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One Parent One Language Strategy' - A case study of a child's simultaneous bilingual language acquisition.

A thesis submitted to the School of Languages for the

Degree of

LICENCIATURA EN LENGUAS MODERNAS

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Abstract

This thesis reports a case study using "One parent, One Language" communicative strategy with a one-year-old child. This study was carried out in Puebla in different contexts. The main purpose of our research was to investigate the different communicative strategies used by bilingual parents to raise their child bilingually and then to use that information to explore language learning in our son.

The research data were collected by observation formats one for each language in order to keep a sequence and organization in the events during the research time. Those formats describe important issues like, date, context and child's progress in the learning of commands.

The research found that there are different strategies that could be adapted to the characteristics of the child, parents and contexts. Also we found these strategies as helpful tool for bilingual parents.

About "one parent, one language" strategy we will show the final number of commands the child acquired in English and Spanish. We also found the importance of the consistency in the application of the strategy. Those data show the progress the child had in English and Spanish and the differences and similarities between the language acquisition processes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To our parents for their endless love, support and encouragement.

DEDICATIONS

Gabriel

This thesis is dedicated to the all people who were around us all the time, to the people who were supporting us and helping us all the time, all the people who we have the privilege to call family, this thesis project is dedicated to them, especially to my son and wife the biggest reason to do this, to my parents who were all the time unconditionally behind me doing everything for me no matter what no matter how.

Octavia

First I want thank my family; my husband, you were always there to encourage me in your very particular way, my son when I first met you my life began, my parents you give me your support and your guide through my life, my parents in law thank you for let me be part of your family and to give us your support and finally but not less important to my brother, my best friend you and me together each step and each achieved goal forever and ever.

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CHAPTER I

1.0 Introduction

It seems almost impossible to imagine a baby transforming into a communicating creature, let alone one conversant in two or several languages. The miraculous progress from cooing to speech occurs in exactly the same way whether it is in contact with one or in several languages. In some countries language planning is usually seen as a public endeavor which is most typically carried out by the government; however, not only the country could engage in language planning but also individuals. Grosjean (1982, p. 370) speaks of childhood bilingualism as "a planet a fair" and of "planned bilingualism in the family" in reference to parents who decide to raise bilingual children. In this research, we are going to analyze the language learning progress of our one year old child applying "One Parent, One Language" strategy during a period of three months.

1.1 Justification

The reasons why we wanted to research this topic are the following; the first reason is we are really interested to investigate the necessary strategies for a child to learn two languages at the same time. Particularly we wonder which one of the strategies could be applied in our specific case? Another reason for doing this research is because we want to start bilingual education in the family, so applying the correct strategy we can analyze the learning process by gathering observations of the child's progress; for us as parents it is important that our child learn a foreign language because we think he is going to have an advantage over others.

In order to confirm the above, the research was carried out at home using the following methodology. We used a mixed-methods approach in which we used observations and self-reports as well as keeping a quantitatively analyzed record of the

commands understood by the child. All of these resources were focused on getting information from our one-year-old child learning process using the strategy "One Parent, One Language" (explained in Chapter II).

1.2 Study Significance

We consider that this research will be very useful for bilingual parents who want to educate their children in both languages or for parents who speak the same language, but live in a community where most people speak something else. The research contains different strategies that these parents could apply according to their context.

1.3 The Context of the Research

This research is directly related to language acquisition due to its connection to the stages or periods of a Language Acquisition Process (LAP). In this regard we have to find out the possible ways in which age influences the LAP who is the process by which humans acquire the capacity to perceive and comprehend language, as well as to produce and use words and sentences to communicate.

It is also important to review what bilingualism is and the types of bilingualism that exist.

The following chapter will present the relevant areas of L1 child language acquisition, and L2 child language acquisition, then, a discussion of bilingual language acquisition of children who are acquiring two languages at the same time will be presented.

1.4 Background of the Research

At the time of this study we had been studying English for several years at a faculty of modern languages, so as bilingual speakers we were really interested in

educating our child as a bilingual speaker too. In our experience we have seen in the faculty some examples of bilingual children. Most of them educated by their parents. That example encouraged us to start this bilingual education with our own child and report the obtained results in our thesis project.

1.5 Research Location

This investigation was done in our home because that is **a** place in which we spend more time and have more interaction with our child. The main reason why we decided to use our home to apply the strategy was to create a comfortable atmosphere for our child; he will learn the L1 in a natural way.

1.6 Research Aims

The research aims of this research were:

- To investigate the different bilingual education strategies in the family.
- To analyze the learning process of both languages in our child using the "One Parent, One Language" strategy.

1.7 Research Questions

The research questions are focused on the case study carried out with our child and those are:

RQ1- Using the selected strategy during the research period, how many commands did the child acquire in the L1?

RQ2- Using the selected strategy during the research period, what commands did the child acquire in L1?

RQ3- Using the selected strategy during in the research period, how many commands did the child acquire in the L2?

RQ4- Using the selected strategy during in the research period, what

commands did the child acquire in the L2?

1.8 Chapter Conclusion

In the next chapter we will discuss the theoretical background of this research

(Chapter II). In Chapter III we will describe the methodology used in the research. The

following chapter (IV) the results will be presented and the research questions will be

answered. Finally, in Chapter V we will discuss the implications of our research project

and the limitations of the same.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter introduction

In this chapter we discuss the different topics that support the principal issue of this research that is to observe and analyze the bilingual learning process of our child using the "One Parent, One Language" strategy.

2.1 First Language Acquisition Process

There is an important distinction between language acquisition and language learning. Children acquire language through a subconscious process during which they are unaware of grammatical rules. They get a feel for what is and what is not correct. In order to acquire language, the learner needs a source of natural communication. The emphasis is on the text of the communication and not on the form.

Language learning, on the other hand, is not communicative. It is the result of direct instruction in the rules of language. In language learning, students have conscious knowledge of the new language and can talk about that knowledge.

