As for the quality of strategy use, our findings suggest that the bilinguals showed willingness to take risk and practice naturalistically and have the necessary tools to foster and promote autonomy beyond the classroom and the teacher's control.

Keywords: case study, monolingual, multilingual, language learning strategies, SILL, cross-linguistic

1.   Introduction

The last decade has seen a significant amount of research into multilingualism and third language acquisition (De Angelis, 2007; Aronin & Hufeisen, eds., 2009; Cenoz, 2009, etc.). Various models of multilingualism acknowledge the importance of language learning strategy development and use (e.g., Herdina & Jessner, 2002), yet there is very little evidence of how language learning strategies influence third language learning and what their role in cross-linguistic influence among L1, L2 and L3 is. This paper focuses on the study of language learning strategy development and use of three learners of English. The participants were tutored by one of the researchers for three years and successfully completed their B2 and C2 level international English examinations. They were 1 bilingual boy aged 10-13, with L1 Greek and L2 Serbian, 1 bilingual girl aged 12-15, with L1 Russian and L2 Greek, and a control participant, 1 monolingual girl aged 11-14 with L1 Greek, all of whom received tutorials individually, for 3 hours a week over a period of 3 years. It was noticed that the two bilingual learners used a different approach to third language learning from numerous monolingual learners the researchers had taught and that there were striking similarities between the two of them. Thus, a systematic observation was set up consisting of combined methods of research with the aim to identify the possible differences in language learning strategy use and speculate on the causes.

2.   Literature review

Our study explores two areas that have been gaining popularity in foreign language research: language learning strategies (LLS) and multilingualism.

Although the concept of 'language learning strategies' is not easily definable, listing their essential features allows comparability across studies and gives results a greater explanatory power. According to recent research (Cohen, 2005, Griffiths 2008, Oxford 1990, 2011) the main characteristics of LLS are the following. First of all, they are mental activities which serve the completion of a certain goal. They are also used to regulate learning and form strategy clusters which are evaluated via a series of metacognitive strategies. Strategies also include a socioaffective aspect, they are chosen by learners themselves and can contribute to the promotion of successful learning. Finally, they can be taught and can help teachers expand their role in class.

In general, it is agreed that the use of LLS is positively related to language proficiency overall or in specific skills. Research has shown that successful language learners use more strategies more frequently than students with lower proficiency (Griffiths 2003, Lan & Oxford 2003, Psaltou & Kantaridou, 2009). What differentiates higher proficiency students is also the metacognitive knowledge to opt for appropriate strategies and use them in an orchestrated fashion that meets both the task demands and their own learning strengths (Cohen & Macaro, 2007). Therefore the difference in strategy use, as far as proficiency is concerned, is both quantitative and qualitative.

As for the role gender plays in strategy use, most findings confirm the existence of significant gender differences, with females reporting using overall more strategies than male learners (Green & Oxford 1995, Dreyer & Oxford 1996, Peacock & Ho 2003, Gavriilidou & Papanis 2009).

For a long time multilinguals were viewed as the sum of two or more monolinguals and their linguistic knowledge of two or more languages was strictly measured against the language proficiency of monolinguals in each of these languages. Eventually, this view changed and multilingualism is now viewed as a complex phenomenon (Herdina & Jessner, 2002; Cenoz, 2003; Aronin & Hufeisen, 2009, etc.). It must be admitted that although bilingualism and multilingualism share many important features, third language acquisition is different from second language acquisition in that it is not only L1 that influences L2 acquisition but vice versa, and similarly L3 can influence L2 and L1. Generally, cross-linguistic influence in multilinguals is far more complex and diverse. The advantage of a bilingual over a monolingual learner has been stressed by researchers as bilinguals already have access to two language systems and are generally aware of the processes involved in acquiring a language and can draw from that experience. However, they may be at a disadvantage as well because of phenomena such as code mixing or attrition. It could also be assumed that bilinguals follow a different route and learn L3 in a different way than monolinguals. (Cenoz, 2009)

 There are findings that show that multilinguals are more flexible when switching strategies depending on task demands or in case of ineffective learning and are better at using implicit rather than explicit learning strategies. Bono and Stratilaki (2009) also point out that bilinguals learning L3 possess a complex set of metalinguistic knowledge, strategies and beliefs which differentiate them not only quantitatively but also qualitatively from monolingual learners. In Greece, Psaltou-Joycey and Kandaridou (2009) conducted a study on plurilingualism (individual multilingualism), language learning strategy use and learning style preferences and concluded that trilingual students use more strategies, more frequently than bilingual students and that their learning styles differ as well.

