

Onur Ural

University of Arizona, the USA

Kenan Dikilitas

University of Stavanger, Norway

IDENTITY FORMATION AND CAREER PROSPECTS OF BILINGUAL PROFESSIONALS: BLENDING LANGUAGE SKILLS TO CREATE NOVEL APPLICATIONS TO CAREER PURSUITS

Summary. The most widely believed misconception about bilingualism purports that exposure to a second language within the community will automatically yield bilingual children, who can apply their balanced language skills in every domain of their future employment. However, this misconception does not represent the real-life experiences of most bilinguals. Through a pivotal focus on individual cases, this study was designed to manifest (1) bilingual identity formation and (2) career prospects of early and sequential bilinguals. The study analyzed collected data from individual surveys and in-person interviews with bilingual professional adults. Findings revealed that conscious engagement with the languages they were exposed to as children plays an active role in a bilingual speaker's identity formation process and influences their career pursuits, instead of the common notion that being exposed to a second language is adequate to embrace bilingualism. Hence, this article brings implications to consider on career pursuits of bilingual speakers as the results indicate bilingual career pursuits transcend language-related occupations.

Keywords: bilingual identity; bilingual professional; career prospects; identity formation; linguistic capital.

Introduction

Linguistic capital is a resource that can be invested by a person in order to yield economic returns (Bourdieu, 1991; Grin, 2003; Fang, 2011; Flynn, 2013). However, in various settings competence in another language is viewed as a problem rather than a resource (Agirdag, 2014; Hakuta, 1986; Herrera & Wedin, 2010; Ruiz, 1984). In lay conversations about bilingualism, as Block (2007) posits, "there are often comments to the effect that the children of immigrants end up fully proficient in neither the host community language nor their heritage language" (p.67). In some studies, bilingualism is also statistically linked to lower academic performance (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2017).

On the other end of the spectrum, a battery of studies revealed that bilingual children outperform monolingual children in tasks that required cognitive functioning skills (Carlson & Meltzoff, 2008; Kalashnikova & Mattock, 2012; Kapa & Colombo, 2013) and that bilingual children are inaccurately labeled as delayed or in need of special resources (Kovács & Mehler, 2009; Pearson, 1998; Werker & Byers-Heinlein, 2008). In some settings, bilingual people are considered competent in every aspect of their life, including their education, employment, hobbies, and so on (Grosjean, 2010).

Results in scientific research on two ends of the continuum are surprising in the context of evidence related to bilingualism. To this end, we aimed at unfolding specific cases of individuals who use different dyads of languages across different regions and nations to indicate how bilinguals cast distinctive bilingual identities and follow career pursuits pertinent to their identity construction process; a research area that is barely investigated in the literature. Our findings indicate that bilinguals can tailor their bilingual skills to form a novel understanding of their career pursuits, instead of acting like two monolinguals in one domain of employment.

Theoretical Framework

Vygotsky (1986) postulates that a person's thought development is determined by language and the sociocultural experience of the individual as complementing tools since a slow accumulation of functions of the language mastered by the individual underpins the basic structures of thinking. Drawing on Vygotsky's sociocultural views on the role played by language and dialogue in knowledge construction, Halliday (1990) notes that "a child's acts of meaning are joint constructions, enacted through dialogue between himself" (p. 74) and others to achieve a personal identity. In other words, the use of language provides spaces to authenticate (Bucholtz, 2003) one's self "meaning-making and making sense of the world" (Makalela, 2015, p. 210). To this end, identity and language are in an interwoven relationship, in which language acts as a catalyzer for understanding the world and developing an identity.

As language and identity are interwoven entities, Block (2007) posits there is a need to approach bilingualism through a multimodal mindset which

shifts the focus of attention “beyond the narrow linguistic realm to the broader realm of semiotic behavior” (p. 70), in which bilingualism, communication, and socioeconomic progress are seen to transcend the linguistic means. This understanding of language as a multivariate and complex phenomenon is reflected in Larsen-Freeman’s (2011) call for viewing language as an adaptive, multidirectional, and nonlinear web which emerges in new circumstances via interactions with multiple agents. This complex system arises from interactions among multiple components in a complex net of language resources. To explore this net, there is a need to employ a bottom-up approach to understand the ecological nature of social contexts (Larsen-Freeman, 2011). In this approach, bilingualism is not considered a mere system of an L2 added to an L1, instead, bilingualism is one linguistic repertoire consisting of new language practices that make up the unique meaning-making resources of language users (Garcia & Wei, 2015). This meaning-making process helps shape bilingual identity.