The study of the First Language Acquisition Process (FLAP) is necessary because it will help us to understand the child's progress during this case study. Being aware of this process will facilitate the identification of learning features associated with the child's language acquisition.

In general the language acquisition process refers to the period of time in which a child learns his or her native language. However, how children learn to speak is not perfectly understood. Most explanations involve the observation that mainly children copy what they hear and use inference to make meaning the best they can. Noam

Chomsky said that human beings have a natural aptitude for understanding grammar. For other language elements, children usually learn the sounds and vocabulary of their native language through imitation.

There are many theories about FLAP but some of them are more myths than real investigations. For example, Psammeticus, an Egyptian Pharaoh during the 7th century BC, believed language was inborn and that children isolated from birth from any linguistic influence would develop the language they had been born with.   Nowadays, psychologists and linguists using technology and other strategies such as observation have obtained more information about FLAP. For Guasti (2002), first language acquisition in children occurs without explicit teaching, on basis of positive evidence, under varying circumstances and for an invariable period of time and finally, in identical ways across different languages. So, we can say that the most important factor in FLAP is the interaction with language.

There are many differences in language interaction patterns around the world. Virtually all normally developing children become language users at the same rate. The way children learn language follows a specific pattern and is inherently systemic in nature. Children must be exposed to language and be able to interact with others, but how that exposure and interaction occur is extremely variable. Even though young children are not initially formally taught language, language acquisition is part of the overall development of children physically, socially, and cognitively. There is strong evidence that children may never acquire a language if they have not been exposed to a language before they reach the age of 6 or 7. Children between the ages of 2 and 6 acquire language so rapidly that by 6 they are competent language users. By the time children are of school-age, they have amazing language ability; it is a seemingly effortless acquisition

(Cole & Cole, 1993; Curtiss, 1977; Goldin-Meadow, 1982; Lindfors, 1991; McLaughlin, 1984; Newport, 1991). Then, it is clear that children must be exposed to language and to be able to interact with others.

2.1.1 First Language Acquisition Stages

In order to understand FLAP, researchers have divided the process into stages. Those studies are of two types: longitudinal and cross-sectional. Most studies of child language acquisition are longitudinal; these are the ones that focus on the development of speech in the same group over time. The other types of studies are cross-sectional which search for a certain type of data across a broad spectrum of different children.

Now we are going to present how FLAP is studied by different researchers. To Bruner, important outcomes of learning include not just the concepts, categories, and problem-solving procedures invented previously by the culture, but also the ability to "invent" these things for oneself (Bruner, 1957, p. 234). In 1966**,** Bruner proposed three modes of representation:

- Enactive (0-1 year old) it involves encoding action-based information and storing it in our memory. For example, in the form of movement as a muscle memory, a baby might remember the action of shaking a rattle.

- Iconic (1-6 years old) this is where information is stored visually in the form of images (a mental picture in the mind's eye). For some, this is conscious; others say they do not experience it. This may explain why when we are learning a new subject, it is often helpful to have diagrams or illustrations to accompany verbal information.

- Symbolic (7 years onwards) this develops last. This is where information is stored in the form of a code or symbol, such as language. This is the most adaptable form of representation, for actions and images have a fixed relation to that which they represent. 'Dog' is a symbolic representation of a single class.

Modes of representation are the way in which information or knowledge are stored and encoded in memory. Rather than neat age related stages (like Piaget), the modes of representation are integrated and only loosely sequential as they "translate" into each other Bruner (1960).

The second author is Jean Piaget (1936). For him, the child's cognitive development is about the child developing or constructing a mental model of the world. Piaget was interested both in how children learnt and how they thought. Piaget studied children from infancy to adolescence, created a cognitive-developmental stage theory that described how children's ways of thinking developed as they interacted with the world around them. Infants and young children understand the world much differently than adults do, and as they play and explore, their mind learns how to think in ways that better fit with reality.

Piaget's theory (1973) has four stages: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational. During the sensorimotor stage, which often lasts from birth to age two, children are just beginning to learn how to learn. Language development, and thus thought, begins during this time. The major tasks occurring during this period involve children figuring out how to make use of their bodies. They do this by experiencing everything with their five senses, hence "sensory," and by learning to crawl and then walk, point and then grasp, hence, "motor." During the preoperational stage,

which often lasts from ages two through seven, children start to use mental symbols to understand and to interact with the world, and they begin to learn language and to engage in pretend play. In the concrete operational stage that follows, lasting from ages seven through eleven, children gain the ability to think logically to solve problems and to organize information they learn. However, they remain limited to considering only concrete, not abstract, information because at this stage the capability for abstract thought is not well developed. Finally, during the formal operational stage, which often lasts from age eleven on, adolescents learn how to think more abstractly to solve problems and to think symbolically, e.g., about things that are not really there concretely in front of them.

2.2 Age as a Factor of Acquisition Process

Age is one of the influential factors in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). A great variety of views have been expressed on the age question in children and adults who learn either the native language (L1) or the second language (L2) in different ages. Age as an influential factor brings different performance stages in second language learning. Various explanations and interpretations of second language acquisition exist which consider age. However, there is no linear pattern of learning among the same age group of learners, and they learn differently and individually depending on variables. Most people believe that younger learners have certain advantages over older learners in language learning while others believed the opposite. The common notion is that younger children learn L2 easily and quickly in comparison to older children (Ellis, 2008; Larsen-Freeman, 2008; Mayberry & Lock, 2003).

The relationship between age and success in SLA, though complex in nature, is linked to the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH). CPH, also known as "the sensitive

period," is defined as "the period during which a child can acquire language easily, rapidly, perfectly, and without instruction" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p.145) The CPH suggests that a period of time exists, between birth and somewhere around the age when a child enters puberty, in which the learning a second language can be accomplished more rapidly and easily than times falling outside of this period i.e. post puberty (Larsen-Freeman, 2008). SLA theories and research have explained the impact of age in second language acquisition. As reported by Lightbown and Spada (2008), learning depends on learners' characteristics and the environment. Their findings suggested that older learners have a higher level of problem solving and metalinguistic abilities than younger learners.