Finally, it is significant to refer to the different aims and methodologies used in the research in third language acquisition. As Canoz (2003) points out, some of these studies are concerned with general language development by multilinguals while others study specific aspects of the process. She stresses the need to further examine specific characteristics of third language acquisition as is the case in the present study where bilinguals' language learning strategies are recorded and analyzed against those of monolinguals.

3.   Case study background

This is a participant-observation study of three early adolescents who received English language tutorials by one of the researchers for three years as part of preparation for B2 and C2 level exams. The first observation began in 2008 and involved the first participant, a 10 year old boy who at that time was bilingual in Greek and Serbian and had been learning English formally for 5 years. He can be described as an ambilingual balanced bilingual who started using both Greek and Serbian at the same time being exposed to both languages from birth. Greek was the language of the host country and his father's native language while Serbian was his mother's first language and the language he used during

his visits to Serbia. Both his parents are English teachers who switched codes regularly between English, Greek and Serbian in every day conversations that he took part in as well. He is literate in all three languages, although to a lower degree in Serbian than Greek or English. He received formal education in Greek while English was taught as a school subject and Serbian informally at home by the mother.

The second participant, the bilingual girl aged 12-15, started her English tutorials at about the same time and it became apparent that the two of them shared some common learner characteristics. The girl came from an immigrant expatriated family from Russia who had come to Greece when she was an infant. She only spoke Russian till the age of six when she started school and had to attend classes in Greek. So, based on the order of acquisition she can be described as a non-ambilingual balanced bilingual who has the same level of proficiency in both Greek and Russian but not the same level of literacy, as she does not use Russian to read or write so often. She received English lessons as part of formal education at school and private lessons to prepare for her examinations. At home, she mainly speaks Russian with her family while she speaks Greek with her friends.

The third participant was selected as a control one to verify the assumptions on whether or not bilinguals develop different learning strategies when learning a third language than monolinguals that learn a second language. She was a monolingual girl aged 11-14 with L1 Greek who also received tutorials in English for three years and successfully passed her B2 and C2 examinations. She was taught English in school but also had had private lessons by a native English speaker for a period of 6 years prior to the observation period.

## 4.	Research hypotheses

The research hypotheses posed in this study were the following:

Bilingual learners use more strategies more frequently than monolinguals when learning a L3.
Bilingual learners' use of strategies differs qualitatively from that of monolinguals when learning English L3.
Bilingual female learners use more strategies more frequently than bilingual male learners.

## 4.1.	Research methodology

Instruments used in the collection of data from the three learners were:

(1) The "Strategy Inventory for Language Learning" (SILL) questionnaire (version 7.0 – ESL/EFL) developed by Rebecca Oxford (1990: 293-300) including six different strategy categories: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social which has 50 items corresponding more or less to a specific strategy. These items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 'never or almost never true of me' to 'always or almost always true for me'. This inventory provides information about a) overall frequency of strategy use and b) preferred individual strategies in each of the six categories. According to research reports, the SILL appears to be the only LLS instrument that has been extensively checked for reliability (in general the SILL reliabilities have been high) and validated in multiple ways. It can also be used to examine the frequency of strategy use in relation to factors such as gender, age, cultural background, etc. The SILL was administered at the beginning of the observation and after three years.

(2) The "Language Strategy Use Inventory' (LSUI), developed by Cohen, Oxford and Chi (2006). Strategies are classified according to skill area (listening, reading, speaking and writing) and categories associated with vocabulary and translation strategies. The questionnaire contains 90 items selected on the basis of a 4-point scale: 1) I use this strategy and I like it, 2) I have tried this strategy and would use it again, 3) have never used this strategy but I'm interested in it, 4) this strategy doesn't fit me. Learners make a qualitative evaluation of their strategy use thinking about the outcomes of strategy use. It is worth mentioning that this inventory does not provide a score on strategy use for a given skill or language overall. According to its designers, it avoids purposely having learners rate the strategies by frequency of use because the reason you use a strategy a lot is because you need to use it a lot to make it work. The strategies that were selected to monitor the three learners' strategy use were specific strategies involved in a particular skill area, such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar and they covered numerous categories. The categorization was based on Oxford's six categories of direct and indirect strategies.

