THE DEVELOPMENT OF METALINGUISTIC AWARENESS AND CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY IN A TRILINGUAL CHILD: A CASE STUDY

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By Gabriel Criollo Chávez

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This thesis has been read by the Thesis Committee of

Gabriel Criollo Chávez

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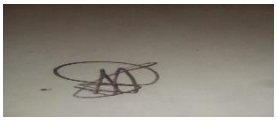
Ph. D. Bárbara Pamela Olmos López
Thesis Director

MA. Georgina Aguilar González
Committee Member



MA. Laura Lima Xalteno
Committee Member

DEDICATIONS

This thesis is dedicated to my marvelous and admirable parents, Aleyda and Roberto, who have been my two role models ever since I was a kid. They have been unconditionally by my side despite adversity, and they have taught me uncountable valuable lessons that I will forever carry with me. I would certainly not be where I am today without their guidance and love.

To my sister, Loan. Despite our age gap, I am constantly learning from her and she is one of the few people with whom I can be myself in all my nuances and talk for hours. I am truly fortunate of being her brother.

To Roy, the most incredible, intelligent, noble and expressive dog I have ever known. He has taught me the importance of responsibility, love and discipline.

They all play a crucial role in my life and I love them with all my heart.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction to the Problem

Bilingualism can be broadly defined as the ability that some individuals have –to different degrees- to speak two or more languages (Baker, 2011; Bullock & Toribio, 2009; Grosjean & Krista Byers-Heinlein, 2018; Myers-Scotton, 2006; Ramírez-Esparza & García-Sierra, 2014). In other words, "bilinguals are those who use two or more languages in their everyday lives" (Grosjean, 2010, p. 4). As can be seen, both definitions include circumstances in which there may be a dominant language, and bilingualism also applies to situations where a person speaks more than two languages. There are different kinds of bilingualism, but one that is of particular interest for this research is bilingual acquisition, defined as the process whereby a three-year-old child (or younger) has acquired full proficiency in at least two languages at about the same time (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2017; Serratrice, 2019). This phenomenon is also known as native bilingualism, early bilingualism (Arnberg, 1987; Kessler, 1984) or bilingual first language acquisition (BFLA, Genessee & Nicoladis, 2017, p. 1). In this case, the child develops more than one linguistic system, typically from birth or within the first three years of life.

Given the fact that the child grows bilingually, the development of metalinguistic awareness, defined as "the ability to deliberately reflect on and manipulate the structural features of spoken language, treating the language system itself as an object of thought, as opposed to using the language system to comprehend and produce sentences" (Tunmer & Cole, 1985, as cited in Dita, 2009, p. 7; De Houwer, 2019) is one of the main features of bilingual development. In other words, since native bilinguals have to cope with the cognitively demanding task of managing two or more linguistic systems, they become

more conscious of the way their languages work, and they develop an understanding of the similarities and differences, as well as a clear distinction between words and their referents.

A second issue concerning early bilingual development is that of identity, which, according to Cipiela (2011, p. 8, as cited in Ylänkö, 2017, p. 9), can be defined as a "multi-faceted phenomenon that is constructed in the presence of others through communication; in other words, language." Thus, bilingual children growing in a social context develop awareness that they belong "to a social category or group" (Hogg & Abrams 1988, as cited in Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225). Given this group of people around them, bilingual children develop a sense of identification as members of this community, and it is also widely acknowledged that language plays a crucial part in the construction of identity (Cipiela, 2011; Fielding, 2011; Gérin-Lajoie, 2005; Llamas & Watt, 2010). In sum, language mediates the personal interactions and the social relations that ultimately shape a person's identity. By the same token, when the community itself is bilingual, children develop a sense of belonging –or not- to two particular communities when there is a clear linguistic connection and a specific social referent.

Several researchers have explored the issue of identity construction in young bilinguals. For example, Gérin-Lajoie's (2005) ethnographic study carried out among adolescent bilingual French speakers in two minority schools in Ontario found that most of them identified themselves explicitly as bilinguals. She concluded that identity construction is a complex process given the language power relations where English is a dominant language: teenagers seek to construct their identity as part of a minority group, sometimes in opposition to the English-speaking majority, sometimes assimilating to it. Similarly, Ylänkö (2017) conducted five thematic semi-structured interviews with two

Finnish-English families living in Finland with the purpose of exploring their linguistic identity, finding that most family members identified themselves as bilinguals.

Besides assuming their dual identity, young native bilinguals have been found to engage in practices that display and reinforce this bilingual identity. For instance, Cashman‘s (2008) ethnographic conversation analysis found that bilingual English-Spanish preadolescents in a US elementary school used impolite language and code-switching in spontaneous conversation as strategies to locally mark their bilingual identity. Finally, another interesting study conducted by Yi (2009) showed that teen Korean-American transnationals living in the US used to engage in multiple online literacy practices that allowed them to use Korean and thus reinforce their bilingual identity instead of giving up their heritage language.

Whereas previous research on identity of native bilinguals shows how the linguistic and social interactions allow them to construct and exercise their identity, most of these studies have been conducted in settings where there is a strong connection between the languages and their linguistic communities. In all cases, participants were members of linguistic minorities holding a double nationality. For this reason, there was the need to either adapt to or rebel against a monolingual identity. However, whatever happens in a situation when a child develops three languages within a socially monolingual community where no socially relevant power relations are apparent is a crucial issue that demands further analysis.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The objective of this research is to provide insights into the metalinguistic awareness and the construction of identity in a trilingual child. By means of a series of thematic narratives developed from thematic semi-structured interviews, a case study was

conducted on an 11-year-old girl who acquired English, French and Spanish from birth in the monolingual context of Puebla City.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the narrative and reflection of this individual case, the following questions were explored:

1) Based on the analysis of relevant theory on bilingualism and family language policies, what is the participant's trilingual profile?
2) According to her results in the Cambridge English Language General Assessment Test and the Test de Connaisance du Français, what is her level of proficiency in English and French?
3) How does the child perceive herself in terms of her language identity and dual nationality? and what social communities does she think she belongs to?
4) What is the preferred language of the child for different kinds of activities such as school, entertainment and family life? What seems to motivate her choices?
5) What social elements seem to help the child to maintain her identity as a trilingual?
6) Based on a translation task on idiomatic expressions, what seems to be her degree of metalinguistic awareness?
7) Based on the transcribed data from the interviews, what is her dominant language and what type of lexical, grammatical, or pragmatic errors does she make?
8) What can be concluded about her metalinguistic awareness and her language identity?
9) What are the implications for similar situations where a child grows bilingually in a socially monolingual context?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Learning a language involves much more than simply acquiring vocabulary and using grammar rules. It is also an act whereby the person assumes a social identity and becomes –partially or fully, consciously or subconsciously- aware of a new culture. To speak the language requires "owning the language," making it part of one's identity. However, such issues of socio-linguistic and intercultural importance are usually neglected in the language classroom. This study sets out then to shade some light on the issues that concern a trilingual child's development of metalinguistic awareness and identity in the hope that they will be of use for language teachers interested in a more holistic teaching and learning experience. The fact that first language acquisition is noticeably more successful than second language learning may be due also to the social and affective factors surrounding the child. These factors can be transposed to the classroom to provide a more meaningful and successful experience.

1.5 Definitions of Terms

The following concepts are essential for understanding the theory that underlies this study. In this section, brief operational definitions will be provided and they will be further discussed in Chapter Two.

Bilingualism can be broadly defined as the ability that some individuals have –to different degrees- to speak two or more languages (Baker, 2011; Bullock & Toribio, 2009; Grosjean & Krista Byers-Heinlein, 2018; Myers-Scotton, 2006).

Bilingual acquisition is the process whereby a three-year-old child (or younger) has acquired full proficiency in at least two languages at about the same time (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams 2017, p. 413; Serratrice, 2019).

Code-Switching: "The alternating use of two or more languages within conversation" (Gumperz, as cited in Auer, 2002, p. i.). Following Muysken, (2000, p. 1), this concept is used "to refer to all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence."

Double Non-Dominant Home Language without Community Support: "In this situation, each parent has a different native language, neither of which is the community language, and each parent speaks their own variety to the child. In this situation, trilingual, rather than bilingual, acquisition occurs. One of the most extensive documentations of this type can be found in Hoffmann (1985), who reports on the acquisition of English (from the community), German (from the mother), and Spanish (from the father) (Piller, 2001, p. 63).

Identity: According to Cipiela (2011, p. 8, as cited in Ylänkö, 2017, p. 9) it is a "multi-faceted phenomenon that is constructed in the presence of others through communication; in other words, language." It is "a personal 'project' pursued reflexively by people as they go through the events and stages of their lives" (Giddens, 1991, as cited in Coupland, 2007, p. 106).

Metalinguistic awareness can be defined as the ability to "reflect on and manipulate the structural features of spoken language" (De Houwer, 2019; Tunmer, Herriman, & Nesdale, 1988, as cited in Wagner, Muse & Tannenbaum, 2007 p. 53).

One Person-One Language (OPOL): "If this strategy is chosen, each parent speaks their native language to the child, and the community language is one of these languages" (Piller, 2001, p. 63).

1.6 Thesis Organization

In this first chapter, the topic was introduced by presenting an introduction to the problem, the relevance and purpose, the research questions and a brief definition of concepts that are relevant for this study. The forthcoming chapter will serve as means to provide a more detailed and extensive look at different concepts and theories pertinent for this research. The third chapter will outline a description of the participant, including her context and background, as well as the instruments utilized and their relevance. It will also discuss the methodological choices made according to the aims of the study. The fourth chapter will discuss the findings and results retrieved. Lastly, Chapter Five will conclude the research by exploring the limitations and implications of the study, along with direction for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents and discusses the main theoretical background related to this research. Since the main concept is bilingualism, this chapter will begin by offering a definition of the concept, as well as the kinds of bilingualism. Afterwards, language acquisition will be explored, including the main theories. Subsequently, family language policies will be revised. Furthermore, issues in native bilingualism will be discussed, as well as the main traits in bilinguals, such as code-switching and metalinguistic awareness. Lastly, identity will be defined, and the chapter will conclude with a summary of previous studies on bilingualism and identity.

2.1 Bilingualism in the World

Bilingualism has been the object of study of linguists and lay people for a long time, as evident in the early bibliography (Bergman, 1975; Hagège, 1996; Leopold, 1939 & 1948; Ronjat, 1913). In fact, learning and using more than one language is very common in many countries in the world (Ramírez-Esparza & García-Sierra, 2014). According to Abdelilah-Bauer (2015, p. 15), « la moitié, au moins, de la population mondiale sont bilingues ou plurilingues. Grandir en parlant plus d'une langue est le quotidien de milliards de personnes à travers le monde. » However, interest in bilingualism has increased because of globalization, which can be defined as an increased movement of people and human products around the world (Knight, 2015, p. 2). A great amount of the population is thus interested in learning other languages in order to adapt or take advantages of the opportunities that internationalization brings, and they become bilingual. On the other hand, this flow of the population also brings as a consequence the emergence of bi- or multi-national families who enforce linguistic policies (Piller, 2001) directed to the preservation of the family languages; that is, children raised within this

families often (though not always) grow bilingually or multilingually. This is the case of the participant in this study, a native trilingual speaking Spanish (the language of the community), English (the language spoken by her father) and French (the language spoken by the mother): In order to understand the process of bilingual development and identity construction, the notion of bilingualism should be defined.

2.1.1. Defining Bilingualism

In very simple terms, bilingualism can be defined as the ability that a person has to speak two languages in different levels (Baker, 2011; Grosjean, 2010; Bullock & Toribio, 2009). According to Grosjean (2010, p. 4) "bilinguals are those who use two or more languages in their everyday lives." Thus, although for some researchers bilingualism includes people speaking three, four, or more languages, for some others multilingualism is quite a different phenomenon. Authors such as De Angelis & Selinker (2001) state:

> "multilingual is a speaker of three or more languages with unique linguistic configurations, often depending on individual history, and as such, the study of third or additional language acquisition cannot be regarded as an extension of second language acquisition or bilingualism. (p. 43)

For the purposes of this study, bilingualism and trilingualism will be considered similar phenomena, although the focus of the research is precisely to determine the elements that matter in identity construction when there are more than two languages involved.

A second issue in the definition of bilingualism concerns the level of proficiency necessary to consider a person bilingual. There are in fact, two different extreme opinions of bilingualism, known as "strong" or "weak" versions (Baker, 2011; Elmiger, 2000; Gleason & Ratner, 1998). In other words, some authors agree that even a person with a limited proficiency in another language is bilingual, while the opposing view considers

bilingualism as the "native-like use of two or more languages" (Bloomfield, 1993, as cited in Baker 2011, p. 19). For the purposes of this study, a bilingual will be just a person who uses more than one language in their daily lives. However, it is important to emphasize that the participant in this study is a balanced trilingual with advanced communicative skills in all three languages.

There are, of course, different kinds of bilingualism which will be discussed below.

2.1.2 Kinds of Bilingualism

The first distinction that it is important to mention in this literature review is that between individual and social bilingualism (Baker, 2001). This means that bilingualism can be an individual or a collective affair, as described below.