2.3 Bilingualism

According to Webster's dictionary *bilingual* is defined as "having or using two languages especially as spoken with the fluency characteristic of a native speaker; a person using two languages especially habitually and with control like that of a native speaker" and bilingualism as "the constant oral use of two languages". In the past being bilingual was defined as being able to speak two languages perfectly; this is also the approach of Bloomfield (1935, p. 56). In contradistinction to this conception, which includes only "perfect bilingual", McNamara (1967) proposed that a bilingual is anyone who possesses a minimum competence in only one of the four language skills, listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing, in a foreign language.

All of these definitions give us two extreme different views. One argues that a native competence is necessary to be bilingual. We know that for a non-native speaker it is difficult to acquire a language perfectly due to many factors. And the second one that proposes any person with a minimal knowledge about another language could be named

bilingual. For the purposes of this study, we will attach to the most recent conceptions of bilingualism, which is being able to speak two languages.

2.3.1 Types of Bilingualism

To learn his or her first language, a child spends quite a while listening, repeating, and learning by trial and error during the first five years of life. Once we have defined the concept of bilingualism we can start talking about these three particular types:

1. **Simultaneous bilingualism:** in simultaneous bilingualism a child learns two languages as "first languages". So a child is a simultaneous bilingual if he or she goes from speaking no languages at all directly to speaking two languages.

2. **Receptive bilingualism**: Being able to understand two languages but expressing oneself in only one. Children who had high exposure to a second language throughout their lives, but have had little opportunity to use the language would fall in this category. For example, many children in Chinese or Mexican immigrant households in countries like the United States hear English on TV, in stores and so on, but use their home language (Chinese or Spanish) in everyday communication. When they enter preschool or kindergarten, these children are likely to make rapid progress in English because their receptive language skills in English have been developed.

3. **Sequential bilingualism**: Learning one language after a first language has already been established. This is the situation for all those who become bilingual as adults, as well as for many who became bilingual earlier in life.

Bilingualism is considered a necessity around the world. Families want to achieve bilingualism for their kids or for their young learners including adults, they could reach bilingualism choosing these kind of strategies.

2.4 Bilingual acquisition

The belief that learning a second language (L2) poses challenges to cognitive performance in early childhood is questioned along with the ideas of proponents and opponents. It is regarded acceptable to claim that development in bilinguals and monolinguals can be different because of the functions or advantages of specific experiences in each language. Studies maintaining that bilingualism influences cognitive development in early childhood lead to the conclusion that language and cognition are interdependent rather than independent issues. Nevertheless, bilingualism has been treated as a single discrete independent variable ignoring that it is a multidimensional notion, which seems to remain a problem in the experimental paradigm of research (Yavuz Akbulut, 2007).

To examine the influences of bilingualism, it is considered crucial to take into consideration the unique features of participants, tasks and the relationships of those tasks to the constructs in question.

Bilingual children's ability to transfer their decontextualized skills and knowledge from one language to another is regarded as an advantage while children in monolingual contexts are only able to carry out the very same tasks only in one language (Ben-Zeev, 1977).

2.5 Bilingual Education in the Family

A growing number of parents view bilingualism as a laudable family goal. The reasons for this trend include a desire to maintain ties to the parent's heritage language and culture, to provide children with academic and cognitive advantages, and to promote cross-cultural understanding and communication (Wong Fillmore, 2000).

In order to encourage bilingual parents to start bilingual education for their children, we have to start defining what bilingual education is. Bilingual education is a form of education in which the information is presented to the student in two languages. Therefore, technically any educational method that includes more than one language is bilingual.

Over time a child can express ideas clearly and almost perfectly from the point of view of language and grammar. Although parents never sit with children to explain to them the workings of the language, their utterances show a superb command of intricate rules and patterns that would drive an adult crazy if he or she tried to memorize them and use them accurately. This suggests that it is through exposure to the language and meaningful communication that a first language is acquired, without the need of systematic studies of any kind. As we already know unlike adults, children learn language unconsciously, but above all through hearing. The goal of the infant is not to learn the language but to be able to communicate and interact in his environment. Adults, on the other hand, learn a language by reading and writing, with full intention of mastery of the language. The goal of the adult is to master the grammar and to be in command of an extensive vocabulary.

Until this point we realize that children are perfectly capable of acquiring two languages and also we know that we as parents can raise bilingual children in our home

since early childhood, but how can we do that? There are some methods that are called communication "strategies" that will be described below.

2.6 Communication Strategies for Bilingual Education in the Family

There are many methods and approaches that give us a plan to start bilingual education in our family but each one depends on specific situations. Research into the language development of the children of bilingual couples has a considerable tradition. It started in 1913, when Ronjat published his observations about his son's first five years of simultaneous acquisition of French (from his father) and German (from his mother). Since that moment parents and specialists started to document the bilingual learning process on different situations.

2.6.1 One Person, one language

The "one person, one language" approach is a popular method adopted by parents attempting to raise simultaneous bilingual children. With the "one person, one language" approach, each parent consistently speaks only one of the two languages to the child. For instance, the child's mother might speak to him or her exclusively in Spanish, while the father might use only English.

Traditionally, the "one person, one language" method has been regarded as the best method for bilingual language acquisition free of mixed utterances. The French linguist Maurice Grammont first introduced the term "one person, one language" in 1902. He theorized that by separating the languages from the beginning, parents could prevent confusion and code mixing in their bilingual children.

George Saunders (1988, p. 49) wrote in his book *Bilingual Children: From Birth to Teens* that the "one person, one language" approach "ensures that the children have

regular exposure to and have to make use of each language. This is particularly important for the minority language, which has little outside support." This method has also been linked to an early development of metalinguistic awareness.