Language use has several “forms of capital or power when colliding with one’s ... language identity” (Babino & Stewart, 2019, p. 153) to make meaning, which creates complex language investments over time. As bilingual identity is shaped within the society; the degree of economic gains from bilingualism depends on regions, nations, and the value set by the society (Zarobe et al., 2011).

Previous Studies

Despite the lack of studies investigating the bind between bilingual identity and career prospects, there are studies in the field that investigated bilingualism and pertinent economic outcomes through a description of correlated variables. It may seem that the economic advantages of bi/multilingualism have become almost a norm in many parts of the world (Hornberger & Link, 2012); however, many studies in the field indicate less optimistic views. Chiswick and Miller (2007) found that proficiency in an immigrant language, as well as the dominant language within the society, is associated with lower earnings among the native-born in many parts of the world. In a similar vein, Callahan and Gandara (2014) found that “research investigating economic returns of

bilingualism remain inconclusive at best" (p. 4).

Literature on immigrants' career prospects in their host countries suggests that language skills bring the potential to play a pivotal role in their career advancement, yet there are other potent factors that should not be ignored. In their study in which language fluency was juxtaposed with immigrants' earnings, Chiswick and Miller (1995) found that English-language fluency is shown to be associated with a 16.9% increase in the United States, 12.2% in Canada, and 11.0% in Israel. However, through an analysis of the language and earnings of immigrants in Germany, Dustman and Van Soest (2002) statistically revealed the possible false reasoning of previous studies, in which "straightforward regression analysis concluded that immigrants' proficiency in the language of their adopted country is correlated with their productivity, as measured by earning" (p. 73). The data in the study revealed that employment of immigrants in their adopted country depends on several socioeconomic and educational factors, in which proficiency in language brings a 5% return in earnings while the education level of the immigrants' parents may add up to a 10% increase in earnings. In some research comparing job retention of alien and non-alien workers after on-the-job training in Belgium, H'madoun and Nonneman (2012) found similar results. In the study, they indicated that ethnic minorities within a country usually "reside in the poorest inner-city urban areas with substandard school facilities and lack of opportunities to expand language skills" (p. 94), which later contributed to lower employment prospects of these ethnic groups in Belgium. After statistical analysis, it was found that being a member of an ethnic minority reduces the employment probability by nearly 10% even after other factors are controlled. The results of this study, therefore, concluded that even after job training, employers discriminate against ethnic bilingual speakers with good language skills in the host country. "The question is therefore whether the language itself, other factors being equal, does result in earnings differentials" (Grin 2003, p. 17).

In a comparative analysis conducted in the UK by Blackaby et al. (2002), "[n]ative ethnic minorities are also found to be twice as likely to be not working than a comparable sample of whites with a similar age structure" (p. 274). It was revealed that the earnings of ethnic minorities were also lower.

White hourly earnings over the period 1993 to 1996 were found to be "£9.08 which is substantially higher than that found for Pakistanis (£7.00) and blacks (£7.89). Indians, as in the case of employment, do better than other ethnic groups, but at £8.23 per hour earnings are still significantly below those of whites" (p. 274). When data on education levels were juxtaposed, it was found that "whites, whether employed or out of work, have fewer years of formal schooling than any other ethnic minority group" (p. 278).

In a study conducted in Germany, Burkert and Zeibert (2007) indicated that the gender gap in unemployment among ethnic minorities prevailed and that occupational and skill mismatch was observed at labor market entry for individual nationalities even after relevant variables that determine transition chances were controlled when conducting the analysis. A similar study conducted in Ireland by Barrett et al. (2008) revealed that the average earnings difference between immigrants from new EU members as of May 2004 and natives in Ireland is between 10 and 18 percent. Hence, overall data indicate that wage premiums are not commensurate to competence in the language of the host country and the level of education of bilingual speakers (Grin, 2003).