2.1.2.1 Individual vs Social Bilingualism

Individual bilingualism refers to a situation in which a person acquires or uses two languages within a monolingual community (Baker 2011, Hamers, Blanc & Blanc 2000). This means that an individual is going to add new languages to his or her linguistic repertoire regardless of the fact that only one language is used in society. One example of this would be people who learn English or French in Mexico. English would be used in this case by these people for individual purposes, but not for communicating in everyday matters. Hamers, et al. (2000, p. 6) refer to individual bilingualism as "bilinguality." On the other hand, social bilingualism refers to the situation when the whole community or social group uses both languages for different social purposes and/or in different contexts, as each language has a particular status (Baker, 2011; Hamers, et al., 2000). One example of this are the different groups of people who need two languages to communicate, such as people who speak indigenous languages in Mexico. They may

interact within their communities in their mother tongue, and in Spanish for school or trade purposes. This also happens very often in contexts of English as a Second Language (ESL) in countries such as India or Pakistan. English is the official language, but people have other native languages that they use in their everyday lives.

2.1.2.1 Additive vs Subtractive Bilingualism

A second important implication of individual and social bilingualism is the fact that sometimes people learn another language in order to increase their communicative potential. This happens normally when an international language such as English or French is learned by Mexicans. Even though these people will become bilingual, they will continue to use their first language, but adding a new language for other uses. This is known as additive bilingualism. There are other situations where the introduction of the second language may replace the first language (Baker, 2011, p. 43). This is called subtractive bilingualism and it happens in situations where the first language does not have the same status as the new language or in some way people may be stigmatized for using it (Wright, Taylor, & Macarthur, 2000). For example, children who speak Nahuatl or other native languages in Mexico may learn Spanish in school. Later, they realize that they may be discriminated against for using an indigenous language or that they do not need it for school or society in general. This will lead them to stop using their mother tongue and eventually become monolingual again. This same situation of subtractive bilingualism may happen to Mexicans who immigrate to the US: at some point, they stop using Spanish: “most children become English dominant or English monolingual when they start their school years (Fillmore, 2000, as cited in Ramírez-Esparza & García-Sierra, 2014, p. 38).

Another important dimension of bilingualism concerns the level of proficiency that bilingual people may attain and that will influence the way in which they use both languages. This distinction is presented and discussed below.

1.2.3 Subordinate, Coordinate and Compound Bilingualism

The level of proficiency that the bilingual possesses in both languages may lead to three different kinds of bilingualism: subordinate, coordinate or compound bilingualism (Baker, 2011; Diller, 2015). First of all, subordinate bilingualism occurs when the person has a very basic knowledge of a second language. For that reason, the person cannot express him or herself confidently and fluently and will constantly need to use his/her first language in order to solve problems or try to transfer information to the second language. Coordinate bilingualism occurs in situations where the bilinguals may possess an efficient level of proficiency to communicate in both languages, but they will use each language for different purposes because they "learned two languages in different contexts" (Diller, 2015, p. 254) for example, everyday life and school matters. An example of this are advanced English learners or teachers in the LEI. Although they may have high levels of proficiency, they will use English only for an academic or professional context, whereas Spanish will be limited to everyday social interaction.

Finally, compound bilingualism will refer to situations in which a person possesses high levels of proficiency in both languages and may use them in the same contexts: that is, using Spanish and English for both every day and professional matters. This kind of bilingualism is very rare because it involves situations in which both languages are necessary in and outside home. Some people refer to this as "pure" or "full" bilingualism. However, as Bullock & Toribio (2009) state: "monolingual-like control of two languages over all aspects of linguistic knowledge and use within all domains is rare,

if possible at all." As a matter of fact, languages may have different functions, may be used with different interlocutors in different context and therefore may not be used to the same extent.

1.2.4 Passive vs Active Bilingualism

Finally, the level of proficiency displayed in the different language skills and the context of use may lead to two different kinds of bilingualism: passive or active. The former refers to situations in which people may be able to understand both languages but speak only one. In other words, "some listen with understanding and read a language (passive bilingualism) but do not speak or write that language. Some understand a spoken language but do not themselves speak that language" (Baker, 2011, p. 5). On the other hand, some bilinguals actively engage in productive skills such as speaking, interacting and writing. Active and passive bilingualism is then very common in children in bilingual families (Abdelilah-Bauer, 2006). Sometimes they will develop just one language although they may possess receptive skills in both (Lion, 1996; Yamamoto, 2001, as cited in de Hower, 2007). Yet some others will use both languages on a regular basis, and will therefore be active bilinguals. This distinction is important for this research, as the subject of this study is a child in a trilingual household and is an active speaker of Spanish, English and French.

1.2.5 Simultaneous vs Consecutive or Sequential Bilingualism

Bilingual skills can be developed simultaneously or at consecutive moments. First of all, according to Baker (2011, p. 94), "simultaneous childhood bilingualism refers to a child acquiring two languages simultaneously from birth." In this case, parents normally raise the child using both languages and providing reliable and consistent sources of input an interaction. In contrast, sequential or consecutive bilinguals are those children who,

having acquired a first language, are subsequently exposed or immersed in a second language so that they become bilingual (Baker, 2011, p. 94). This usually happens in the context of school, as "nursery and kindergarten education can enable a child to acquire a second language without formal instruction" (Baker & Jones, 1998; Thompson, 2000; as cited in Baker, 2011, p. 94). The subject of this study is then native trilingual; that is, a child who acquired three languages simultaneously from birth.

2.2 Early and Native Bilingualism

As stated in the previous section, native bilingualism, early bilingualism (Arnberg, 1987; Kessler, 1984) or bilingual first language acquisition (BFLA, Genessee & Nicoladis, 2017, p. 1) has been researched extensively. According to Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams (2017, p. 413), Bilingual acquisition is the process whereby a three-year-old child (or younger) has acquired full proficiency in at least two languages at about the same time. In other words, to be a native bilingual it is necessary to have developed communicative competence during the first three years of life: "some bilinguals learn two languages simultaneously from birth" (Genesee, Paradis, & Grago, 2004, as cited in Ramírez-Esparza & García-Sierra, 2014). This is a very important definition for this research, since the participant acquired three languages from birth. The main difference between native bilingualism and other kinds of bilingualism is that the languages are acquired –not learned. The difference between acquisition and learning has been discussed extensively in the literature and is dealt below.

2.2.1 L1 Acquisition

The process of first language acquisition has been a subject of great interest for linguistics, especially for developmental psycholinguistics. This is due to its complex and effective

nature, since a normal child develops linguistic competence with a speed, accuracy, and regularity that astonishes both linguists and ordinary people (Clark, 2009; Brown, 2000; Foster-Cohen, 2001; Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2017). Generally, by four years of age, a child already possesses a fairly complex linguistic system that can be compared, except for some limitations, to the language of an adult (Berko Gleason & Bernstein Ratner, 1998; Clark, 2009; Brown, 2000; Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 20017). By age 6, a child already possesses a vocabulary of approximately 30,000 words, an amount that will only double by the end of college, approximately 18 years later (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams 2017). Several hypotheses have been advanced to account for how a child achieves such a feat in such a short time and despite a great number of constraints. The following section will present the main theories related to first language (L1) acquisition.

2.2.2 L1 Acquisition Theories

Even though there may be a larger number of theories and hypotheses with different names, these can be summarized in "(a) the nativist, generativist, Universal Grammar (UG) approach and (b) the constructivist, emergentist, socio-pragmatic, functionalist, usage-based approach" (Ambridge & Lieven, 2011, p. 1: Clark, 2009). These two views present opposite or differing positions about the most important aspects involved in how languages can be acquired. The first issue concerns whether language is a biological feature that is already imprinted in the brain, or if language needs to be learned and developed by means of interaction (Clark, 2009). This is often referred to as the "nature or nurture" conundrum. It is obvious that language cannot happen without the interplay of biological and social factors.

Another issue that experts try to determine is that whether the process of acquisition is exactly the same for all children "considering that languages differ in their

complexity and some items and structures may be easier or more difficult in different languages (Clark, 2009). Although most researchers find it quite convenient to describe language acquisition in terms of discrete stages of development, there is also evidence of overlap between different stages (DeBoysson-Bardies & Vihman, 1991; Ingram, 1989). Each theory will then differ in its views on the continuity or discontinuity of the acquisition process.

Another important point of controversy relates to the object of acquisition itself. In other words, while some theorists think that children acquire the grammatical structures of language, others consider that the process of language acquisition consists of the appropriation and use of communicative functions (Bruner, 1985; Berko Gleason, Hay, & Cain, 1989; Farrar, 1990; Snow, 1981). In this sense, although a clear distinction can be seen between formalist and functionalist views (Givón, 1979 and 1995; Newmeyer 1998), the field is relatively broader as different studies focus on the acquisition of the various linguistic components such as phonology, lexicon, morphology, syntax, and social uses of language.

Closely related to the question of what is acquired in the process of language acquisition is the mental representation of language. The general notion adopted from the generativist paradigm is that children acquire grammatical rules. However, the connectionist model (Jonson-Laird, 1988; McClelland, Rumelhart, & PDP Group, McClelland & Seidenberg, 1989; 1986; Potter, 1990) attempts to explain language comprehension and production from neural networks that lead to a set of associations with past experiences. In this sense, rather than rules, we have processing units, responsible for carrying out the computational operations that will lead the individual to process and produce language (Bohannon & Bonvillian, 1997). An important task for

each of the theories of language acquisition is to describe, in their own terms, how we humans mentally represent language.

Of even greater interest to psycholinguists is the question concerning the autonomy or interaction of the language faculty with respect to other cognitive processes or tasks (Berko Gleason & Bernstein Ratner, 1998; Obler & Fein, 1988). The view adopted will reflect adherence to an innatist or interactionist theory. If it is believed that language is genetically programmed in the individual, then one will tend to believe that this faculty is independent. Conversely, if one believes that language acquisition is dependent on other cognitive or social factors, then one will take the opposite position. A very interesting study that reports certain dissociation between general intelligence and language ability is that conducted by Yamada (1990). His subject, Laura, at age 16 and with an IQ of only 41 points, demonstrated quite advanced linguistic ability, with large vocabulary and sentences of high complexity. Her advanced language, contrasting with her low level of intelligence, suggests that language ability develops independently and separately. Therefore, theories of language acquisition must adopt a view of the modularity (independence) or dependence of language and provide a convincing explanation to support such a view.

In contrast to linguistic and cognitivist theories, which address the behavioral and cognitive dimensions of language respectively, the social-interactionist theory is interested in the social aspect of language acquisition (Bruner, 1985; Berko Gleason, Hay, & Cain, 1989; Farrar, 1990; Snow, 1981). Its main tenet is the existence of a particular kind of language used by adults to interact with children, which plays a central role in language acquisition and is called Child-Directed Speech (CDS).

2.2.3 Child-Directed Speech

The central point in the social-interactionist theory is that infants hear a special type of language, called baby talk (BT) or –in more academic and politically correct terms- child-directed speech (CDS) (Brown, 1973; Snow, 1972; Snow & Ferguson, 1977; Pine, 1994; Richards, 1994; Snow, 1994). This type of language used mainly by mothers (although it is now known that other types of caregivers, women and men, also use CDS) when addressing the infant involves a type of clear and exaggerated pronunciation, simple and concrete vocabulary, as well as a set of syntactic features that, from an interactionist perspective, allow the infant to extract and analyze information that is crucial for language acquisition (Bernstein Ratner, 1986 & 1987; Fernald, 1985; Kemler-Nelson, Hirsh-Pasek, Jusczyk, & Wright-Cassidy, 1989). In other words, language acquisition occurs because babies have access to a particular kind of language samples that allow them to construct their communicative competence.

The existence of a special register used with infants in the acquisition stage has been studied with interest, especially in the sense of its universality. That is, whether it exists in all societies (Bernstein Ratner & Pye, 1984; Gleitman, Gleitman, Landau, & Wanner, 1998). According to Berko-Gleason & Bernstein Ratner (1998), CDS exists in one form or another in all societies, although does not have the same characteristics. In other words, it is culturally determined. An example given by Bernstein Ratner & Pye (1984) is that although a high (high-pitched) tone of voice is more attractive to babies and very common in the CDS of most societies, the register used for babies among the Quiché Maya is fundamentally low (grave), while the high pitch is used to address people of higher social rank. However, the existence of a specific way of addressing young children suggests, from a social-interactionist point of view, that it is through CDS that children can face the difficult task of learning a linguistic system with ease and efficiency (Fernald

& Khul, 1987): BT provides them with a quite adequate and attractive database to advance the acquisition process in a systematic, graded, and safe way. For this reason, Bruner (1985) proposes the term Language Acquisition Support System (LASS) as a better alternative to Chomsky's LAD.

At this point it is important to mention that social interactionists (Bruner, 1985; Berko Gleason, Hay, & Cain, 1989; Farrar, 1990; Snow, 1981) do not deny the existence of certain genetically predetermined neuropsychological attributes, but they do claim that such biological factors are insufficient to ensure language development. Consequently, the existence of a critical period for language acquisition is rejected (i.e., Snow, 1987), although it is recognized that aspects such as a native accent will be more difficult for an adult learner to acquire. Another crucial point of this theory is that language is not considered just another aspect of cognitive development, but rather a facet of communicative behavior developed in interaction with other human beings. In other words, in order to develop language, the infant requires interaction, not mere exposure to the language. What is undeniable is that newborns benefit from a particular kind of language that contains the elements to make language acquisition easier and more effective.