2.6.2 One Language-One Environment

Children who grow up in a bilingual environment from an early age do not necessarily learn to speak the two languages they are hearing, and may speak only one, even with a parent who speaks another language to them (Lyon, 1996; Sirén, 1991). This can be quite a baffling experience to parents and educators, who often take it as a matter of course that children will learn to speak the languages spoken to them. As Wong Fillmore (2000) and Portes and Hao (1998) have argued, it may be quite detrimental to children and their families if children do not learn to speak a home language that is often the only language in which the parents can adequately communicate. This may make it difficult for parents to fulfill their role as primary agents in the socialization process, and may have a negative impact on the closeness and intimacy between parents and children.

If this strategy is used, both parents speak to the child in the language that is not dominant in the community. This strategy is based on the assumption that the child will acquire the community language anyway, for instance in preschool. It could work really well, but it is not a fact.

2.6.3 Non-Dominant Home Language without Community Support

In this case, the parents have the same language, which is not the community language. Community language is not as dominant that of the parents, and the parents speak their own language to the child.

2.6.4 Non-Native Parents

Here, parents have the same native language, which is also the language of wider communication in the community. However, one parent or both parents always talks to the child in a non-native language. Such situations have been documented e.g. by Saunders (1982, 1988) and Döpke (1992). George Saunders, a native speaker of Australian English, was successful in teaching his three children German, in addition to English, in Australia. Döpke studied a similar situation: the English- and German-speaking families she observed in Australia included some for which German was not a native language of either parent.

2.6.5 Mixed Languages

In this situation, the parents are bilingual and one or both parents switch and mix languages with the child. The community may also be bilingual, as is for instance the case in one of the earliest studies of this type of bilingual acquisition, namely Tabouret-Keller (1962), who studied the simultaneous acquisition of French and German by a child who was born to bilingual parents in the Alsace, a bilingual region of France, bordering Germany.

2.7 Raising Bilingual Children: The Importance of Consistency

The last point but not the least important is the importance of consistency. As soon as we decide to raise a bilingual child we must make a plan in order to achieve the objective. On the Internet we can find a lot of web pages and blogs specially created for parents who are raising bilingual children. There are articles from specialists and also materials such as games and songs that are helpful in the process. In those sources parents also share their good and bad experiences and are good to know what happens to them and make some comparison.

According to Christina Bosemark (founder of multilingual children´s association) who shared an article on omniglot.com there are 5 steps that guarantee success in the process of raising a bilingual child, those are:

1. Family agreement. It is very important that couples commit to following the plan, so they have to give the child security and confidence.

2. Be Realistic. Of course parents want a bilingual child but they have to take into account that it is a process in which children need more than just to be exposed to another language; you can use some materials accessible to all like movies, music or games.

3. The tactical plan. No matter what the chosen strategy is each parent has to be sure about what is his or her function during the process.

4. Get together. Learning a language is not only to understand its grammar and to speak it. Parents have to complete children's formation with culture.

5. Be patient. Learning two languages is a process; it takes time and parents need to remember that each child is different, some need more time than others.

At the end most parents who decide to start raising a bilingual child said that the most important factor is to be consistent and patient.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction and overview

This chapter provides a description of the methodology, subjects, instruments and procedures followed in the analysis of the data used to carry out this research. What is intended with this research was to explore how many commands and words a child acquired using "One Parent, One Language" strategy, also we wanted to describe how this strategy works in order to encourage bilingual parents to raise bilingual children.

This research is considered a mixed-methods study because we used quantitative and qualitative research methods. This study is quantitative in nature because our research questions are based in the number of commands and words the child learned. Also, it is qualitative because we used journals describing the environment and context ~~in~~ where the child learned them. To collect data it was necessary to design an instrument in order to create files and makes the data analysis easier.

So chapter three describes the procedures, how data were obtained, the instrument used and the methodology in order to answer the research questions set out in Chapter I.

3.1 Subjects

This study was carried out at any place in where the child acquired any command because in most places where the child learned was because he saw the action or just repeated it at the same time that is was happening.

The main participants of this research were four people. Each one had a specific role in the process, first a one-year-old child, the parents and finally the child's grandmother.

The strategy suggested is that each parent speaks one language, but in this case we made some changes for example both of us speaking to our child in English not only one like the name of the strategy. We felt our child would get enough Spanish from his grandmother and the general environment.

3.1.1 One-year-old child

The study is based on the bilingual learning process in childhood. So, our son is the protagonist in this research. He was born in Puebla City on July 5th, 2011. We used the "One parent, one language" strategy since September 2012, when he was 14 months old, until April 2013.

3.1.2 Parents

The child's mother was born in Puebla City; she is 24 years old, Spanish native speaker and also a student of the Modern languages major at BUAP. The father was born in Puebla, he is 23 years old and he was also a student of the Modern languages Major at BUAP.

We decided to raise our child in both languages: English and Spanish because we believe that a bilingual person has better academic and occupational opportunities in life.

3.1.3 Grandma

The grandmother was born in Puebla City. At the time of the study she was 50 years old and she took care of the child half day from Monday to Friday. She is a Spanish native speaker. She was sharing with the child half of the day about 30 hours per week and they interacted all the time in Spanish, so the child understood that language with his grandmother.

3.2 Data collection instruments

As we mentioned before this research was qualitative and quantitative because the main purpose was to identify the number of commands and words performed by the child in English and Spanish, but also we were interested in knowing which context the child felt more comfortable in.

In order to answer the questions, we needed as much information as possible, so we decided that observation was the instrument that gave us the opportunity to obtain it.

In our case the time that we as parents and observers spent with the child was limited and it made the data collection process a little bit difficult. For that reason, we decided to create an instrument in which we could collect all the possible information and at the same time it had to be easy to manage by the child's grandmother.

First, we decided to write two journals, one written by the parents and the other one by the grandma. Each journal was written in each language Spanish and English. The journals consisted of a description based on the commands acquired, the context and the language. Then, we created the observation format. It consisted of four columns; the first column one contained the date. The second column presented a brief description of the context, the third column the command that the child performed and finally in the last column some observations were written. The main objective of the observation format was to organize and gather information about what the child did and what we wrote in the journal.