(3) Proficiency tests to determine the progress in language learning covering all four skills and to insure that the three participants did not differ from one another with respect to the level of proficiency. The proficiency tests used consisted of B2 level tests during year 1, C1 level tests during year 2 and C2 level tests during year 3. They were KPG past exam papers for B2 and C1 level and Michigan University past exam papers for B2 and C2 level. The learners were continually tested in all four skills and their progress was measured.

(4) Semi-structured interviews. The interview questions included think-aloud protocol questions which helped establish the processes happening during and after task completion in all four skills and vocabulary and grammar tasks. The learners' answers were recorded and transcribed. For example, during a completion of a written task the participants were asked to describe the thinking processes relevant to the task planning, execution, evaluation and repair. At the same time, the researcher would prompt the participants about the way they gathered information, developed ideas organized their writing, used dictionaries, wrote drafts, etc. Similar procedures were applied to other types of tasks. The participants were also asked to self-evaluate their learning and using of languages in general.

These strategy assessment measures were chosen because they combine a quantitative and a qualitative evaluation of the specific learners' strategy use thus allowing the researchers to assess it in a more consistent way and provide triangulation of the findings.

5. Results

Before presenting the findings, it is necessary to clarify that the results in general were considered and characterized according to their possible significance in percentages and not statistically speaking, due to the small sample of the participants. The exceptions are the following findings resulting from the statistical analysis of the SILL scores at time 1 and time 2 for all three cases using SPSS v19.

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
time1	2,9267	3	,48429	,27960
time2	3,2867	3	,65858	,38023

Table 1 Descriptive statistics showing the overall mean scores on the SILL for all three cases at time 1 and time 2

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
time1 - time2	-,36000	,17436	,10066	-3,576	2	,070

Table 2 The results of t-test (sig=0,070>0,05) showing that there are no statistically significant differences between the two measurements for all three cases with respect to the mean scores on the SILL

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Memory time1	2,3333	3	,90948	,52509
	Memory time2	2,5185	3	,95796	,55308
Pair 2	Cognitive time1	3,4524	3	,36654	,21162
	Cognitive time2	3,8095	3	,55482	,32032
Pair 3	Compensation time1	3,5000	3	,88192	,50918
	Compensation time2	3,6111	3	,85527	,49379
Pair 4	Metacognitive time1	2,8889	3	,77778	,44905
	Metacognitive time2	3,5185	3	1,02640	,59259
Pair 5	Affective time1	2,2778	3	,58531	,33793
	Affective time2	2,5556	3	,76980	,44444

Pair 6	Social time1	2,7222	3	,85527	,49379
	Social time2	3,2778	3	1,05848	,61111

Table 3: Paired Samples Statistics showing mean scores for each of the six strategy categories on the SILL at time 1 and time 2 for all three cases

The paired samples t- test was computed and it showed that there are statistically significant differences in the frequency of strategy use only in memory category between time 1 and time 2 for all three cases. (sig=0,038<0,05)

		Bilingual female		Bilingual male		Monolingual female	
		mean	%	mean	%	mean	%
Memory	Time 1	3,3		2,1		1,5	
strategies	Time 2	3,6	6.0	2,3	4.0	1,6	2.0
Cognitive	Time 1	3,9		3,4		3,1	
strategies	Time 2	4,4	10.0	3,6	4.0	3,4	6.0
Compensation strategies	Time 1	4,2		3,8		2,5	
	Time 2	4,3	2.0	3,8	0.0	2,6	2.0
Metacognitive strategies	Time 1	3,2		2,0		3,4	
	Time 2	4,1	18.0	2,3	6.0	4,1	14.0
Affective	Time 1	2,3		2,8		1,6	
strategies	Time 2	3,0	14.0	3,0	4.0	1,6	0.0
Social	Time 1	3,7		2,0		2,5	
strategies	Time 2	4,5	16.0	2,7	14.0	2,6	2.0
Overall	Time 1	3,5	10.0	2,7	6.0	2,4	6.0
strategy use	Time 2	4,0	(70.0-80.0)*	3,0	(54.0-60.0)*	2,7	(48.0-54.0)*

refers to the percentage of overall strategy use for time 1 and time 2

Table 4 Frequencies of learner responses to the SILL six categories and overall at time 1 and time 2 (mean ratings and differences between means for time 1 and time 2 in percentages)