However, when it comes to bilingual children it is obvious that language acquisition will become infinitely more complex because languages are acquired in parallel and therefore, the process may be influenced and affected by linguistic and social factors. In fact, child bilingual acquisition depends on how this bilingualism is planned and executed by the family by means of any of the linguistic family policies described below.

2.3 Linguistic Family Policies

This section discusses parental decisions or "family linguistic planning" (Piller, 2001, p. 61) directed at raising bilingual children. Given the prestige that bilingualism has gained in modern times, families invest significant effort, time, and money to establish their own language policies. Family language policies can be defined as "explicit and overt as well as implicit and covert language planning by family members in relation to language choice and literacy practices within home domains and among family members" (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; King, Fogle, & Logan-Terry, 2008; Spolsky, 2012; cited in Curdt-Christiansen, 2018, p. 420). In simple terms, the concept refers to what parents do so that their children can grow bilingually. Parents carefully decide what languages they want their children to learn, often acquire from an early age.

There are different kinds of policies or strategies depending on the family languages, the context, and the expected outcomes. If the parent's languages are taken into account, six types of family language policies can be distinguished (Piller, 2001): One person-one language, one language-one environment, non-dominant home language without community support, double non-dominant home language without community support, nonnative parents, and mixed languages.

Table 1: Types of Family Language Policies (From Piller, 2001, p. 64)

	Parental languages	Community languages	Strategy
Type 1	Different L1s	The L1 of one parent	Each parent speaks their language to the child.
Type 2	Different L1s	The L1 of one parent	Both parents speak the non-dominant language to the child, who is exposed to the dominant language outside the home, especially in daycare and preschool.

Type 3	Same L1	The L1 of neither parent	Both parents speak the non-dominant language to the child, who is exposed to the dominant language outside the home, especially in daycare and preschool.
Type 4	Different L1s	The L1 of neither parent	Each parent speaks their language to the child who is exposed to the dominant language outside the home, especially in daycare and preschool.
Type 5	Same L1	The L1 of both parents	One parent speaks their L2 to the child.
Type 6	Bilingual (either)	May or not be bilingual	The parents code-switch and mix languages with the child.

As the table shows, there are different strategies that parents can use to raise their children bilingually depending on the languages that they speak and the language of the community outside. The most common strategy and the one considered most effective is Type 1, termed "One Person-One Language" (OPOL) and it is extensively used by binational couples (Piller, 2001). In contrast, the least popular policy is Type 6, which involves code-switching and language mixing. This is because it is considered more complex and probably less effective than the others. In the case of the participant in this study, it seems like different kinds of policies where implemented, since each parent spoke a different language to the child: the father spoke to her in English, while her mother spoke to her in French (Type 1). In this way, the child acquired the dominant language (Spanish) from the community, at daycare and school (Type 4). However, English was not the father's native language. For that reason, the result was not bilingualism, but trilingualism.

A final word concerning family language policies concerns the outcome or success. Different authors (De Houwer, 1990; Lanza, 2004; Okita, 2002; Piller, 2001 &

2002, cited in Curdt-Christiansen, 2018) report different results with different strategies. The most important conclusion is that regardless of the parents' involvement and the strategy used, the final result is not as expected. Even though parents aim at a balanced bilingualism for their children, sometimes monolingualism ensues in the medium or long term. It is children who finally decide whether they keep or abandon the languages the parents have chosen for them, and code-switching and identity play a central role in the development of this bilingual identity. Both issues are discussed below. Finally, the importance of family language policies for this study is best summarized by Curdt-Christiansen (2018) as follows:

2.2.6. Issues in Native Bilingualism

There are several issues and controversies related to native bilingualism. Most of them are the product of general beliefs or prejudice concerning particular groups of people such as illegal immigrants, some others to the complexity of the process of developing two or more linguistic systems at the same time. These issues are discussed below.

> Bridging the gaps between studies of child language acquisition and the field of language policy research, the study of FLP thus seeks to understand, inter alia: why (and how) members of some transnational families maintain their language while members of other families lose theirs; in what ways some children, growing up in a largely monolingual society, become bilingual while other children, growing up in a bilingual environment, become monolingual. (p. 421)

In conclusion, a family language policy intended to raise bilingual children is a long and winding road that does not always end in bilingualism. Children's bilingual development faces many challenges and obstacles, which are discussed below.

2.2.6.1 Language Delay and Learning Problems

Language delay refers to the fact that bilingual children's language production may seem to lag behind in comparison to that of monolingual children. More specifically, they may produce their first words slightly later, or show low vocabulary scores during the preschool years (Baker, 2011; Snow, 1998). Bialystok, for example, (2009, p. 2) argues that: "le vocabulaire des enfants bilingues a tendance à être moins développé dans chaque langue que celui des enfants monolingues dans leur langue." However, this is true only when vocabulary items in a single language are counted, since the global vocabulary of the bilingual child includes words in two languages. In addition, most of the studies that found evidence of language delay in bilingual children were conducted before 1960 and more recent studies found evidence contrary to this hypothesis. Finally, concerning the early years of instruction and the development of literacy, it has been found that « l'acquisition d'habiletés d'alphabétisation chez ces enfants dépend de la relation entre les deux langues et du niveau de maîtrise de la langue seconde. Ce sont surtout les enfants qui apprennent à lire dans les deux langues qui partagent un même système écrit (p. ex., l'anglais et le français) qui font les progrès les plus rapides en apprentissage de la lecture. » (Bialystock, 1999, p. 2) Thus, it is not that bilinguals have inherent cognitive problems, but that the learning task is more challenging for them as they are learning two distinctive and separate linguistic systems at the same time.

A similar argument against native bilingualism argues that children who acquire two languages simultaneously may exhibit low achievement in school (Baker 2001; Landry, 1968; McNamara, 1967). For example, children may feel confused or insecure, resulting in failure. In fact, research has shown that children in bilingual programs will tend to have high dropout rates when they enter culturally dominant institutions (Amselle, 1996; Gonzalez, 1981), which calls into question the effectiveness of bilingual

instruction. This means that the failure rate in bilingual children may be due more to socio-economic factors than to factors related to the children's school performance.

However, some researchers believe that bilingual children have advantages over monolingual children (Baker, 2001 and 2011; Cummins, 1976; Garcia, 1990; Hakuta, 1984, 1985, and 1990; Kloosterman & Diaz, 1995; Saunders, 1982). Among these we can mention abstract thinking, immediate translation, metalinguistic ability, and nonverbal thinking. For example, Bialystok argues that « les enfants bilingues de quatre à huit ans manifestent un grand avantage en matière de résolution de problèmes qui demandent de contrôler l'attention envers les aspects spécifiques d'une manifestation et d'inhiber l'attention envers les aspects trompeurs qui sont fondamentaux, mais associés à une réponse incorrecte » (p. 3). Similarly, other studies argue that early bilingualism may have a positive effect on subsequent third language learning (Doyle et al., 1977). That is, people who developed two languages in childhood are likely to be successful if they wish to study a language in adulthood. Finally, researchers who view native bilingualism as positive also criticize bilingual education policies very strongly (Campoverde 1985; Charter, 1991; Gonzales 1993; Hakuta, 1990). For example, Hakuta (1990) argues that the main problem with transitional bilingual education in the United States is that it has a minimalist view of bilingualism, where only the first language is used as a tool for English acquisition. Gonzales (1993), for his part, conducted a survey of 22 beginning bilingual education teachers who graduated from Texas bilingual education programs and found that approximately one-third to one-half of his subjects had not had a Spanish-speaking university professor, had not taken a Spanish education course, did not understand the nature of bilingualism, and did not know how to assess students' proficiency in Spanish and English. From these perspectives, the attrition rate and low achievement in bilingual

programs may not be due to any natural disadvantage of bilingual students, but to the way bilingual education programs are conceived and administered.

2.2.6.2. Dominant Language and Language Attrition

These two concepts are closely related to native bilinguals. First, it has been found that language loss through disuse can occur in the early stages of development of bilingual children (Snow, 1998; Kamada, 1997). Similarly, language dominance refers to the fact that bilingual children are unlikely to be equally good in all aspects of both languages (Grosjean, 1982). As can be seen, both terms are relative to subordinated bilingualism (Baker, 2011; D'Acierno, 1991; Moreno, 1998) or unbalanced bilingualism. In other words, even native bilinguals have one strong and one weak language, and some researchers believe that the latter will tend to be lost over time. In an interesting study, Kamada (1997) found that the mother's language tends to dominate and is more likely to be retained by bilingual children. This finding may not be generalizable to all cases because of differences in the concept of family in different cultures. The most defining elements or markers for language maintenance are code-switching and identity, which will be discussed in a separate section below.

2.2.6.3 Code-Switching, Code-Mixing, Translanguaging

First of all, it is important to state that switching languages is a defining trait of bilingual proficiency. Bullock & Toribio (2009) define code-switching as "the ability on the part of bilinguals to alternate effortlessly between their two languages" (p. 1). This alternation may happen when the context or the interlocutor changes, but also within the same conversation when the interlocutors are also bilingual. In this regard, it can also be defined as "the alternating use of two or more languages within conversation" (Gumperz, as cited

in Auer, 2002, p. i.). Bilinguals can thus use the resources of the languages they master to signal important elements in their conversation by using one or the other language as they wish. In any case, code-switching can be used to name "all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence" (Muysken, 2000, p. 1). The complexity of code-switching is summarized by Bullock & Toribio (2009) as follows:

> First, its linguistic manifestation may extend from the insertion of single words to the alternation of languages for larger segments of discourse. Second, it is produced by bilinguals of differing degrees of proficiency who reside in various types of language contact settings, and as a consequence their CS patterns may not be uniform. Finally, it may be deployed for a number of reasons: filling linguistic gaps, expressing ethnic identity, and achieving particular discursive aims, among others. (p. 2)

Even though linguists today recognize the sociolinguistic nature of code-switching as a marker of identity and a discourse strategy, in the past it was considered as an evidence of lack of proficiency and even mental confusion (Werker & Byers-Heinlein, 2008, as cited in Ramírez-Esparza & García-Sierra, 2014, p.38). Recent studies show that, instead, switching from one language to another is "(part of a) verbal action; as such, code-switching has and creates communicative and social meaning" (Auer, 2002, p. 1; Franceschini, 2002). Bilinguals make effective and intentional use of the languages they master to effectively communicate and mark their identity. This means thus that "code-switching is related to and indicative of group membership in particular types of bilingual speech communities (Auer, 2002, p. 1). This means that being a bilingual and keeping and using both languages implies that the person uses them productively and sees

themselves as belonging to the communities that these languages belong to. Code-switching is thus closely related to bilingual identity.

In fact, this intentional language shift can be used for learning purposes, in which case it is called translanguaging, defined as "an encompassing term for a variety of multilingual practices, traditionally termed as code-switching, code-mixing, borrowing and crossing, which are commonplace amongst multilingual language users" (Wei, 2015, p. 177). In schools and places with multilingual communities (i.e. Jaramillo, Ospina & Reinoso, 2016), the act of translanguaging is expected to create a social space for multilingual speakers "by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitudes, beliefs and performance" (Wei, 2011, p. 1223). In other words, not only is code-switching or translanguaging natural, but it is also beneficial linguistically, cognitively, and socially: "translanguaging is not simply the mixing of linguistic forms from diverse language sources. It also involves a variety of identity articulations and negotiations within newly created social spaces (Wei & Hua, 2013, p. 29).

In sum, the functions of code-switching and translanguaging can be summarized as follows:

> multilingual speakers seem to manipulate their linguistic codes in order to establish multilingual/multicultural identities among themselves (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2007), carry out cognitively demanding tasks (Reyes, 2004), or convey the meaning of the intended idea more accurately (Zentella, 1997). Code-switching also has an interpersonal, social function; multilingual speakers consistently monitor and attempt to accommodate to the interlocutors' language use." (Park, 2013, p. 50).

As a conclusion, it is crucial to remember that shifting languages is the most important element of bilingual proficiency and identity. It is by using both languages that bilinguals demonstrate their proficiency, and that they express their identity as members of two linguistic communities.

2.2.6.5 Metalinguistic Awareness

Metalinguistic awareness refers to the ability to reflect on language knowledge and use (Snow, 1998; Tunmer, Herriman, and Nesdale, 1988, as cited in Naggy, 2007, p. 52). One of the most mind-boggling features of bilingual children performance is that « leur compréhension de la structure linguistique, appelée conscience métalinguistique, est au moins aussi bonne et souvent meilleure que celle de monolingues comparables » (Bialystok, 2009, p. 2) For example, many studies on native bilingualism have found that children can identify their two languages, know when, where, and with whom to use each, and are "expert" translators (Genesee, Boivin, & Nicoladis, 1996; Hakuta, 1990; Hakuta & Diaz, 1985; Kessler, 1984; Reynolds, 1990). In general, bilingual children seem to benefit of a "« souplesse mentale, une mobilité conceptuelle et une capacité à résoudre des problèmes plus importantes que chez les enfants monolingues » (Kihlstedt, 2005, p. 2). The fact that they develop two languages simultaneously helps them not to depend as much on the referent of a word as monolingual children do. In other words, they know earlier that the word and the object to which it refers are not the same. Bilinguals are very skillful at manipulating the languages they possess and when translating, they focus more on meaning and use than on the form of the utterances.