3.3 Data collection procedure

In this part we are going to describe step by step the data collection procedure. "One parent, one language" strategy is a procedure used by bilingual parents to raise or educate their children in two languages. Basically, parents interact with the child in two

languages. Each parent chooses the language in which he or she feels more comfortable or in some cases each one speaks in his or her native language.

In this specific case, because of the limited time that we shared with our child, we had to make the decision to include the child's Grandma in the research. As we mentioned before, she took care of the child half day from Monday to Friday, so she was the Spanish speaker during the process and we were the English speakers.

3.4 Data analysis

Once the observation period had finished, we started the selection and analysis process in which we reviewed the information of the charts and journal.

First, in order to get the quantitative information required, we divided the observation period into four stages each one lasted two months. Using Microsoft Excel we captured the number of commands and words learned by the child in each stage. In this way, we obtained the total of words and commands learned in both languages, the most efficient stage and the average of words and commands per stage.

Then, we started the journal analysis. Both journals were analyzed by each of us with the purpose of finding in which language and context the child felt more comfortable. As soon as each of us obtained their findings we had a discussion in order to expose our points of view. In this way, we came up with a final conclusion.

3.5 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, relevant information has been mentioned about the subjects, the instruments used and the steps we followed to carry out this research.

In the next chapter, we will describe and explain the data collected in order to refine the findings.

CHAPHTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.0 Chapter introduction

In this chapter, we will present the results of our data collection and we will answer the research questions posed in Chapter One via the data analysis. First of all, we are going to present the research questions on which our research was based. That will be followed by the presentation of the results. Those results were divided in two sections, one for each question. Finally, we close the chapter with a summary of this chapter.

4.1 Research questions

First of all, the research questions necessary for this study are shown below in order to remember them.

- RQ1- Using the selected strategy during the research period, how many commands did the child acquire in the L1?

- RQ2- Using the selected strategy during the research period, what commands did the child acquire in L1?

- RQ3- Using the selected strategy during in the research period, how many commands did the child acquire in the L2?

- RQ4- Using the selected strategy during in the research period, what commands did the child acquire in the L2?

4.2 Results

In this section we present the number of commands acquired during the study period. We included some figures in which we show the final results of this research; we made this because it is easier to understand.

4.3 Results RQ1 – first language command acquisition

As we mentioned, we divided the observation time in four stages. Each stage was two months in length. The results are shown below in figures. This allows us to give a clear idea to the reader about the child's command acquisition.

In this figure, we present the number of commands in L1 acquired by the child in the two first stages. Stages one correspond to September and October and stage two to November and December.

*Figure 4.3.1* Stages 1 & 2 of the child's L1 language development.
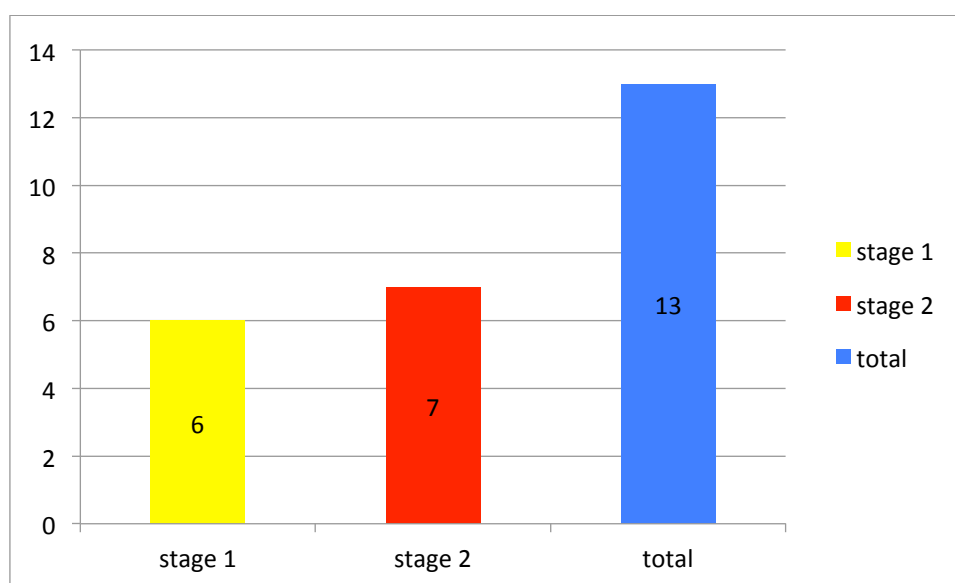
This figure represents the number of commands acquired in the first two stages. As we can see in the second stage we have seven commands, one more than the first stage with only six commands giving us as a result thirteen commands in both stages.

But now the child had greater exposure to L1, because he spent more time with people around him who have as a mother tongue L1.

In Fig. 4.3.1 we included the last two stages January and February (stage 3) and March and April (stage 4).