All three learners improved the frequency of overall strategy use from time 1 to time 2. The bilingual girl's percentage increased from 70,0% to 80,0%, or 3,5 to 4,0 mean score (on a scale to 5), the bilingual boy's from 54,0% to 60,0%, or 2,7 to 3,0 mean score and monolingual girl's from 48,0% to 54,0%, or 2,7 to 3,0 mean score. It is evident that the two bilinguals improved the frequency of strategy use from time 1 to time 2 at a higher percentage and rate than the monolingual girl whose progress in strategy groups, such as memory, compensation, affective and social took place at a lower rate. The differences are more striking in memory, cognitive, compensation and affective categories of the SILL, except for the social strategies and metacognitive strategies where the monolingual girl exceeds the male bilingual. The most striking differences are observed in the memory, compensation and affective strategies (Table 4).

As for the memory strategies, both bilinguals reported to create mental linkages by connecting the sound of a new word and an image to remember the word, by using mental pictures of the situation

where the word might be used, by physically acting out words and by remembering its location visually. As for cognitive strategies, the bilinguals seem to resort more often to searching cognates in their L1 or L2, to trying to discover grammar rules by themselves, and to summarizing the information they hear or read. In the case of compensation strategies, both bilinguals use more often mime and gesture, make up new words and try to guess what the other person is going to say in a conversation. Finally, with respect to affective strategies they try to relax when using English and notice that they are nervous when using or studying English.

The LSUI results highlighted differences in the quality of strategy use between the bilinguals and the monolingual, as well(see Table 5). When asked to identify the strategies they regularly used and found suitable, the monolingual girl reported using 42 strategies (37,8%) out of 100 in total, the second was the bilingual boy with 38 strategies (34,2%) and the last was the bilingual girl with 33 strategies (29,7%). However, combined with the strategies that all three identified to have used and would use again yielded different results. Willingness to experiment and take risks with new strategies was highest in the bilingual girl (27 in number or 24,3%), than in the bilingual boy (18 in number or 16,2%) and only 5 in number or 4,5% in the monolingual girl. The bilinguals also reported interest in using strategies that were unfamiliar to them. The monolingual girl exceeded the bilinguals by 36,0% as opposed to 6,3% and 20,7% respectively concerning the number of strategies that she dismissed as unsuitable for her. Differences in the quality of strategy use are evident in listening, vocabulary and speaking skills in favor of the bilinguals, while the girls exceed the boy in writing.

	Bilingual female				Bilingual male				Monolingual female			
	1*	2*	3*	4*	1*	2*	3*	4*	1*	2*	3*	4*
Listening	9	6	8	3	13	7	3	3	12	2	1	11
Vocabulary	6	4	6	2	7	4	4	3	5	0	0	13
Speaking	8	6	4	0	6	5	1	6	10	0	0	8
Reading	6	5	0	1	5	2	2	3	7	1	1	3
Writing	4	3	3	0	4	0	1	5	7	0	0	3
Translation	0	3	2	1	3	0	0	3	1	2	1	2
Overall Sum	33	27	23	7	38	18	11	23	42	5	3	40
Overall %	29.7	24.3	20.7	6.3	34.2	16.2	9.9	20.7	37.8	4.5	2.7	36.0

Strategy categories:

1* *I use this strategy and I like it.*

2* *I have tried this strategy and would use it again.*

3* *I have never used this strategy but I'm interested in it.*

4* *This strategy doesn't fit me.*

Table 5 LSUI: Number and percentages of reported strategies for each of four strategy categories

As for specific strategies, there is a general overlap between the two bilingual participants. In the section on listening, they use strategies to become more familiar with the sounds of English by practicing very different sounds or by looking for aural associations. They use strategies that help them prepare for what is to follow in a conversation by paying special attention and they compensate for lack of knowledge by watching gestures or body language. They tend to use more strategies when they learn

vocabulary, while the monolingual participant relies on them to review, recall and use new words. In the speaking strategy group, the ones that stand out are the strategies employed to engage in conversations and to compensate for the lack of knowledge. The findings on this self-report questionnaire significantly match the ones on the SILL. When it comes to reading, the bilinguals differ in that they read extensively in English, summarize and make predictions. The monolingual student again excelled in the writing strategy use.