Brecht and Ingold (1998) claim the "cost in instructional time and dollars required to bring [bilingual speakers] to professional levels of competence is significantly less than the cost for individuals without home language experience" (p. 2), yet "underlying deficits in the information, interaction, dialogue, [and] research" (p. 3) make it inadequate. Pertinent research that is available in the field is "mostly limited to short-term outcomes... [h]owever, linguistic repertoires of [individuals] might equally play a role over the long term" (Agirdag, 2014, p. 450). There is a relative scarcity of studies tracking and documenting learners' linguistic development in detail over long periods of time through a narrative account of their interactional experiences (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013). Literature to date does not link the identity formation of bilingual speakers with their career pursuits. Therefore, this study aims to provide multiple cases of bilingual speakers in order to explore how different dyads of languages impact the bilingual identity and the career prospects of bilingual speakers. In line with this idea, we address two research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of adult bilinguals on their development of a bilingual identity?
2. How does one's bilingual identity influence career choices and prospects?

Research Design

Considering Larsen-Freeman's (2011) call for viewing language as an adaptive, multidirectional, and nonlinear web which emerges in new circumstances via interactions with multiple agents, we employed a multiple case study design with a focus on exploring the lived experiences of individual participants (Odom et al., 2018; Vannest et al., 2018). The study was implemented by pursuing a survey followed by two interviews. Participants' answers were combined for summative data analysis to obtain codes pre-determined with our research questions.

Participants

We employed purposeful sampling procedures to understand the phenomena (Creswell, & Plano Clark, 2018). The call for candidates for the study was enacted through word-of-mouth by our colleagues.

Table 1

Participant Information

Participant	Age	Major in BA	Place of Birth	Current Country of Location	Self-reported Languages
John	30	Linguistics	United States	United States	Spanish – heritage language English – majority language
Neil	35	Semitic languages and Syriac studies	Australia	Australia	Aramaic – heritage language Arabic – heritage language English – majority language

Participant	Age	Major in BA	Place of Birth	Current Country of Location	Self-reported Languages
Sophie	31	Second language acquisition and teaching	The Philippines	Turkey	Bisaya – heritage language Maranao – heritage language Filipino – majority language English – second language Turkish – foreign language (6 years of residence)

Table 1 provides information about the participants who all met our criteria of being employed professionals and advanced speakers in two languages or more. We also valued diversity in our criteria for participant selection to include bilingual speakers from different countries who major in various fields in order to secure the credibility of our data. However, we did not mention the research questions; candidates were only informed about the study being on bilingualism in general. We decided to recruit the three participants after being informed about them and reached them via email. All three of them agreed to grant consent to participate in the study.

Data Collection

In this study, we explored bilingual identity and career prospects of the participants by considering possible factors that may exert an effect on their identity and career prospects. Data collection occurred in three distinct stages. The reason behind a three-step data collection was to set the context firstly by asking participants their background information, work settings, responsibilities at work, and related information on their education, family, and the milieu they were raised in. More specifically, in stage 1, participants individually answered questions of an online face-to-face survey “to record basic demographic data about participants” (Richards, & Morse, 2013, p. 92) – (a) personal background, (b) languages spoken within the family and the community, (c) academic studies, and (d) occupation. This enabled us, in the second stage, to develop the semi-structured interview questions that best fit the participants in the study. Therefore, in stage 2, a semi-structured

interview was employed as a tool to understand the experiences of the participants as bilingual speakers. We preferred a semi-structured interview as it allowed flexibility for further questions arising during the interview. Thus, the interview provided us with the opportunity to look for different perspectives and receive feedback on the reasons behind (1) bilingual identity and (2) career prospects of the participants.

Table 2

Sample of semi-structured interview questions

Questions
How do you identify yourself ethnically? What languages were you exposed to when you were a child? What language did you prefer and why? Tell us your experiences with your family and friends about languages spoken at home and in the community In what domains do you feel more affiliated with each language? Why did you want to pursue a career in your field? What are your responsibilities at work? Can you please tell us about your experiences as a bilingual speaker at the workplace?