Figure 4.3.2 Stages 3 & 4 of the child's L1 language development.
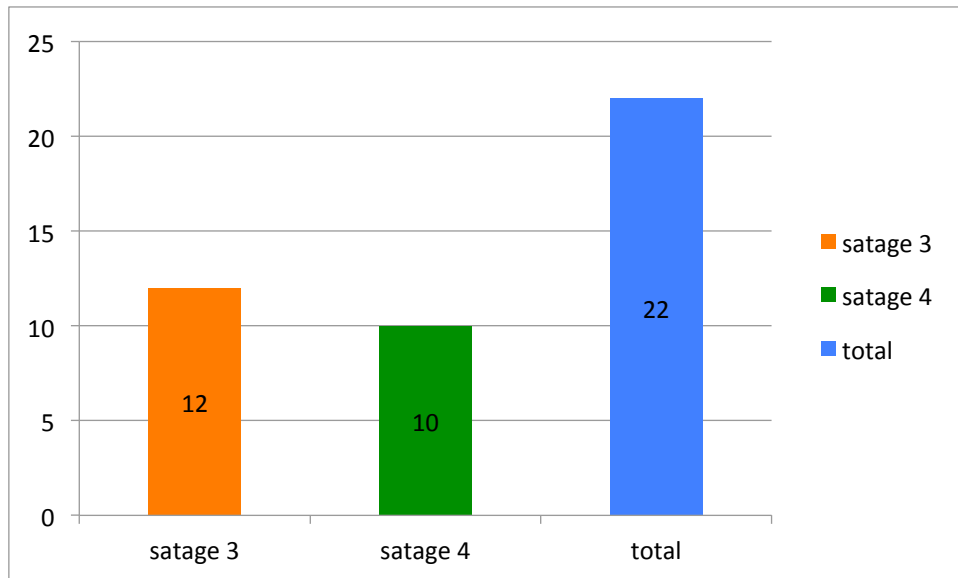
In stage three, the child acquired twelve commands. However, in stage four he acquired ten, two less than in the stage three; consequently in stage three and four we have a total of twenty-two commands.

Figure 4.3.3 we included the four stages and the number of commands acquired in order to obtain the total of commands in all stages corresponding to L1.

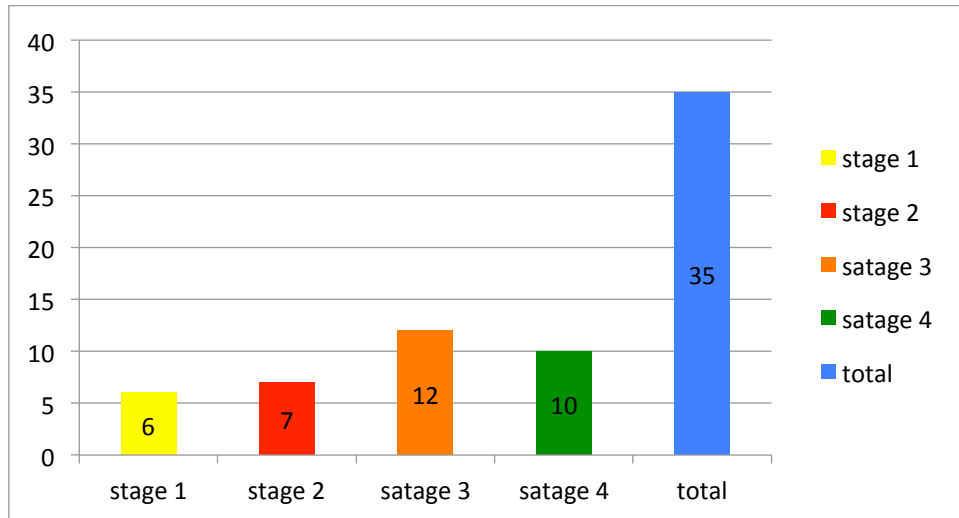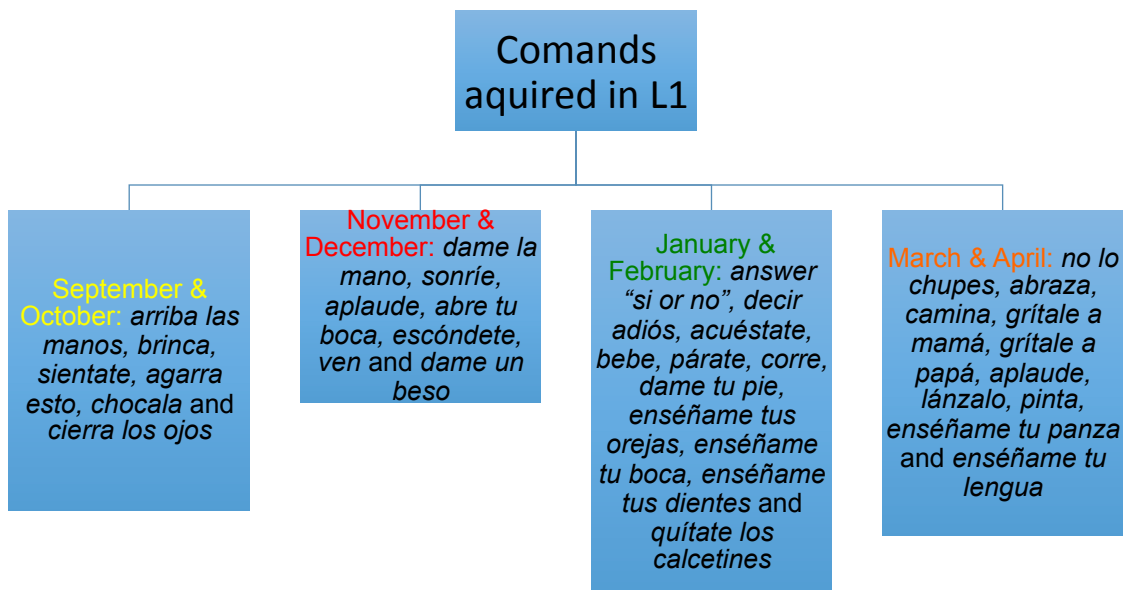*Figure 4.3.3* Final results of the child's L1 command development.

Fig.4.3.3 shows the total of commands acquired in L1, we add the totals of each stage in order to get the answer to the RQ1.