It is interesting that the answers to the questions on translation strategies differed between the two bilinguals. The boy does not translate when he uses any of the four skills while the girl occasionally resorts to translation. The boy also claims to think only in English when using English, while the girl reports reliance on her L1 or L2. In the case of the monolingual girl the answers concerning the role of mental translation are sometimes contradicting.

The bilingual learners also seem to be better communicators since they use more strategies and, in particular, are not reluctant to ask for help or make up words to keep the conversation going. As for vocabulary learning strategies, there is an interesting difference in the type of strategies used. The monolingual girl tends to memorize vocabulary in a more mechanical manner and controls her learning since she keeps a vocabulary book which is regularly checked, while the two bilinguals rely more upon retaining images by creating mental pictures or linking personal experiences to new words.

The next research tool used were numerous English language proficiency tests to check the progress the three students made over the course of three years.

	Bilingual female	Bilingual male	Monolingual female
B2 level	Pass (around 70%)	High pass (around 75%)	Pass (around 70%)
C2 level	Pass (around 70%)	Pass (around 70%)	Low pass (around 60%)

Table 6 Official examination results

All three students reached about the same level of proficiency in English in general and had similar results on particular skills. At both B2 and C2 levels they had the lowest scores on the writing part of the examinations, middle scores on grammar, vocabulary and reading and high scores on speaking. The two bilinguals had significantly better scores on the listening part than the monolingual.

	Bilingual female		Bilingual male		Monolingual female	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Cognitive strategies						
Reading	13	4	10	7	10	7
Listening	12	4	13	3	6	10
Writing	16	7	14	9	20	3
Speaking	3	3	6	0	1	7
Communication strategies	8	0	5	3	3	5
Vocabulary strategies	6	12	6	12	2	16
Grammar strategies	4	4	2	6	1	7
Metacognitive strategies	6	3	8	1	8	1
Overall sum.	68	37	64	41	55	50
Overall %	64.7	35.3	60.9	39.1	52.3	47.7

Table 7 Task based analysis results

A checklist of strategies (see Table 7) showed that the bilingual girl used 68 (64,7%) out of 115 strategies, the bilingual boy came second with 64 (60,9%) and monolingual girl came last with 55

(52,3%) strategies. The bilinguals exceeded the monolingual particularly in listening strategies, the bilingual boy stood out in speaking strategies and the monolingual girl used most strategies during writing tasks. The bilingual female was the best communicator while both bilinguals used the same number of vocabulary strategies.

Verbal reports that resulted from prompting during task completion and the semi-structured interviews revealed, among others, the following. The bilingual girl reported to be using most strategies from the check lists unconsciously and showed evidence of metalinguistic awareness. When encountering new vocabulary she draws from both L1 Russian and L2 Greek depending on the word closeness to either of the languages. She also guesses from context or analyses word parts to come to understanding. She avoids literal translation as she realizes that it is impossible since, according to her, the syntax of L1, L2 and L3 differ significantly. She reports to be constantly learning from her mistakes but does that in an anxiety-free manner as she is used to encountering unknown vocabulary and expressions in all three languages. She also insists that it is impossible for her to learn grammar or vocabulary by heart. When asked what language is the language of thought she said that she thinks in all three languages depending on the situation and that Russian often helps her with her English and vice versa as they share cognates, but she sometimes finds it confusing and mixes codes, particularly when she lacks the knowledge of Greek vocabulary.

The bilingual boy reported using similar strategies; however, the main difference between the two bilinguals seems to be that the boy claims to think only in the target language when he uses it whether it is Greek, Serbian or English. He finds it difficult to translate in any of these languages and never learns the grammar rules or new vocabulary by heart. He says that he finds it very easy to find patterns in English and that it comes naturally. He makes guesses, tests hypotheses and takes risks in a stress-free way. While in Greece, he thinks in Greek and English and in Serbia in Serbian and English. English seems to pervade as a language from which he constantly draws information.