Interviews were conducted individually in English as it was the common language between the interviewers and interviewees.

After acquiring data on participants' background information to set the context in stage 1 and allowing participants to describe their experiences with the language in stage 2, a second interview in stage 3 allocated us time in between to contemplate on data acquired in stages 1 and 2, and to develop further questions to acquire more robust data. From the perspective of the participants, a second interview "fosters a stronger relationship between researcher and participant, such that the latter may feel more comfortable deeply describing difficult or emotionally laden experiences" (Knox, & Burkard, 2009, p. 569). Therefore, in stage 3, a second interview was conducted in order to ask follow-up questions related to participants' reflections on bilingual identity and career prospects with questions including "Can you tell me how you understand your role as a bilingual speaker?", "Where do you see yourself in the future?".

Data Analysis

The participants' answers were coded and analyzed, and underlying ideas were examined in a semantic context. We initially prepared the data for analysis with the transcription process, which was followed by data revision in which coding procedures (Richards, & Morse, 2013) were implemented. We merged the survey and interview data for a summative data analysis to investigate participants' language use and lived experiences that have a bearing on their bilingual identities and career prospects. We coded and categorized each response under predetermined codes designated with our research questions: (1) bilingual identity, and (2) career prospects of bilingual speakers. In a coda to this process, we obtained labeled sections of the interview data that fell under each code.

Table 3

Sample of coding under predetermined themes

Code	Bilingual Identity	Career Prospects
Interview Excerpt	"I experienced rich exposure to Assyrian Aramaic at home, with extended family, and among the wider Assyrian diaspora communities in Sydney." (Neil)	"Education, training, and experience weigh significantly more than being a native speaker. These qualifications are always superior to being a native speaker." (Sophie)

Trustworthiness

In the course of participant selection, we placed emphasis on the diversity of languages and nationalities to obtain data credibility. Quoted words of the participants were cited verbatim. For this process, we individually asked the participants whether they agreed with each statement, a process known as member checking (Cresswell, & Miller, 2000), which was employed to ensure the accuracy of the findings and to avoid any inaccuracies or alterations in the participants' raw data. During the data analysis process, we employed analysis triangulation among us - the researchers in order to verify data credibility and dependability (Cresswell, & Poth, 2018).

Positionality

We believe that sociocultural environmental factors influence a person's thought and identity development (Vygotsky, 1986; Pavlenko, 2001). However, one possible setback of considering social aspects as a pivotal factor in language learning processes is overgeneralizations about individuals in certain communities or settings and inadequately addressing individual differences such as investment (Bourdieu, 1991), agency (Miller, 2014), and identity (Pavlenko, & Norton, 2007). Such an overgeneralized understanding of social representations has the potential to define language learners under stereotypical assumptions while ignoring distinct variables influencing individual learning processes. That is why, there is a need for an approach to understand language learners as "complex social beings with various kinds of agency, identities, aspirations, emotions, linguistic and cultural repertoires and forms of social/cultural and economic capital" (Duff et al., 2013, p. 105). Within this framework of understanding the individual, it is deemed pivotal to consider identity as an emerging construction on a dynamic continuum, instead of viewing it as a static entity. This multiple case study is a reflection of our understanding of the issue at hand.

Findings

In this study, we explored the identity formation and career prospects of bilingual speakers. In the findings section, each participant is introduced based on three aspects: (1) background information, (2) bilingual identity, and (3) career prospects. Such a description follows our data collection order (a background survey followed by two interviews), and our research questions: participants' perceptions of their development of a bilingual identity, and the influence of it on their career choices and prospects.

Late Appreciation of Bilingualism: "I Disliked the Language After My Parents' Divorce" (John)

John is a 30-year-old male with American parents. He has an English-speaking

monolingual mother and a Spanish heritage speaker father. His parents divorced when John was 2 years old, so he was raised with his mother, with regular visitation to his father's and grandparents' home in which Spanish was spoken.