4.4 Results RQ2

The child acquired 35 commands in the L1, 3 more than in L2. Here we have what commands were acquired during the all four stages:

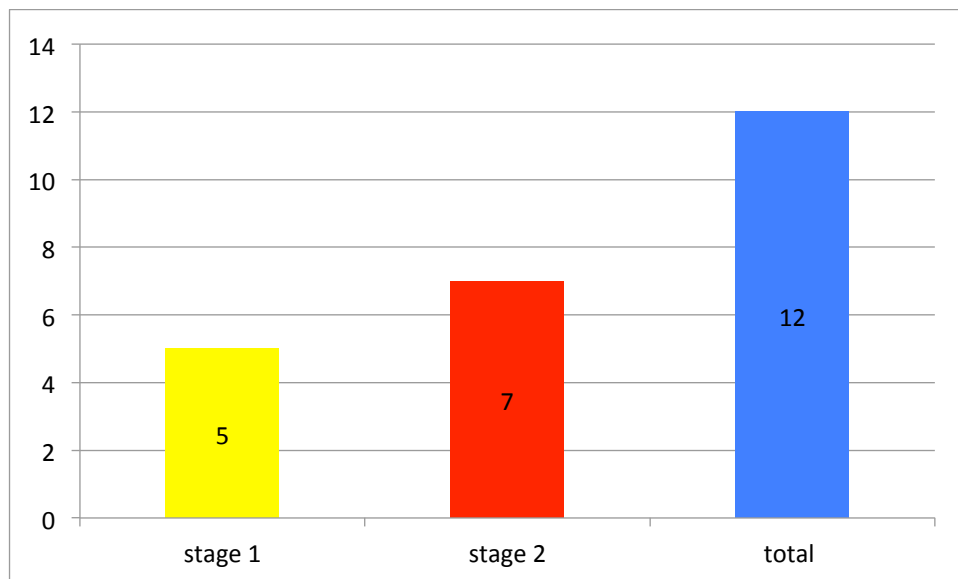*Figure 4.4.1* Commands acquired in L1.

4.5 Results RQ3

In Fig. 4.5 we present the number of commands in English acquired by the child in the two first stages. Stage one corresponds to September and October and stage two to November and December.

Figure 4.5.1 Stage 1 & 2 of the child's L2 language development.

This figure represents the number of commands acquired in the first two stages. As we can see in the second stage we have seven commands, two more than the first stage with only five commands giving us as a result twelve commands in both stages.

Figure 4.5.2 below corresponds to stages three (January and February) and stage four (March and April); here we can find the number of commands in English acquired by the child.

Figure 4.5.2 Stage 3 & 4 L2 language development.
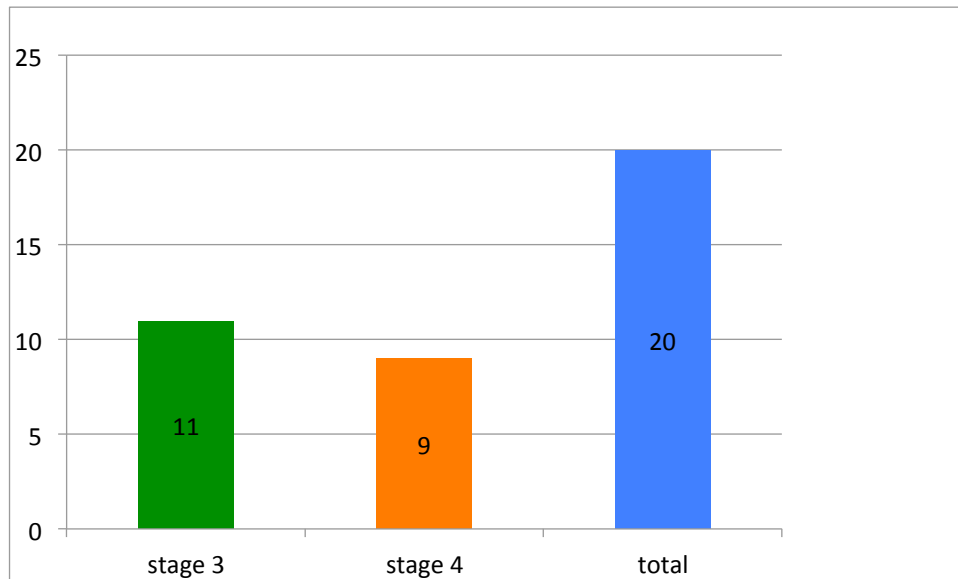
In stage three the child acquired eleven commands. However, in stage four he acquired just nine, two less than in stage three. Therefore in stage three and four we have a total of twenty commands.

In Fig. 4.5.3 we included the four stages and the number of commands acquired in order to obtain the total of commands in all stages corresponding to L2.

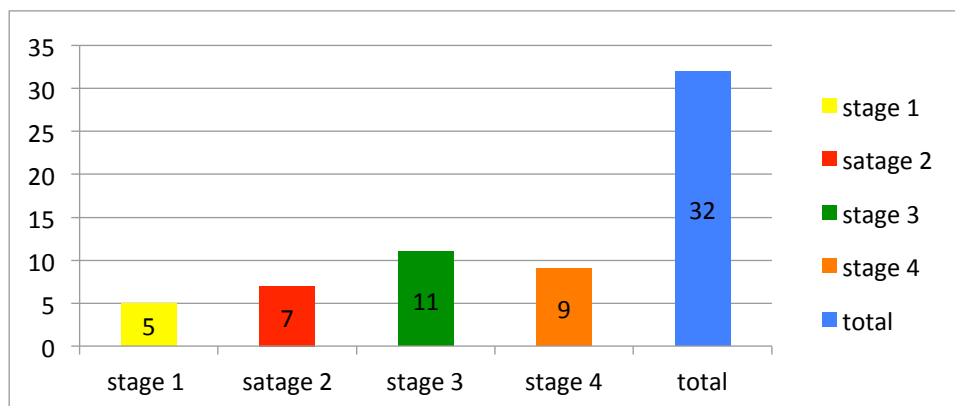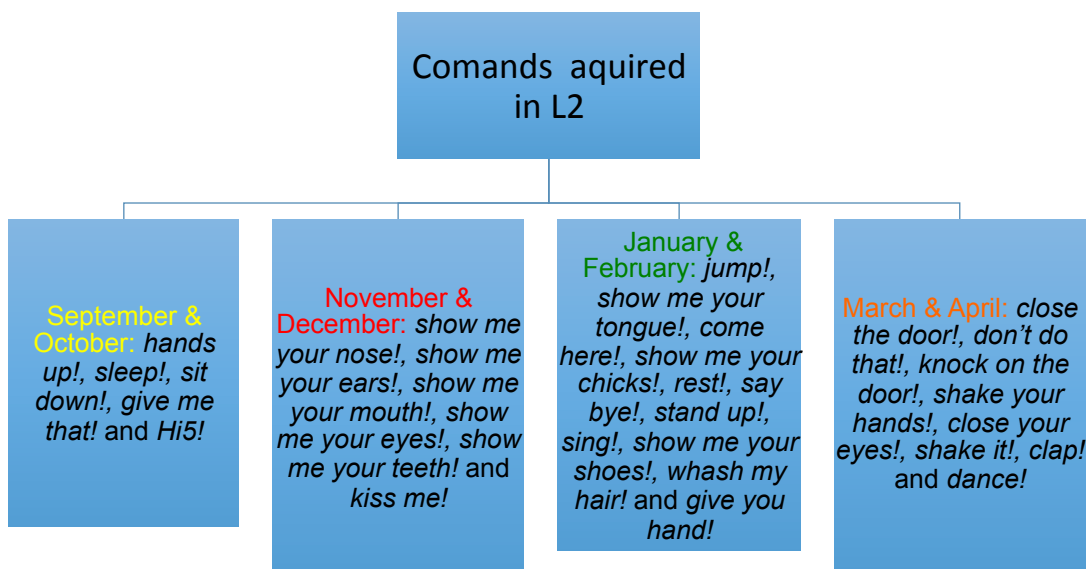*Figure 4.5.3* Final results of the child's L2 command development.