The last section of this literature review concerns the central topic under investigation, the notion of identity.

4. Bilingualism and Identity

As stated in the introduction, identity is a crucial concept in native bilingualism because it is interesting to explore how a child raised in two languages –three languages in the case of the participant in this study- constructs its self and social image.

2.4.1 Defining Identity

Identity can be broadly understood as the self-image that people have of themselves as individuals but also as members of a social group. Cipiela (2011, p. 8, as cited in Ylänkö, 2017, p. 9) defines it as a "multi-faceted phenomenon that is constructed in the presence of others through communication; in other words, language." Identity is a multidimensional, complex construct that is best summarized by Brubaker (2004, as cited in Choi, 2008, p. 178) in five main points that are explored by experts:

1. Self-understandings
2. "Sameness" among members of a group
3. Core and fundamental aspects of selfhood
4. "Groupness" which develops iteratively
5. A fluid, multiple, and co-constructed selfhood.

This concept of identity is deeply rooted in the development of a bilingual person, since "many simultaneous bilinguals learn two languages while also learning about the cultures associated with the languages. These two cultures may be internalized as part of their identity" (Ramírez-Esparza & García-Sierra, 2014, p. 36). In other words, bilingual acquisition is not just a process of developing two linguistic systems, but also a construction of two cultures, of a bilingual identity. As obvious from previous studies, most studies on bilingualism and identity have focused on people living in contexts where the languages carry an important social function. For example, Duff (2015) argues that:

> "The field [of applied linguistics] is, furthermore, increasingly concerned with identity construction and expression through particular language and literacy practices across the life span, at home, in diaspora settings, in short-term and long-term sojourns abroad for study or work, and in other contexts and circumstances." (p. 57)

Thus, researchers have paid close attention to how immigrants and their bilingual children who develop and adapt to bilingual and multilingual situations in which at least two different linguistic communities interact. Even if at the beginning researchers were mainly interested in adults who crossed borders and settled in different linguistic communities, the focus of recent studies has shifted to the transnationalism of children and teenagers, and "on virtual and psychological connectedness (and not just physical mobility and interactions); and on multigenerational experiences affecting languages, individuals, and communities in transnational spaces" (Duff, 2015, p. 57). That is why the way bilingual or multilingual children and communities develop their identities is now in the spotlight of researchers.

The traditional idea of identity and speech communities as fixed, unidimensional, unchanging entities has now given way to a more dynamic view where "identity creation, stance-taking, and other forms of speaker agency are now at the heart of societal contact studies" (Darquennes, Salmons & Vandenbussche, 2019, p. 7). In other words, multilingual communities in transnational spaces are constantly evolving, and the use of the language that they make varies because identity is constructed, adjusted, and re-constructed in the day-to-day social and linguistic interactions. "The role of languages-in-contact as a key factor of social identity has been overtly embraced by adjacent disciplines, including the speaker's autonomous capacity to reposition and redefine this very identity through linguistic variation" (Dasrquennes et al., 2019, p. 9). In sum, it is

now recognized it is language and the use of languages that provides speakers with both an individual and a social identity as members of a community (Dasrquennes et al., 2019, p. 112). Thus, language is not merely a tool for communicating and interacting with others, but it also shapes and re-shapes people's identities. This relation between language and identity is further explored below.

2.4.2 Language and Identity Construction

As discussed above, language is a crucial component in the construction of identity (Duff, 2015, p. 60). Speakers use language to express their ideas, but at the same time they define who they are and how they perceive themselves in the face of others. Fasold (1984, as cited in Prakash & Kumar, 2021, p. 14) believes that "language is used to make a statement about the identity of the speaker in relation to the listener in a social situation created and defined by language itself." In the case of bilinguals, it is evident that this identity construction is a complex process given that they have to navigate between two languages and two cultures or societies. Thus, they may at some point feel more identified with one language, which will eventually lead them to neglect or stop using the other; or feel active and representative members of both linguistic groups that their languages represent. "Relative ability to speak two languages can be related to the degree that bilinguals perceive their mainstream and ethnic cultural identities as compatible and integrated vs. oppositional and difficult to integrate" (Ramírez-Esparza & García-Sierra, 2014, p.37). The more identified they feel as members of both cultures, the more bilinguals will tend to use both languages so that this language switching makes them express their bilingual identity (Bucholtz & Hall 2004a, 2004b, 2005, as cited in Cashman, 2008, p. 129). In the case of the native trilingual child participating in this

study, it is interesting to explore how this trilingual identity is constructed in her day-to-day interactions.

The role of language is thus crucial in identity construction. As Prakash & Kumar, 2021, p. 13) state, "language happens to be one of the strongest markers of identity." Its influence can be seen in all social and cultural dimensions that an individual participates in. Preece (2016; as cited in Rao Mentha, 2023, p. 2) argues that "if identity is a social marker, language is its most defining feature in that it is the most significant way in which that identity is communicated." It is by using the language, selecting which one to use to express different meanings in different contexts and with different interlocutors that bilinguals construct their linguistic identity in front of others. "Linguistic behavior [is] a series of acts of identity in which people reveal both their personal identity and their search for social roles" (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985; as cited in Coupland, 2007, p. 108). This means that in every interaction, bilinguals are going to position themselves and dynamically construct their identity in the choices they make to express different ideas and communicative functions. In other words, "identity is co-constructed through linguistic interactions (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Reyes & Vallone, 2007; García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017). Finally, bilingual's construction of identity is best summarized by Alfonzetti (2002):

> Code-switching —far from being caused by an insufficient competence in one of the two languages, and besides expressing a double cultural identity—works as a communicative strategy used for a variety of purposes, related either to the negotiation of the language of interaction or to the organization of conversational activities. (p. 207)

As a conclusion, language and identity are inextricably linked, and active bilingualism is a way in which individuals assume this double culture and identity, by

actively owning their languages and assuming the choices they negotiate in interaction. Most previous research on bilingualism and identity has been carried out in situations of bilingualism that involve first or second-generation migrants living in a community where one of their languages is extensively used as an official or native language. In contrast, the present study focuses on a trilingual child constructing a trilingual identity in a context where only one of her languages is used and where there are no distinctive social groups to which the other two languages are associated. A summary of the main previous research is presented below.

2.4.4. Studies on Bilingualism and Identity

An important number of studies have focused on how bilinguals construct and express their bilingual identity (Cashman, 2008; Fielding, 2011; Greer, 2007; Martínez-Roldán, 2003; Pichler, 2006; Velásquez, 2010; Ylänkö, 2017; Zhang, 2013). All of them are qualitative in design, and most of them utilized semi-structured interviews, while three of them used a combination of interviews and discourse or conversation analysis (Cashman, 2008; Greer, 2007; Pichler, 2006). These three methodologies, along with ethnographic, naturalistic observation, narrative inquiry and critical discourse analysis seem to be best suited to approach the topic. The purpose, methodology, results, and conclusions of previous research are summarized below.

First of all, Martínez-Roldán (2003) carried out a case-study narrative inquiry to analyze the topics and purposes of bilingual literature discussions. Her participant, Isabela, was a 7-year-old girl born in Mexico studying 2nd grade in the USA. Longitudinal data was collected over a year from 15 discussions in the literature class and interviews with her parents. The analysis showed that the representation and interactional roles in the narratives created Isabela's two distinctive identities: one as an English-speaker

possessing a good mastery of writing skills, and the other as a Mexican girl with a good command of the Spanish language and with a strong identification with Mexican culture and traditions. Thus, her use of Spanish and the topics in her narratives were used as markers of her bilingual identity. A similar study was conducted by Fielding, (2011) with French-English bilingual children in Australia. By means of narratives and semi-structured interviews, data was collected over six months from two students to analyze their self-concept and their bilingual experiences. The elements in the narratives and the use of the languages provide evidence to conclude that both of them experience a strong connection with English and French and identify with both languages and cultures. Finally, results obtained by Zhang (2013) while working with Chinese children in a Mandarin-English program, also showed a strong connection between the languages and the cultures, as children displayed a clear bi-lingual and bi-cultural identity.

Some authors have focused on how bilingual identity is constructed in interaction. For example, Pichler (2006) analyzed a corpus of 80-minutes of spontaneous talks and found out the way 5 teenaged Bangladeshi girls in a school in London used bilingual teasing for multiple functions, one of them being to negotiate or re-negotiate class and culture-related identities. Similar results were obtained by Cashman (2008) in a 25-hour recorded sample of spontaneous interaction collected from a group of 22 students in an English-Spanish bilingual elementary school. 2nd grade students used impolite, code-switched language to manage local identities or social membership in the group. In other words, language was used to mark and negotiate their identity or their attitudes to someone else's identity. In another study using the same methodology, Greer (2007) found that multi-ethnic Japanese teenagers make use of forward or backward-oriented repair in spontaneous conversation to signal a translation or express deference towards

their interlocutors. All of these studies show that identity is also constructed and managed locally in interaction by means of code-switching or particular conversational strategies.

Lastly, semi-structured, thematic interviews have been used to explore self-perception and the different dimensions of identity that may be expressed in language alternation (Velásquez, 2010; Ylänkö, 2017). Using data from interviews to Latino high school students, Velásquez (2010) found that language alternation was used by participants to re-create their academic experiences and express their bilingual identity. Ylänkö (2017), on the other hand, explored the identities of two Finnish-English bilingual families. The analysis of the data collected by Skype or phone showed that even though the children identified more strongly with Finnish, they also displayed a bilingual, bi-cultural identity. Thus, it is apparent that where bilingual practices prevail, there is also a strong connection to the cultures and identities of both languages expressed by means of language.

2.5 Relevance and usefulness of the theory

The theory outlined in this chapter will be useful to analyze and understand the results of the present research. Firstly, it was of great importance to explore previous studies on bilingualism, not only to identify which type of research and data analysis fits best for this study, but also serve as a background for it, by identifying similarities and differences in results shared within this topic. Secondly, the concept of bilingualism, the theories within it, as well as the different kinds of bilingualism explored will serve to define the participant's trilingual profile with greater precision and accuracy once the instruments are applied. Similarly, exploring the family language policies will be important to identify more precisely the type or types of family language policies involved in the participant's environment that enabled her trilingualism. Furthermore, the analysis

of issues in native bilingualism will be relevant to identify if the participant experiences any of the aforementioned issues. Subsequently, as it was previously explored, language plays a significant role in identity construction, hence the importance to explore this subject thoroughly to further understand the insights that the participant shared related to her languages, as well as some of the main discourse strategies used by bilinguals.

The next chapter provides a description of the methodology selected to collect, analyze and interpret the data.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This research had the purpose of determining the self-perception of language competency and the construction of identity in a trilingual child. As such, the usage of several instruments was necessary to make sure there was enough data to analyze and furthermore, provide an answer to the research questions. The instruments used during this research included a face-to-face interview, a measurement language scale, a questionnaire, two sample computer tests and a translation of expressions in order to explore the participant's perceptions, measure her linguistic competence and language usage and skills, as well as the link between all her three languages.

This chapter aims specifically to present a description of the participant in the study, her context and background; the instruments used to retrieve information and the role of each instrument in providing different kinds of data, and finally, the procedures utilized to analyze the information.

3.2 Participant and Setting

The main and sole participant for this research was a child living in Mexico of age 11 at the time of the study. Despite living her daily life in a socially monolingual context, she is a simultaneous trilingual who has been using English, Spanish and French to communicate with her family since a very early age but has never lived in an English or French speaking country. Her father is an English college professor from Mexico, and her mother is a French teacher with French nationality who has been living in Mexico for the past 22 years. As such, the participant holds a double nationality (Mexican and French), and uses English to communicate with her father and French to communicate with her mother. The participant also has an older brother with whom she also uses English. As it

is worth noticing, the family communication is composed of two different languages, none of which is used in her academic or social life. Although the participant is proficient in three languages, conversation flows as normal as a conversation in a single language, as all members are familiar with all three languages and use them on an everyday basis.

Most of the participant's day-to-day routines involve contexts where she uses Spanish as the main means of communication. As previously mentioned, her academic life requires Spanish, as well as part of her social life. She attends a monolingual school where no subjects are taught in either French or English (with the exception of the English-as-a-foreign-language class). Besides school, she used to attend a sport club where she used Spanish to speak with her acquaintances and teachers. Finally, during the pandemic of 2020, social media became a part of her social life, where she used English to communicate with others.

3.3 Research Methodology

The methodology selected for this research was a case study. This is the best option extensively used in language acquisition and bilingualism, since "case studies consist of detailed inquiry into a bounded entity or unit (or entities) in which the researcher either examines a relevant issue or reveals phenomena through the process of examining the entity within its social and cultural context" (Grogan Putney, 2022, p. 55). In other words, a case study focuses on a specific individual with certain traits that help to provide qualitative data for the whole research. It is worth highlighting that the purpose of a case study "is to enhance our understanding of a phenomenon, process, person or group, not to experiment and generalize to other populations in the tradition of larger-scale survey research (Pearson Casanave, 2015, p. 100). Thus, different instruments will be applied, because the data collection for case studies is extensive and thus requires multiple sources

of information (Cresswell, 1997; Richards, 2011). Because there will be a single participant to do an in-depth study, the current research will have different instruments to receive as much information as possible from the participant to explore different subjects such as identity and metalinguistic knowledge. Because of the singularity and detailed analysis needed for this research, a case study fits well with the description of this research.