Born and raised in southern California, a region in the US located at the American Mexican border, the participant was also heavily exposed to Spanish speakers from different countries in Latin America. Therefore, his paternal family was not the only source of Spanish for him. This provided John with rich exposure to different languages at different locations. As he received simultaneous exposure from birth to both these languages, his case is referred to as simultaneous bilingualism (Kim et al., 2016). The participant currently lives with his sister, who is also a bilingual speaker of English and Spanish. Yet, the language spoken at home is mainly English.

“While I worked on the Spanish translation of some documents of the company I worked for, seeing the differences between languages from an early age stoked the interest, which got me into linguistics.”

What makes John different from a myriad of heritage language speakers is that John has adopted linguistics as a career path and decided to study linguistics at the University of California. As he has a degree in linguistics, John has a scholarly view on the concept of bilingualism, which would diminish the effect of tacit knowledge during the study as he has developed his self-image as a bilingual through an academic perspective besides sociocultural mediation.

Bilingual Identity

Rich exposure to languages spoken around him entitled John to appreciate the uniqueness each language afforded. As one of the purposes of this study is to gain insights into bilingual identity formation, the shift John went through from attaching negative connotation to Spanish in his early childhood to later developing a positive connection to it in part because of Latin music his father introduced to him clearly exemplifies his identity formation and language affiliation as a bilingual.

In John's case, bilingualism transcends competence in languages. He finds race and ethnicity two complicated issues. Growing up, he often hesitated with government paperwork for school and has never found an appropriate race box:

"Options with the lines *Caucasian, not of Hispanic origin* or *Hispanic, not of Caucasian origin* make things complicated for me being bi-racial. Phenotypically speaking, I do not look Hispanic nor white in the classical American consciousness which allows for a certain ambiguity in how people perceive and interact with me on both sides of the racial and language divide."

When he needs to identify though, then at this moment, ethnically he says white, because he was raised predominantly by his mother. Racially, he says mixed, white, and Hispanic. He believes Latin and Mexican have much more marked and perhaps situational-specific meanings, and he does not consider it appropriate in all contexts to use them:

"I would choose Mexican over Latin since, there is a utility in the distinction culturally, and that Mexican and Spanish is technically more accurate in my case."

It is seen in John's case that language awareness and bilingual identity formation are interrelated issues. In his early childhood, John identified languages with people. As his maternal side of the family was entirely monolingual speakers of English, he feels closely affiliated with English as he was raised by his mother. Because he developed negative affiliations with his paternal family, he associated the language they speak, Spanish, with his negative feelings towards them. Yet, there was a shift in his feelings towards Spanish as he grew up.

John did not feel inclined towards Spanish and its cultural associations while he was growing up, due to the negative family aspects related to the divorce. He found Spanish to be a predominant factor separating him and his mother from his paternal family. His mother was not a Spanish speaker, and he found his paternal family unwelcoming; therefore, in his mind, Spanish absorbed that negative connotation in his childhood. However, later in life, he

grew to appreciate it and developed a positive connection to Spanish music because of his father, which he still enjoys to this day.

Career Prospects

John mentions the hardship of being raised by a single mother. As they did not collect money for his college funds, John preferred to study at a community college which was relatively less expensive than state universities in California before transferring to the University of California. He aspired for higher education and to fulfill this, he decided to study Spanish as he was highly aware of his bilingual abilities and the doors it might open. Hence, his decision to take a Spanish minor was pragmatic, a way to improve, and a way of certification.

Having classes for two years at the community college, John decided to study linguistics and applied to the Department of Linguistics. This decision allowed John to examine languages from an academic perspective and create a mental map to envision career trajectories that he can pursue as a linguist. As he developed a deep interest in technology and acquired some work experience with programming:

“I decided to tailor my linguistic abilities with my interests and experience in coding and programming.”

Hence, he decided to take computational linguistics lessons in his junior and senior years at university and changed his minor from Spanish to a more comprehensive technological bent, Speech and Language Technologies.