Fig. 4.5.3 shows the total of commands acquired in L2. We added the totals of each stage in order to get the answer to RQ3.

4.6 Results RQ4

The child learned a total of 32 commands. Below we have the commands acquired:

Figure 4.6.1 Commands acquired in L2.

4.7 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, we presented the research results in different ways. We found the results very interesting because we see the issues about our child and the use that he has with both languages. In Chapter Five we present the overall meaning of this case study.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

5.0 Chapter introduction

This study as we already know tracks the progress of our one year old child, who was exposed to a communicative strategy called "One Parent, One Language", used by bilingual parents to raise their children in two languages.

In this chapter, we are going to summarize and discuss the results presented in the previous chapter. Also, we are going to describe the limitations that we faced during this research and we are going to write some recommendations for those parents that are interested in raising bilingual children.

5.1 Results and their significance

In the previous chapter we presented the outcomes from the instrument applied to answer our research questions. These outcomes correspond to the languages the child was exposed to: English (L2) and Spanish (L1). In general, the results were favorable. The child learned commands in both languages and now he can make a distinction between the languages.

5.2 Research aims

In the first chapter we set the aims of our research project:

- To investigate the different bilingual education strategies in the family.
- To analyze the learning process of both languages in our child using "One parent, one language" strategy.

Now we are going to discuss if those aims were achieved during our research. The first aim was to investigate the different strategies of bilingual education in the family. Well, in order to choose the correct strategy to apply in our specific context we

investigated six different strategies: One Person-One Language, One Language-One Environment, Non-Dominant Home Language Without Community Support, Double Non-Dominant Home Language Without Community Support, Non-Native Parents, Mixed-Languages. Each strategy was described and exemplified in Chapter 2 with the purpose of making the selection process easier. We found also the context in which each method succeeds.

The second aim was "To analyze the learning process of both languages in our child using "One parent, one language" strategy. To achieve this, we exposed our child to this strategy for a period of time in which we used a specific instrument to monitor the process and the progress of our child. The instrument applied was described in Chapter 3 and the process and results obtained in both languages English and Spanish in Chapter 4.

5.3 Recommendations

Consistency is the basis of this communication strategy. That is why we recommend the prior and ongoing communication between parents or persons involved in the process. Quality time, we know that the time we share with our children is sometimes limited, and we want to teach a foreign language so we suggest that the process has to be natural as everyday activities, so we can start introducing vocabulary and the child can get used to the language. This is a natural approach, so we did not have to limit our son's learning to formal education environments. This is an advantage to our children because he can learn anywhere and is also comfortable for him.

5.4 Limitations

First of all, the most obvious limitation was the language and time. In this case the language mostly spoken was Spanish, people on streets, family also TV communicate in Spanish and the interaction in English was reduced to communication between parents-

son, son –parents so if to this factor we add the time we shared with our son, that is not too much time and the progress is affected and continuous reinforcement is necessary.

The second limitation was the lack of cohesion and consistency. Sometimes parents who speak both languages have one in which they feel more comfortable. So in some situations it is easier to use that language. In our case we use Spanish more than English in our daily life. We can use English to tell our son something but use Spanish talking with family or other people.

5.5 Personal reflection

In our personal reflection of this case study we want to express our personal experiences in the realization of the thesis project. First of all, we want to talk about our interest in choosing this topic.

At the beginning of the process we just wanted to collect data but then in stage 2 we realized that the child was really learning both languages. It was amazing, we saw how he recognized the same things in English and Spanish. In that moment we put a special interest in this case study because we were watching the result in that moment and we tried to do our best to teach our child as much as we could.

In terms of writing the thesis, in chapter one we only had to write about what we wanted to find out in this research project. However, in chapter two we collected information in order to carry out the study. It was a little bit difficult because there was not too much information related to the topic. We had some doubts about the language acquisition process because it was a lot of information and many authors had different opinions. In the third chapter we decided what instrument to use in all the process in order to answer the research questions. Then, in chapters four and five we presented the result.

5.6 General conclusion

We know that nowadays it is essential for everybody to know more than one language and it is also known that age is crucial in process of learning a language. That is why we think that introducing a second language from the beginning is a great opportunity for a child in his future life.

As parents, it is a wonderful experience to have the opportunity to educate our child in a second language. Not all people have this chance to do it. It creates more powerful relations with your child. This case study is the perfect example to show that is possible to do no matter what you think; you just need to try it.

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