3.4 Instruments

Six instruments were used during this research. The first two instruments were the Cambridge English Language Assessment General Test (Cambridge English Language Assessment, n. d.), and the Test de Connaisance du Français, which helped to assess the participant's language proficiency. The third instrument was a semi-structured face-to-face interview that focuses on four different themes related to language and identity. The fourth instrument was a checklist with the dimensions of bilingualism, which aimed at determining the participant's bilingual profile. The fifth instrument was a checklist format to determine the family language policy implemented to establish the child's language. Finally, a translation task was used to measure the participant's level of metalinguistic awareness through a translation of idioms in the three languages.

3.4.1 The Cambridge English Language Assessment General Test and the Test de Connaisance du Francais: Assessment of Trilingual Skills

As stated above, the participant's level of proficiency was assessed using two instruments: the Cambridge English Language Assessment General Test (Cambridge English Language Assessment, n.d.) and the Test de Connaisance du Francais or TCF (TV5 Monde, n.d.).

3.4.1.1 The Cambridge English Language Assessment General Test

The General Test is a placement or diagnostic test used to determine what Cambridge proficiency examination certification the candidate is ready to take. It is a quick online examination that measures general language and communicative functions. It is a multiple-choice test designed for adult learners. Even though there are other exams for young learners such as the participant, such instruments were considered too simple because they are directed at foreign language young learners. For example, the Cambridge series Starters, Movers and Flyers only measure basic vocabulary and grammar at the A2 level of the CEFR. Since the child is a native trilingual, a more advanced test was required. However, given the age and maturity of the participant, the Cambridge English Language Assessment General test was considered the best option. This instrument can be seen in General English (cambridgeenglish.org).

3.4.1.2 Test de Connaisance du Francais

Concerning French, the Test de Connaisance du Français (TCF, TV5 Monde) was selected for the exact same reasons presented above. The TCF is an international certification in French from France Éducation International. It is a 90-minute multiple-choice test comprising three sections: Comprehénsion Orale, Compréhension écrite et Structure de la Langue. Similarly, the TCF is a proficiency test designed for adult candidates. The instrument can be accessed through TCF - Test de connaissance du français en ligne avec TV5MONDE

3.4.2 Interview: Language and Identity

The aim of the research was to focus and explore identity and metalinguistic awareness, which is why the first instrument applied, was a face-to-face semi-structured interview

with questions about the participant's perceptions of trilingualism in her everyday life and to know how she sees herself. Overall, the interview sought to know the participant's attitudes about certain topics related to trilingualism. However, an issue arises when using an interview, which is that there are no expectations to the answers that will be provided by the participant, and sometimes, that may lead to not receiving enough data, especially if it is a structured interview. As such, a semi-structured interview seems to be suitable, for a greater chance of getting more information while still covering specific topics. Semi-structured interviews help on creating new questions based on answers provided, which can help in exploring deeper into a topic, or exploring new related topics.

The first instrument was then an interview originally created by Ylänkö (2017), which I adapted to fit into the trilingual child profile. The interview contains questions that fit within one of four themes explored. The first theme explores the competence/experience of the participant's language skills and fluency and contains approximately 6 to 7 questions. The second theme which contains from 7 to 9 questions focuses on the participant's language use, on how often she uses each language and also if she notices code switching when speaking and the languages used to speak with her family on a daily basis. The third theme focuses on the role of each of the languages, how they fit in her academic, social and family life, and overall, within the society she is in. This theme contains 9 questions. The fourth and last theme with approximately 7 questions focuses on the language of emotion, which explores if the participant associates certain emotions to a certain language; as well as if her emotions vary depending on what language she is using (See Appendix A).

3.4.3. Dimensions of Bilingualism Questionnaire/Checklist

In addition to the semi-structured interview, a checklist was also used in retrieving data, not focused on the participant's perceptions, but rather on her type of trilingualism. The format aims to identify the participant's bilingual profile. The reason for using a checklist with different types of bilingualism is because it is a quick way to analyze answers, providing a type of trilingual based on the participant's answer selection. The checklist was adopted from Criollo (2016). It includes six different questions to identify what kind of bilingualism the participant has. Each question has two options, from which the participant chooses the one that fits the participant's situation best. Depending on the answers provided, a type of bilingualism is associated to the participant. The purpose of this questionnaire is solely to identify what type of trilingualism the participant has and use it to analyze the data collected from the interview (See Appendix B).

3.4.4. Family Language Policies Questionnaire/Checklist

To complement the information concerning the bilingual profile, another checklist was used to determine the family language policies implemented to establish the child's and the family languages. As stated in the literature review, there are different strategies that families use to raise their children bilingually –trilingually in this case. These strategies depend on the parent's languages and the community languages. The checklist was adopted from Criollo (2016) and can be seen in (Appendix C).

3.4.5 Idiom Translation Task: Metalinguistic Awareness

The last instrument used was a list of 10 idioms used in Spanish, which the participant had to translate to English and French in order to explore the metalinguistic competence. In this case, the translations provided were analyzed to determine to what extent the

English and French translation compare to the meaning and use of the original phrases. In other words, if the participant focuses on the form, or on the semantic or pragmatic aspects of the original idioms (See Appendix C).

3.5. Data Collection Procedures

To collect the data, I first contacted the participant's parents to ask for authorization to apply the instruments. Once the arrangement and the date to apply the instruments were settled, three visits were done to apply all six instruments. In the first visit, the semi-structured interview was applied, as well as the two checklists (bilingual profile & family language policy) The second meeting was used to apply the Cambridge English Language Assessment General Test, as well as the idiom translation task. The third and final visit was done to apply the Test de Connaisance du Français.

The interview was done face-to-face. Before beginning, the participant selected the language she wanted to use during the interview. When the interview was agreed to be done in English (as requested by the participant), I added a final note by telling the participant to feel free to express any doubts that she might have concerning the questions she was going to answer, either related to vocabulary, grammar or even the meaning of a sentence. I decided to add this final note for her to truly comprehend what was being asked, and thus, ensuring that her answers provided as much data as possible. I asked for her consent before recording her. Once she gave it, I kept an audio record of the interview. The length was around 27 minutes. There were occasions in which the participant did not fully understand the questions. I assisted her by using synonyms, giving examples or even in one occasion rephrasing a question in Spanish. Once she fully understood the questions, she provided answers and insights which sometimes led to formulating other questions that were not in the original instrument. When the interview was over, I handed her the

checklist related to her bilingual profile, explained the assignment and waited for her to complete it.

During the second session, the participant began by taking the Cambridge English Language Assessment General Test on her computer. I stayed near her in case there were any unexpected errors in the webpage or on the device used to answer the test. At one point, the participant asked me what a word in the test meant (vicinity), explaining that she was unfamiliar with it. I replied that unfortunately I was not going to aid her right away, but I would tell her what it meant once the test was completed. The participant to nearly 15 minutes to finish it. Furthermore, I provided her with the idiom translation sheet and gave her the instructions before she started answering. When she understood the assignment, she proceeded to complete the gaps with her translations. The task lasted under 15 minutes.

During our last meeting, I provided the participant with an electronic device to complete the Test de Connaisance du Français. I also let her know that this test would be considerably longer than the prior examination she had taken. Once she started the test, I stayed near her to assist in any unexpected errors that might occur. The exam took less than 90 minutes to be completed.

3.6 Data Analysis

With all the instruments answered, the questionnaire was analyzed by seeing what answers were chosen by the participant in a table graphic in word, since each answer refers to a specific kind of bilingualism, the end result would show her most predominant traits in bilingualism which would then point her specific combination. The table includes the number of questions, the different options and highlighted in yellow is the option selected by the participant (one per answer), and based on her selection in graphics, those

would be her most predominant traits. The translation was then analyzed to find if they were translated literally, which would convey no metalinguistic awareness, or rather an idiomatic translation, which would imply that the participant has metalinguistic knowledge. The way to grade the translations would be by using a scoring system. A translation gets 0 points if done incorrectly; that means, if it is not translated correctly. One point is given if the translation is correct, but being too literal. If a translation is done correctly while showing the idiomatic meaning of such, then 2 points are given. Then the maximum score point is identified as well as the score from the participant, which will then be the global score on metalinguistic competence/awareness. Lastly, the interview was transcribed to an Office Word text, answers were classified according to their content. They were then fitted in each category that is also related to a given research question, and then exploring what the participant said about that category. The categories were the following:

1. Preferred language for school, entertainment and family life
2. Self-perception
3. Lexical, pragmatic or grammatical errors
4. Construct of identity

3.7. The Observer Paradox

One last remark concerning the methodology focuses on the close relationship between the researcher and the participant (brother–sister). First, it is important to mention that within the bilingualism and language acquisition tradition, this has been current practice, since most studies were performed by researchers within their own children. For this reason, it is important to mention the observer's paradox. Loewen (2016, p.) explains that "the observer's paradox means that all observation involves some altering of the

research context, whether intentional or not." In other words, the information retrieved from observation may not be natural since the participant is aware that they are being observed. Since the interview was done face-to-face, and the aforementioned connection between the researcher and the participant, it is important to highlight that the insights or the language used by the participant might have been partially affected or influenced by it. However, because this study focuses on a very specific situation and person, the research would not have been able to be explored without having a close relationship to it.

The upcoming chapter will explore the results acquired during the three meetings.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The following chapter aims to present and discuss the findings and results retrieved and analyzed from the instruments applied to provide a closer and more detailed look into certain elements that constitute the profile of a trilingual child living in a monolingual context.

The elements investigated are listed below:

- The assessment of the participant's level of proficiency in English and French, given that these are the two languages the child speaks that are not used by members of the community.
- The participant's bilingual profile, to explore her type of trilingualism using the answers from the questionnaire.
- Language and identity, which will focus on her competency and fluency, her language use, the role of each language in the participant's life, as well as language of emotion.
- Metalinguistic knowledge used to translate idioms in two other languages, and lastly, all kind of errors that were done by the participant using her language within the interview.

4.1 The Participant's Trilingual Profile and Assessment of Proficiency

This part of the results provides an estimation of the participant's level of proficiency. Since Spanish is the language of the linguistic community and she is schooled in that language, diagnostics of proficiency were only estimated for English and French. Although the language tests used are not adapted to the young age of the participant, they were selected because they are more appropriately aligned with the participant's trilingual profile. Most children's proficiency tests assess only very basic and limited knowledge

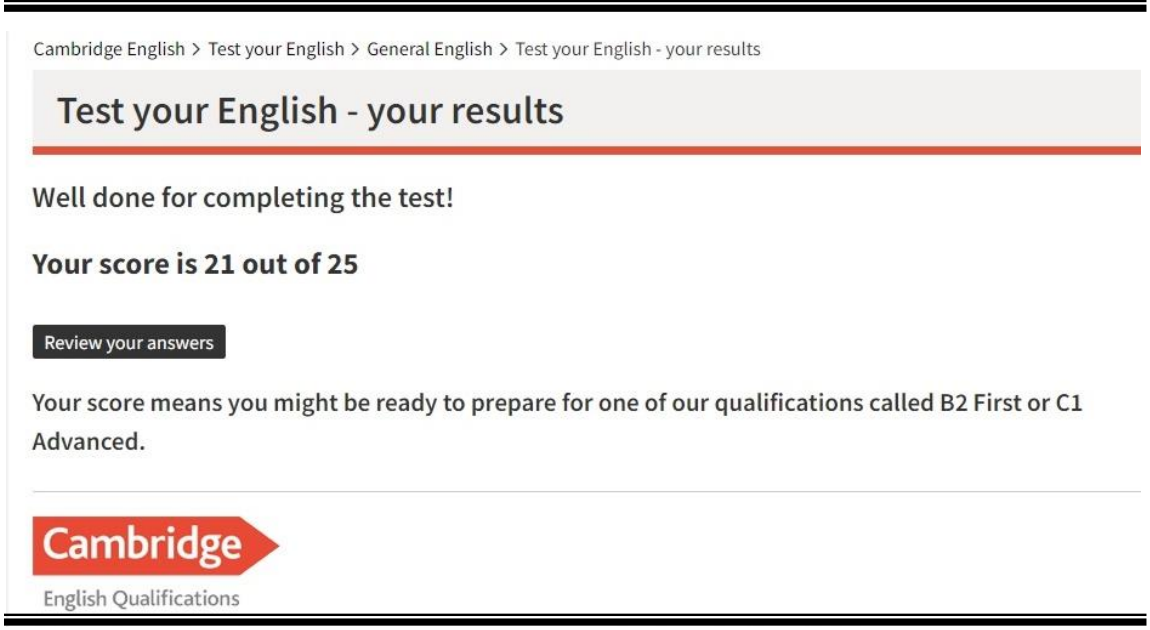
and vocabulary, such as the name of colors or animals. In other words, it was necessary to use tests for adults that really helped to measure the child's trilingual proficiency.