The monolingual girl reports to be using certain strategies throughout her preparation for the English exams without experimenting with new strategies unless she is instructed by her teacher. She relies heavily on a conscious effort to better herself at English, avoids taking risks and spends a considerable amount of time studying showing awareness of her strong and weak points.

6.   Discussion

The bilinguals used more strategies, more frequently: Our SILL findings support the hypothesis that bilinguals use more strategies, more frequently than monolingual learners (Kemp, 2007, Tuncer, 2009). Bilinguals might be more advantageous than monolinguals in the process of language learning having prior language learning experience and being intrinsically motivated. The source of motivation might be previous success at acquiring/learning other languages. In the case of the two bilinguals involved in the specific study, their bilingualism is additive rather than subtractive since the status of their L1 and L2 is not problematic in Greece and their literacy in both Russian and Greek and Greek and Serbian respectively serves as scaffolding when acquiring English with respect to language learning strategies they use.

There was a qualitative difference in strategy use between the bilinguals and the monolingual learner: The bilinguals approach learning both as a system and as a code of communication in ways that indicate creativity, communicative sensitivity and willingness to take risks. The advantage of transferring successful strategy use from previous language learning to the new language learning environment is a major reason for this difference.

The bilinguals tend to transfer more strategies that have to do with implicit rather than explicit language learning since this approach proved to be more efficient when they learned their L2 particularly with respect to vocabulary and grammar. They tend to rely on the typological similarities, such as vocabulary forms between Russian and Serbian and English as there is a lot of borrowing among these languages. Finally, the fact that bilinguals actively use and develop all three languages helps them feel confident and relaxed when encountering language learning difficulties in L3. This characteristic results in differences in the quality of strategy use between the bilinguals and the monolingual learner which concern memory, compensation and affective strategies.

The bilingual female learner used more strategies than the male bilingual: Our findings confirm previous research that gender indeed plays a significant role in strategy use and that females typically report more strategy use than male learners. In our study, the female bilingual learner uses overall more strategies than the male student. Differences were found in memory, cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies but not in affective strategies, which may be contradictory to previous findings (Green & Oxford 1995, Hong-Nam & Leavell 2006). The fact that the monolingual

female exceeds the male bilingual learner in the use of social strategies is also related to the role gender plays, since females are in general more willing to build relationships and use social networks with consistency (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006). As for the differences in the use of metacognitive strategies in favor of the monolingual female learner, it confirms findings of previous research that females are more metacognitively aware than males (Green & Oxford 1995, Dreyer & Oxford 1996, Peacock & Ho 2003).

7.   Limitations

Ours is a longitudinal case study and as such it has advantages and pitfalls. A case study collects data from a single or several cases and its advantages are rich and deep data coming from multiple sources providing for an intensive study. Its limitations are susceptibility to bias, unsuitability for statistical analysis, etc. Being a longitudinal study it enabled us to track sequential developmental patterns and changes bearing in mind individual differences and acquiring comprehensive data, but it required a long study span, high demand on consistency and lacked statistical significance (Wei & Moyer, eds. 2008).

8.   Conclusion-Recommendations

This study provides insights into quantitative and qualitative differences in strategy use by bilingual and monolingual learners when learning a foreign language. We have illustrated that our bilinguals use more strategies, more frequently compared to the monolingual both in relation to strategy groups and skills. Their strategy use shows communicative sensitivity, creativity, willingness to take risks and practice naturalistically. In other words, they seem to have the necessary tools to foster and promote their language learning autonomy beyond the classroom and the teacher's control, which is the main advantage of our bilingual learners over the monolingual one.

More research using a larger sample is required for further investigation of how exactly multilinguals use their strategies. It could be interesting to explore strategy differences in specific types of strategies as well as the clusters and chains of strategies multilinguals use in relation to different skills. Another area worth exploring is the qualitative changes that take place during the development of strategic processing in multilinguals. The final challenge for researchers is to use the knowledge about multilinguals and the strategies they use and integrate it in strategy training programs in order to help monolingual students learn more effectively.

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