4.2 Diagnostic English and French Proficiency Tests

4.2.1 Cambridge Language Assessment General Test

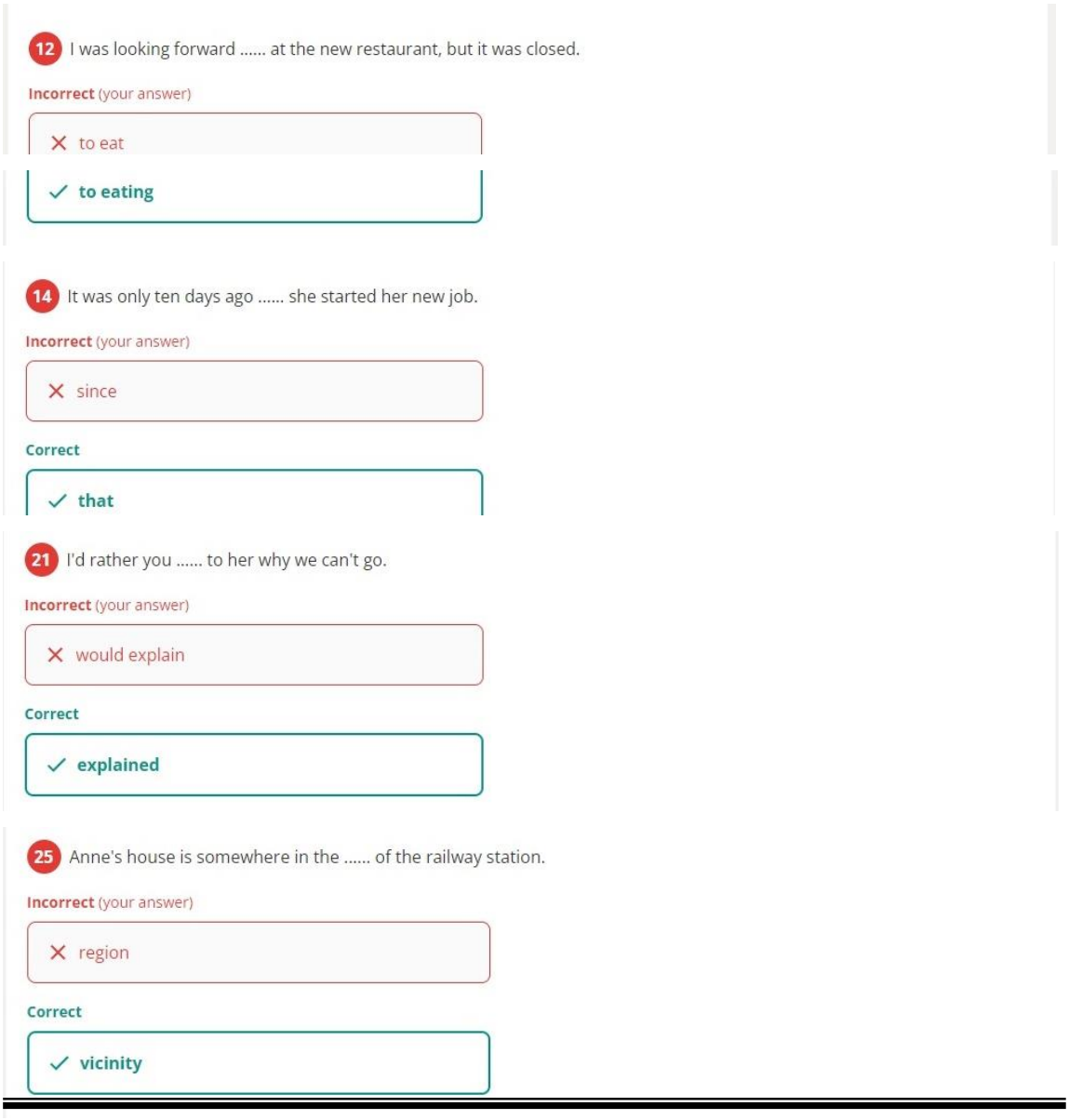
As stated in the methodology, the Cambridge Language Assessment's General Test was selected (Cambridge Language Assessment, n.d.) to assess learner's proficiency in English. This is a quick diagnostic test designed for adult language learners. The participant completed the test under the same conditions of a real test and the results showed that she obtained 21 out of 25 correct answers, being placed in the B2-C1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference. The test results are shown below.

Participants Score in the Cambridge Language Assessment Test



Her incorrect answer corresponded to formal advanced expressions such as "Looking forward to" +-ing, "I'd rather you would…," a complex sentence with a –that clause and a formal advanced vocabulary item: "vicinity." The participant's incorrect answers are shown in the images below.

Participant's Incorrect Answers in the Cambridge Language Assessment Test



As can be seen, her errors correspond to advanced language features that even advanced adult learners would have problems with. It is worth emphasizing that although this is a placement test, it was designed for adult learners and the participant showed a fairly good command of the English language.

4.2.1.1 The Test de Connaissances du Français (TCF)

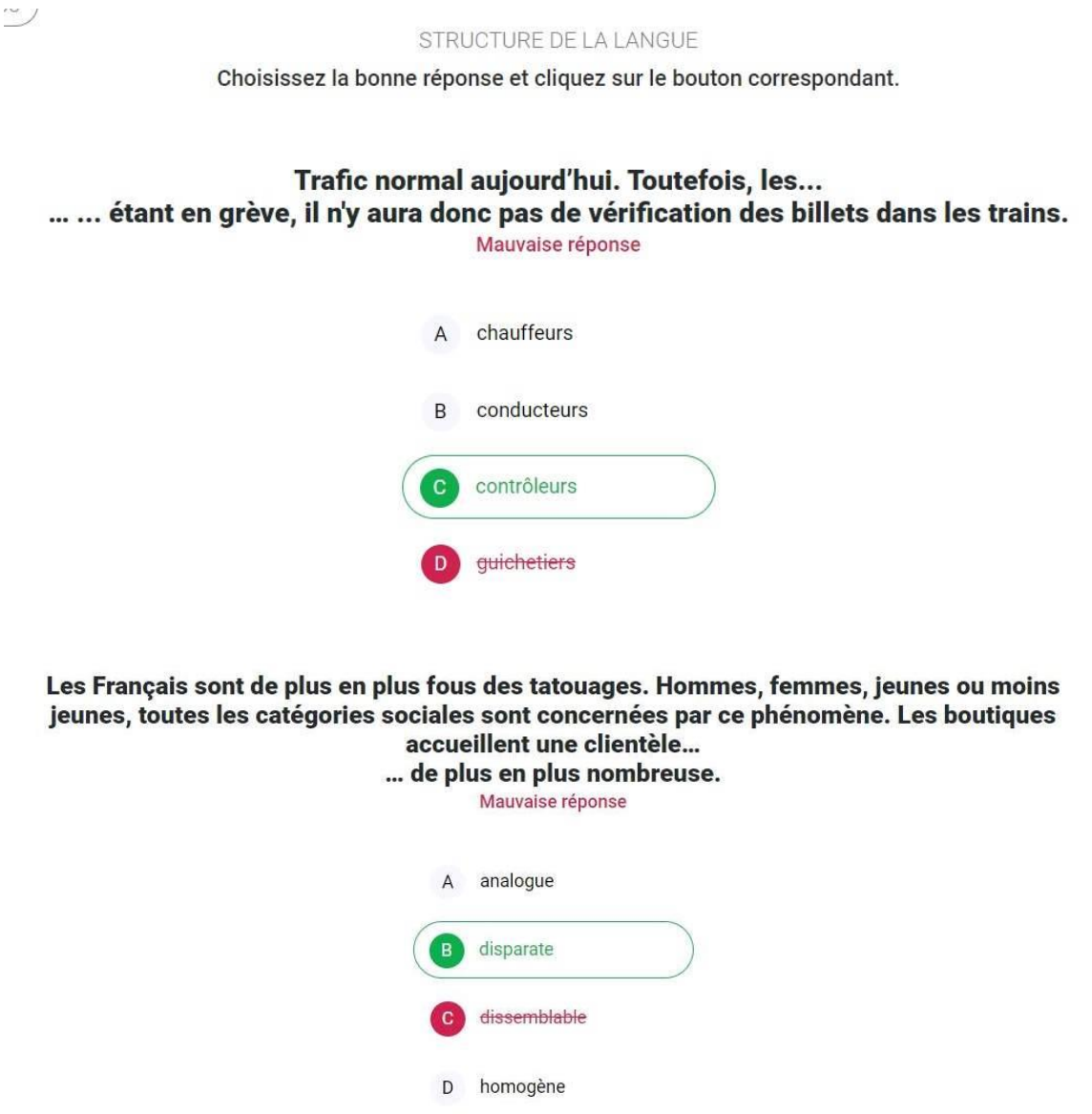
The participant's score in the TCF showed similar results, in this case, the total score was 64 points out of a total of 80. The highest score obtained by the participant was in the *Structure de la Langue* section, which measures grammar, vocabulary, and general language, with a total of 90% and only two incorrect answers. The second best score was for reading comprehension, with 87% of accuracy and only 4 incorrect answers. Finally, the section with the lowest score was listening comprehension, in which the participant obtained 67%, with a total of 10 incorrect answers. A screenshot with the results is provided below.

Participant's Score in the Test de Connaissances du Français

As indicated in the results, the participant obtained in general 80% of accuracy in the test and the estimated level is that of independent user (B1-B2 in the Common European Framework of Reference. This is the level that a native speaker of the language would obtain at that age and that level of education. It is important to remember here that the both the Cambridge and the TCF tests are designed for adult learners. Similarly, it must be pointed out that this test takes 1.5 hours to complete.

In a similar way as for the Cambridge test, the only two incorrect answers provided by the participant in the *Structure de la Langue* section corresponded to advanced vocabulary that may be difficult to understand for a child of that age. The incorrect answers for this test are shown below.

Participant's Incorrect Answers in the Test de Connaissances du Français



In the first case, the incorrect vocabulary item selected corresponds to a specialized vocabulary item to name a person who sells tickets in a train station (ticket clerk, counter clerk). Obviously, the use of this word is outside of the life experience of

the child. Similarly, the second incorrect vocabulary item provided “disparate” (disparate) is a specialized, advanced word that the child does not know. Thus, the results of both diagnostic tests show that the child possesses a good level of proficiency according to her age.

4.2.2 The Participant’s Bilingual Profile

The participant’s results in the bilingual profile checklist provided answers about the participant’s profile, which are described below. First of all, the participant lives in a community where only Spanish is used outside of her home, which makes her an individual trilingual, given the fact that her context is very specific to her and not to a general trilingual community. In other words, she does not belong to a community where the rest of the participants, outside of her family, use the three languages she speaks.

Concerning additive or subtractive bilingualism, the purpose of speaking more than one language is not to substitute a mother tongue or another language, but to keep maintaining all three of them, which means that her trilingualism is additive and not subtractive. The third insight is that she uses both receptive and productive skills in the three languages she speaks (listening, reading, speaking, -and writing, to a lesser extent). Based on this, it can be concluded that her trilingualism is active, and not passive, since she uses the languages to interact and express her ideas. Similarly, the answers selected for question number four tell us that the participant uses all three languages alike, as well as being equally competent in each language, meaning she hits to be a compound and a balanced trilingual.

Finally, in the fifth dimension, the participant learned all three languages at the same time, leading her to be a simultaneous trilingual while the last category focuses on

the moment in life that the participant became trilingual, which was from birth and before three years old, making this process trilingual acquisition. Table 1 summarizes the participant's profile. The features highlighted in yellow are the ones that define the type of bilingualism that she possesses.

Table 2: The Participant's Bilingual Profile

Type of Bilingualism	Answer A	Answer B	Answer C	Answer D	Answer E
Dimension 1	Social bilingualism	Individual bilingualism	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dimension 2	Subtractive bilingualism	Additive bilingualism	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dimension 3	Active Bilingualism	Passive Bilingualism	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dimension 4	Incipient bilingualism	Subordinate bilingualism	Coordinate bilingualism	Compound bilingualism	Balanced bilingualism
Dimension 5	Simultaneous bilingualism	Consecutive bilingualism	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dimension 6	Bilingual acquisition	Second language acquisition	Second language learning	N/A	N/A

According to the dimensions of bilingualism defined in the relevant literature, the participant's profile as a trilingual is individual (not involved in a trilingual community), additive (languages learned not to substitute one another), active (language use involves both receptive and productive skills), coordinate (Spanish is the language of school and society), compound (both English and French have the same function and domain), balanced (equally competent in all three languages) and was achieved via trilingual

acquisition (learn by interacting naturally with other people from birth and before the age three).

4.2.3 The Family Language Policies Implemented

According to the results obtained from the family language policy checklist format, the policies implemented to develop the child's trilingualism were at least three of the frameworks advanced by Piller (2001). First of all, the strategy One Person One-Language (OPOL) was used, since the mother interacts with the child in French, whereas her father and brother use English to communicate. Secondly, One Environment-One Language was also used, since the languages of the home were English and French. The child learned the language from the community outside. In this regard, two other strategies were used, since there was no community support for English and French, and the father, the main English interlocutor with the child in the early years is not a native speaker of English. Thus, the set of family language policies aimed at trilingualism were diverse and the only strategy not used was code-switching and language mixing.

4.3 Language and Identity

Each theme used for the interview will be mentioned below accordingly, using extracts from the answers provided by the participant. First, there will be a description of what can be analyzed from the participant, and the extracts will be presented subsequently to back up such descriptions.

4.2.1 Theme One: Self-Perception of Language Competence and Fluency

The participant states that her language competence in the languages seems to be similar; however, there are certain limitations, such as not knowing the meaning of some words

or forgetting them (1). Specifically with Spanish, the participant mentions that she has some mistakes when writing (2). The participant also reports that the only trouble she has had so far when using the three languages is only forgetting words, which leads to it being complicated (3). Despite having minor limitations in languages, the participant states that she does feel confident when using any of the three languages. As for her identity as a trilingual, she feels and explains she feels this way because that is what she has been used to most of her life (4).

However, she does perceive that people around her react to her trilingualism with curiosity (5), which makes her feel uncomfortable in some situations due to the amount of attention received (6). Lastly, even though the child is a simultaneous trilingual, she identifies the most with the Mexican culture, since she has been living in Mexico for all of her life (7).

Extracts 1-7: Self-Perception of Language Competence in Three Languages

(1) " …I'm OK it's just that I forget some words."

(2) "And in Spanish I can listen to it correctly, I can understand it and I can write it with little mistakes."

(3) "…sometimes when I forget the words it's complicated."

(4) "for me it's normal because I learnt it since I was born so, nothing extraordinary"

(5) "…they´re like they ask * what did you say? * or like they ask me stuff about what do people tell me in other languages…"

(6) "I get a lot of attention and it's uncomfortable."

(7) ""I think I feel more Mexican because I´ve always lived here in Mexico, but I don't really feel I have an identity with my languages."

A point worth highlighting from the participant's answers is that the mistakes that the participant affirms to experience are limitations that most native speakers at her age would experience, as she did not mention anything about feeling limited or even unable to express certain ideas, which is a common restriction that learners of foreign languages encounter. There is another point worth noticing, which is that even though the participant states that she feels more Mexican and that she does not have an identity with her language, certain decisions and actions suggest there is a language preference. For example, she decided to hold the interview in English, and not in Spanish. This shows that the participant may not feel she has an identity with English, but there is definitely a willingness to own and use this language.

4.2.2 Theme Two: Self-Perception of Language Use and Code Switching

The participant's language use varies between contexts, where academic life is focused more on Spanish, as well as any acquaintances found within this environment, such as friends. On the other hand, English and French are the main means of communication within the family, where she uses French with her mother and English with her father and brother (8). As for her social life on the internet, she uses only English (9). She explains the reason why she uses English and French with her family is because that is how her family chose to communicate (10). And Spanish is used mostly because of the community she belongs to (11).

Switching between languages is very common in conversations with her family; she says she does it constantly, but it does not bother her (12). She describes a common situation when it happens, which is at the table when it is time to eat, speaking about subjects related to work or school (13). Granted that English and French are used within the family life, Spanish is used mostly in the outside, with people that she is not close to

(14). However, she also uses Spanish with the family from the side of her father because of the context (15). English and French do no play a role in her activities at school, which is why her use is limited only with family members (16-17). The interview extracts below illustrate participant's language use and code-switching.

Extracts 8-17: Self-Perception of Language Use and Code-Switching

(8) "Well like at school uuh, well, I use Spanish with my -with my friends and my teachers and other people. Well, in the house with my mother I use French all the time, just with her. And with my father and brother I use English."

(9) "On the Internet well, I usually use only English."

(10) "Because, well I suppose because they wanted me to use, well my parents wanted me to use the three languages all the time, so like, that's why."

(11) "Well we're in Mexico and well, we speak Spanish."

(12) "Ah yeah, when it's a conversation with all of my family I have to switch all the time but it's cool."

(13) "We start speaking about the news or like our work and stuff and yeah well my mom speaks with my father and I in French, my mom speaks in French with my father and I speak English with my father and he speaks English with me and that's it."

(14) Well with the strangers well the ones from outside the people that live besides here yeah well I speak Spanish because we're in Mexico. With my family I speak English and French and that's it.

(15) "I use Spanish because they're Mexican and they don't know English"

(16) "I: Do you need English at school?" " P: only in English class" * chuckles*

(17) “I never use it [French] except when -when there's a teacher that wants me to speak French in front of everyone.

In this theme, it is worth noticing that while the participant mentions that it was her family’s decision to use English and French within her household, there are instances where language choices depend entirely on her. Examples of such decisions are, deciding to have the interview in English and in this theme, and also purposely choosing English as her only language for her digital life. Hence, an explicit sign of the participant’s willingness to keep English language and to incorporate it into her identity, despite it not being relevant within her linguistic community. Ultimately, she could decide to use only Spanish, which is the case of many bilingual children who eventually become passive bilinguals.

4.2.3 Theme Three: Self-Perception of the Role of Languages

The participant mentions that the relationship between English and French is very normal (18), however, she does believe that English is a very useful language that she knows, granted she can travel a lot with it, whereas French is not very useful to her, because she only uses it with her family (19). Not also does she believe English to very useful, but that is the language that she uses the most due to social activity on the internet (20). It is worth remembering that the participant had mentioned previously that English was the only language she used on the internet.

The participant perceives that neither English nor French are relevant in her community because there is a lack of interest to learn such languages (21). Lastly, when asked how she perceived herself within the Mexican community, the participant mentioned she does not feel normal because of how the surrounding community always

wants to know about her trilingualism (22). She also stated that the main reactions she gets from people are jealousy, excitement, happiness and curiosity (23).

Extracts 18-23: Self-Perception of the Role of Languages

(18) "a normal relationship? Well... yeah, there's nothing interesting"

(19) "Well Spanish, well, it's fine, it's normal. Then French it's not very useful actually, I don't really use it. I mean, yeah, I use it, but still, it´s not like I'm gonna learn a lot from it... but OK. And English I think it's very useful because you can travel a lot with English and it's a cool language and, well yeah

(20) Well in Spanish obviously I communicate with others but it's just like like very little, yeah so, there's not much I can do with it. And then in French, well yeah I only speak French with my mother so I don't use it a lot either. and well English I think it's the one that I use more because I use the Internet with it, I speak with two partners of my family with it and well that's it.

(21) "people don't like English in their school, they don't wanna learn it." "…I just know the students of my mom because she is a French teacher, but, I don't see anyone that wants to speak French."

(22) "I think like everyone is obviously different, but still, like I feel separated. Just because I speak more than one language and people always want to know and stuff."

(23) "-uuuh, jealousy, happiness, excitement, curiosity and… well, that's it."

Once more, in this theme there is evidence that suggests that the participant has a language preference. However, unlike in the previous themes, this time she explicitly states it. From a semantic perspective, we can see that the participant utilized contrast to separate

Spanish and French from English. She begins by giving her opinion on Spanish and French, in which her use of adjectives ranges from neutral to slightly negative ("normal", "fine" and "not very useful"). When she is going to talk about English, her adjective selection is not only positive, but she also gives reasons to back up her perspective. This insight is reinforced when she talks about language usage, where she states that English is the language she uses more. The participant may not be aware of it, but if English is her most used language, it is because she made this decision. Besides an extrinsic motivation from her family, there is also an intrinsic motivation.

4.2.4 Theme Four: Self-Perception of Language of Emotion

During this part of the interview, the participant mentioned that she feels that English is her native language despite living in a Spanish-speaking community (24). She also mentioned that she perceives when her mother is happy or angry; she expresses her feelings using French (25), as well as her father, who when angry or happy will use English (26), and not his native language. His father's native language is Spanish. And even though this is the case for her parents, she does not believe that there is a language of emotion for her (27), neither does she relate a specific language with a certain emotion (28). However, she does mention that with people outside of her family she does not express as many emotions as with her family. This could be due to the fact of her proximity with her family or it might also be due to the language she uses with them. In other words, while French used within the domain of home and family, it is not used for interpersonal relationships with people outside of her family nucleus (29).

Extracts 24-29: Self-Perception of Language of Emotion

(24) “Well I guess it’s English right now, before it was Spanish, but now it’s English. “

(25) “Well with my mom when she’s very happy, angry or sad she normally uses French and French words and all of that.”

(26) “And with my father it’s the same, except that he doesn’t use Spanish, he uses English.”

(27) “In my case I don’t think it’s true, uuh, I don’t know, it’s just like no.”

(28) “mmmm, not really actually, I... no.”

(29) “well, maybe with other people I’m more closed, I don’t show my emotions that much, but with my family I don’t show them a lot either, but still, with people it changes all the time.”

It is important to mention that when the interview took place, lockdown had already started a few months ago. This variable seems to have played a major role in the perception of her native language. Considering that the participant did not go to school face-to-face, her Spanish interaction was low, if not null. On the other hand, her digital life increased drastically, and thus, she used English the most. It is truly remarkable to see how, despite her having a strong and direct connection with both Spanish and French (because of her double nationality), the participant’s preferred language was English.

It is worth recalling that her father is not a native speaker of the language, and yet, as we observed throughout the themes, there is a positive concept of the language, as well as a willingness to keep it and own it. This insight serves as proof that bilingualism, or in this case, trilingualism can be maintained, even when there is no direct connection to the social community.

4.3 Competence and Metalinguistic Awareness

4.3.1 General Language Assessment from the Interview.

Based on the interview, Table 3 below presents a series of errors that the participant did in English, which will be classified into two categories, namely vocabulary or grammar.

Table 3: English Language Errors Found in the Interview

Vocabulary errors	Grammar errors
"two partners of my family"	"…with the strangers, well, the ones from outside the people that live besides here"

As the table shows, the participant had some rare mistakes when expressing herself. In addition, it is worth noticing that these mistakes do not alter the participant's main idea, granted that the vocabulary errors were not knowing what word would fit in appropriately because she either forgot the word during that moment or she did not know it, but she tried to add up a different word to express herself, sometimes even coming up with a long synonym for the word she is looking for. Overall, her vocabulary and grammar mistakes were in a minor quantity and did not cause major deviation from the main purpose or idea that the participant had.

4.3.2 Metalinguistic Awareness as Expressed in Translation of Idioms

Finally, to determine the participant's level of metalinguistic awareness by having her focus on the meaning and use of a series of idiomatic expressions, a translation task was used. The table below illustrates the ten idioms used for the translation, along with the translation to English and to French. Each translation contains a color and score gained

based on the translation done. Two points are awarded when the translation fits the original idiom (green) and is not a literal translation. However, if the translation is only done literally then a single point is awarded (yellow). In the case that the translation done does not have the appropriate meaning and not even a literal translation, the 0 points are awarded (red). At the end, points earned for each language are added up to get a total score (max. 20 points per language) which is then converted into a percentage, where 20 points equals 100%, 10 points equals 50% and so on. The percentage achieved is the overall performance on her metalinguistic awareness. The cut-off scores considered appropriate were as follows: (10%-20%= very low / 30%40%= low / 50%-60%= medium / 70%-80%= high / 90-10%= very high).

Table 4: Assessment of Metalinguistic Awareness as Expressed in Translation of Idioms

	IDIOM	ENGLISH	Score	FRENCH	SCORE
1	"ahí nos vidrios"	see ya later	2	À bientôt	2
2	"quiúbole"	What's up	2	Comment ça va?	2
3	"La neta"	Really!	2	Oui!	2
4	"no manches"	Oh my!	2	Tu plaisantes?	2
5	"pasarse de la raya"	Cross the line	2	Franchir la ligne	2
6	"¿a poco?"	Really?	2	Vraiment?	2
7	"ponerse como tomate"	Get red	2	Devenir tout rouge?	2
8	"Dar en el blanco"	Hit the mark	2	Atteindre son but	2

9	“salirse con la suya”	Get away with it	2	Tourné la page	0
10	“órale pues”	Well then	2	Bon alors	2
		Total score: Percentage:	20 (100%)	Total score: Percentage:	17 (90%)

As seen in Table 3, most of the participant’s translations were done accurately without relying too much on literal translations, except for idiom number 9 (salirse con la suya), granted that the participant translated it as “tournee la page,” which would mean to “get over something,” “to move on” and not to “get away with”.

In sum, the participant’s metalinguistic knowledge to translate the idioms was very high for both English and French, achieving 95% on her overall performance. With this said, the participant’s level of metalinguistic knowledge at least as shown in this task, is very high. English is slightly higher than French, which hints to her competence better developed in this language. Finally, her scores were above average and she definitely has the ability to translate idioms accurately using her metalinguistic knowledge.

Once all of the data collected has been presented and explained, the results will be discussed in more detail as they relate to the research questions in the conclusion chapter. In addition, Chapter V will also outline some limitations of the research, implications for the field of bilingualism, language learning and teaching, and some directions for further research.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

5.1 General Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore a trilingual child's metalinguistic awareness and construction of identity by means of a case study using a thematic semi-structured interview, diagnostic tests, a checklist for the bilingual profile, and an idiom translating task. The participant can be described as an individual, additive, active, compound, balanced, simultaneous and native trilingual. She seems to have developed a level of proficiency that allows her to communicate with people outside the family circle and she obtained a score between B2 and C1 in an English general diagnostic test.

Concerning self-perception of language identity, based on extractions from the participant's answers from the interview, the child uses Spanish as her primary source of interaction for her academic life, and her main interlocutors are teachers and other classmates. In addition, Spanish is the language used outside of the home, which is why this is considered the dominant language of the community. In addition, she communicates in English with two members of her family (father and brother), but she also uses this language extensively in her digital social life and online activities. Finally, French is the language of home, since she uses it with her mother and all of the family members on her mother's side. It is also worth emphasizing that both her parents communicate with each other in French all the time. This provides a basically French environment at home.

Based on the information from the interview, language choices seem to rely heavily on the context that the child finds herself in, as she did mention "it always depends on who I'm talking to, if it's my family, someone that I know but I don't speak a lot with, well it changes all the time." She also seems to take her trilingualism as an advantage, but feels uncomfortable whenever people are curious, granted she mentioned that she dislikes

being the center of attention. Despite her languages uses, none of them affect to which community she relates to the most, as she identifies within the Mexican community because that is where she has lived, and the members or her family communicate in English and French.

The child perceives her competence in all three languages to be at an appropriate level. However, she is aware of some limitations she encounters from time to time, such as not knowing the meaning of a word or spelling mistakes. Concerning her metalinguistic knowledge, according to the result of the translation task, it ranges between high to very high despite not living in a trilingual community. She made choices for translation based mainly on the meaning and the use of the expressions, and not simply on the grammatical forms. Finally, she did not show any major language errors in the interview, which was conducted in English. Although no data was collected concerning writing in French or English, it is evident that she may not have developed this skill in the same extent as in Spanish, the language of school. However, she takes English classes in school and texts to friends and relatives in both English and French.

As mentioned in the first chapter, most of the previous studies between bilingualism and language identity showed a strong connection between both concepts. The participant showed a strong connection between both of these languages (Spanish and French) and their communities, since one is the language of the general population, and the other is the main language within her household. However, a new scenario was explored in this case study, where the participant displayed a willingness to keep and integrate another language (English), achieving a very high proficiency level (B2-C1), which was higher than the other non-dominant language. It is of most importance to emphasize that the participant successfully integrates the language into her daily life, despite not having a direct connection to its language community. We can also see that in

this phenomenon there is a combination of two types of family language policies (type one and type four), because the language used to communicate with her father is not his first language, yet is still a part of her daily life.

Another key element that sets this case apart from previous studies is that in previous research, participants only use two different languages in their daily lives (one is used within academic or social life, whereas the other language is used within her household. Despite the participant using a specific language for her academic life, she uses two languages within her household that are equally important within this context. This means that the non-dominant languages overlap in the same context, yet conversation flows normally. This phenomenon enables her trilingualism to be balanced, since she uses all three languages actively in specific situations. Not to mention that she purposefully decided to make English an important part of her digital social life, where she is exposed to multiple contexts.

5.2 Implications

This case study presented a panorama of how a trilingual child perceives her management of three distinctive linguistic systems and exercises her trilingual identity. The results have important implications in the sense that they demonstrate that an individual can assert multiple identities as an active user of three languages even in the context of a monolingual community. The study of family language policies and bilingual acquisition show that normally a child may become competent more than one language by the age of three. From that time onward, as an independent language user, their linguistic choices become more individual. In other words, keeping active bilingualism requires for the person to assume a bilingual identity. This involves keeping and developing practices that assure the maintenance of bilingual skills.

Language maintenance heavily depends on two factors studied here: metalinguistic awareness; which can be demonstrated and executed by code-switching and translanguaging: actively alternating languages and using each of them as a learning tool to navigate different kinds of social situations and communicative interactions. Secondly, maintaining the language does not depend on communicative needs, since the child can use the majority language to get by and get meaning across. Instead, it is identity, the capacity and willingness to "own" the languages and make them part of one's personality, that seems to play a crucial role in bilingual (in this case trilingual) competence and proficiency. Only when trilingual people actively use the language and feel it as part of themselves, can trilingual skills be maintained. Concerning socio-linguistic factors, it seems that in this case study the prestige of the non-dominant languages –English and French- plays an important role in the child's willingness to keep them and use them actively, integrating them as part of her identity.

What these findings imply for language teaching is that there is a significant gap between learning about the language and becoming an active user of the language. EFL teachers must seek and implement learning activities that actively involve the learner in tasks that develop this social sense of identity with a language. Learners must interact in different context that go beyond the classroom, and when this is possible, strategies must be designed to allow the students to use the language to express feelings, develop social relationships and use the language in an authentic way. Learning a language involves owning the language, making it a part of oneself. This can make a difference in terms of language development. The participant in the study has never been in a bilingual school and the use of the non-dominant languages is largely confined to the home domain. However, she keeps up her bilingual skills by using the language and extending it to domains such as social networking. EFL learners must be encouraged to use the language

beyond the restricted space of the classroom, and opportunities must be provided for them to use the language authentically.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

Case studies as the present research carry inherent methodological limitations mentioned in Chapter 3. First of all, the results are not generalizable because they usually focus on a single individual in a particular situation. However, the purpose of case studies is "to enhance our understanding of a phenomenon, process, person or group" (Pearson Casanave, 2015, p. 100) in the hope that unique situations or individual can shed light on particular phenomenon that cannot be studied on a large scale. In this particular case, the participant's unique development of three languages makes it interesting to observe and describe her trilingual identity and metalinguistic awareness.

Another limitation of case studies is that the data collected is mainly qualitative and its interpretation largely exploratory and inductive. However, the research topic addresses aspects that are by nature inherently subjective. Identity is a concept that draws on sociolinguistic and affective factors that are largely different from individual to individual and from social group to social groups and that evolve internally and externally. Dynamic concepts such as these are not easily grasped with any other methodology. However, the purpose of the research was to explore how identity can be shaped in a trilingual child even in the absence of a surrounding multilingual community. Thus, the research required the study of the situation and the participant's reflection on different themes related to language use and management.

5.4 Directions for Further Research

The present study provides some important information concerning identity and metalinguistic awareness in a trilingual child. It shows that active trilingualism can be maintained even in the context of a monolingual community. Different projects can be undertaken to further explore family language policies, native bilingualism, metalinguistic awareness, and identity.

First of all, a phenomenological study could be undertaken with one or more bilingual families to explore how bilingual planning and development is perceived by different participants such as the bilingual children themselves, the parents, the family at large and the teachers or other people interacting with the children on a regular basis. For example, something that happened during the course of this research is that the participant was going to therapy after post-COVID-related anxiety, and at some point, she told her therapist about being trilingual. Since the therapist was proficient in English, she told her that if she preferred, the therapy could be in English. The child thus preferred to hold the therapy in English since "she felt more comfortable and could express more things that way." A phenomenological study could uncover crucial information concerning how bilingualism affects and is affected by the day-to-day interactions that surround bilingual children.

Another interesting study would involve selecting bilingual families raising bilingual children and make an inventory of the language policies they implemented and find the results obtained. Such research would provide information about the most and least successful policies, as well as the different procedures used to implement them. In addition, this study would also permit the exploration of the different kinds of strategies used by children to maintain their bilingual skills and identities. Different kinds of

families with different languages could be selected to have a variety of situations that provide information about how identities are shaped in different contexts.

Finally, a replication study could be conducted. This would involve finding another trilingual child that could participate in the study. The exploration of another case could help us find different kinds of dynamics and outcomes. As was stated before, bilingualism and identity construction are dynamic processes that are largely dependent on a great number of factors that pertain both to the individuals and the society they live in. This means that every experience would be different, and the exploration of different cases can provide more information to understand these dynamics at play in real situations. Given the ever-expanding effects of globalization and its consequences for multilingualism and language policies both in families and societies, it is necessary to keep exploring bilingual skills and identities. In the meantime, I hope that this case study will have provided some insights into the complexities of child trilingualism.

5.5 Reflection

I would like to conclude this paper by sharing some of the personal insights and findings gathered throughout the development of this research. While I have been interested in bilingualism, and grew up as an early or native bilingual, it was not until the in-depth research of the theory relevant for this study that I started to realize and understand more of my own bilingualism. I started to identify my own bilingual and even trilingual profile, and it became evident that I have made many decisions throughout the years to integrate English into my own daily life. The writing and the research done on this thesis allowed me to comprehend my bilingual identity and to truly embrace it. As a teenager, I tended to use code-switching within my family life, as well as within my academic life. However, in many instances I felt judged or did not truly rationalize why I

decided to add words from both languages. It is now evident how I was unconsciously trying to assert my bilingual identity.

Later on in college, I decided to study French and completed all 9 levels at the Centro de Lenguas Extranjeras. Now, as someone who is aiming to be an active trilingual, I became fascinated by the participant's daily life, where she can actively use all three languages despite the restriction of living in a monolingual context. This research was not only insightful, it was also incredibly helpful to come up with practices to integrate all three languages to maintain all three languages. As a future English language teacher, this research will provide practical ideas to formulate strategies and activities within the classroom that foster and encourage students to bridge the gap between the target language and their own language identity.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (ADAPTED FROM YLÄNKÖ 2017)

Appendix 2, INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: CHILDREN

BACKGROUND: Age and school

THEME 1

COMPETENCE/EXPERIENCE OF ONE'S OWN LANGUAGE SKILLS AND FLUENCY

-How would you describe your competence in each language?

- Do you feel like you know both languages equally?

Or do you feel that one language is stronger than the other? In what ways/areas (speech, writing, understanding, etc?) In what situations?

-Are you confident communicating in both languages?

-Do you have/have you had problems with either of the languages in certain situations? What kind of situations?

-In what ways do you feel that you are bilingual?/ How would you describe your bilingualism?

THEME 2

LANGUAGE USE

-Do you use both languages regularly?

-Who do you use each language with? Why?

-Where do you use English? What kind of situations?

-Do you switch between the two languages in conversations? Do you notice when it happens? Who do you do this with?

-What language do you speak at home? Describe a typical (communication) situation at home, within your family.

-Describe your language use outside of the home. Do you speak a lot of English? With whom/where/ in what kind of situations?

THEME 3

THE ROLE OF LANGUAGES (in the participants' lives and in wider society)

-How would you describe your relationship with Finnish and English? How do you feel about having two languages instead of one/being bilingual?

-How would you describe your identity as bilingual?

-What does it mean to you to be able to speak both languages?

-What do you think of English and Finnish as languages?

-What do other people think about you when you speak English? Or the fact that you are bilingual? How do your friends view/consider it? Do they speak English? Do you have friends that are bilingual too?

-Do you feel different from your friends? How?

THEME 4

LANGUAGE OF EMOTION

According to research (and maybe general knowledge), it has been said that one's mother tongue is the language of emotion. What do you think of this? /How do you feel about this?

-Is this true in your family? How does it show?

-Do you relate a specific language to certain emotions- being angry or happy or when you express deep emotion, affection? Which language? Why do you think that is? Does the language vary depending on who you communicate with?

APPENDIX B: BILINGUAL PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE/CHECKLIST

DIMENSIONS OF BILINGUALISM: WHAT KIND OF BILINGUAL ARE YOU?

1. **Do you live in a community where both languages you speak are used in different everyday situations?**
   a. Yes: ***Social bilingualism.***
   b. No: ***Individual bilingualism.***
2. **Is the objective of your bilingualism...?**
   a. ...to gradually replace one language for the other: ***Subtractive bilingualism.***
   b. ...to keep and maintain both languages: ***Additive bilingualism.***
3. **Do you use...**
   a. ...Both languages for speaking, listening, reading, and writing**:** ***Active bilingualism.***
   b. ...One language for the four skills and another one mainly for reading and listening: ***Passive bilingualism.***
4. **What use do you make of both languages?**
   a. I just started learning and using a new one: ***Incipient bilingualism.***
   b. One of them is stronger and the other one weaker. I use the first one to help me understand and organize my ideas in the second one: ***Subordinate bilingualism.***
   c. I use one language in some contexts (like family and social life, everyday activities) and the other language for some other contexts (like school, job, or other formal or academic situations): ***Coordinate bilingualism.***
   d. Both of the languages have the same functions and domains. I use them for everyday and professional activities alike. ***Compound bilingualism.***

Or/and

   e. I am equally competent in both languages. ***Balanced bilingualism.***

5. **In what order did you learn/acquire the languages?**
   a. At the same time: ***Simultaneous bilingualism.***
   b. One after the other: ***Consecutive bilingualism.***
6. **When and how did you become bilingual?**
   a. From birth or before 3 years of age, by interacting naturally with other people: ***Native bilingualism or bilingual acquisition.***
   b. I acquired a second language as a child, before 7 years of age, by interacting naturally with other people: ***Second language acquisition.***
   c. I learned my second language after the age of 7, through formal instruction in a language classroom: ***Second language learning.***

Therefore, my profile as a bilingual is: _____

APPENDIX C: FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICY FORMAT

FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICY FORMAT

Objective: (bilingualism/trilingualism):

Mother	Father	Family & Close Friends
Attitudes towards bilingualism: Explicit agreement for policy?	Attitudes towards bilingualism: Explicit agreement for policy?	Attitudes towards bilingualism: Explicit agreement for policy?
L1: L2: (level) L3 : (level)	L1: L2: (level) L3 : (level)	L1: L2: (level) L3 : (level)
Language to be used with the child:	Language to be used with the child:	Language to be used with the child:
Time devoted to interaction with the child (approximate number of hours a day):	Time devoted to interaction with the child (approximate number of hours a day):	Time devoted to interaction with the child (approximate number of hours a day):

APPENDIX D: IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS TRANSLATION TASK

Instructions:

Translate the following expressions used in Spanish as best as you can to English and French

Spanish	English	French
1. Ahí nos vidrios		
2. Quiúbole		
3. La neta		
4. No manches		
5. Pasarse de la raya		
6. ¿A poco?		
7. Ponerse como tomate		
8. Dar en el blanco		
9. Salirse con la suya		
10. Órale pues		