Survival As a Child of a Migrant Family Despite the Socioeconomic Contenders: “Our Culture Is Threatened.” (Neil)

Neil is a 35-year-old male, bilingual from birth, with ethnic Christian Assyrian parents who came to Australia from Iraq as children. His parents were bilingual in Assyrian Aramaic and Arabic, languages of the Semitic branch. They also spoke English as a third language, having learned it largely as adults. From his

birth, both parents had communicated in their native language, and the siblings spoke mostly in English, ensuring that he had input in both languages:

“My brother and sister gradually lost their Arabic language skills, but they speak English and Assyrian Aramaic at home”.

The participant lived in the family home until high school graduation. He thus had a rich exposure to Assyrian Aramaic at home, with extended family, and among the wider Assyrian diaspora communities in Sydney and Melbourne, to which he was always strongly connected, having lived in areas with large concentrations of Assyrian Aramaic speakers from different countries in the region and attending an Assyrian Saturday school between the ages of 5 and 13:

“My family was not the only source of Assyrian Aramaic.”

Having been born and raised in Australia, where English is the official language, and having received education from pre-school up to the doctoral level there, he is also native in that language. He is thus completely literate in both Assyrian Aramaic and English.

As he has a degree in Semitic languages and Syriac studies, Neil has academic knowledge in linguistics and bilingualism, which enabled us as researchers to have a similar academic jargon during the interview as he has developed his bilingual identity through a scholarly perspective in addition to sociocultural mediation.

Bilingual Identity

Rich exposure to languages and dialects spoken around him enabled Neil to recognize linguistic patterns and differences and to communicate with people from different backgrounds. The case of Neil as a diaspora Assyrian growing up in an English-speaking milieu exemplifies his identity formation as a bilingual speaker.

What makes the case of Neil noticeable among heritage language speakers is that Neil has embraced his heritage language and decided to work

on it to help protect it. He was born in the diaspora to a family that was closely connected with its culture and watched the increasing waves of Assyrian immigrants arrive in Australia, emptying out communities in their original homelands:

“My ethnic group is stateless, and my culture is threatened due to lack of recognition, ethnic discrimination, and religious persecution.”

This made him interested in learning more about it in order to preserve it, the language and the heritage.

He reported not being able to remember how he learned the two languages but found no problems in learning them or keeping them separate. However, he encountered some initial difficulties when he began school as a child:

“I had problems with appropriacy, politeness, and mixing codes – often translating Assyrian expressions into English and vice versa.”

He reported being fluent in Arabic, having been exposed to the language through music and film, as well as connections with neighboring Arabic-speaking communities. When he was a child, he also studied French and Dutch. Being bilingual helped him to learn these languages - with Assyrian being a mediating language for Arabic and, English being a mediating language for French and Dutch due to similarities in grammar, giving him an advantage over monolingual Australian peers.

Neil identifies strongly as an ethnic Assyrian and an Aramaic speaker, but he interestingly sees himself as somewhat distant from identifying as an Australian due to the cultural differences and values he was raised with. It is seen in Neil’s case that authentication and bilingual identity formation are interrelated issues. Neil often identified languages with people as he was growing up. As he felt more connected to his own family and ethnic community, he feels closely affiliated with Assyrian Aramaic. Because he sometimes experienced racism, he associated the dominant language, English, with his negative feelings toward the speakers of it. Yet, there was a shift in his feelings

toward English as he grew up. When discussing problem-solving, he sometimes focused on the intercultural aspects, which eventually allowed him to relate to both ways of thinking:

“How would an Australian think, and an Assyrian think about the problem?”

He has thus developed a conscious ability to switch between languages and cultural frameworks when the need arises. He seems to regard his own experience of being the son of multilingual parents who are part of a diaspora community living in a country with a totally different culture as rather unique.

Career Prospects

Neil described the hardship of being raised by a family from a low socio-economic and immigrant background. However, as he has developed a bilingual identity in favor of his heritage language, he decided to study Semitic languages. His decision to study Semitic languages such as Arabic and Hebrew, and to specialize in Syriac was mostly out of interest, but also a way to improve his language skills, as modern Assyrian is related to those languages and much of its vocabulary and expressions are derived from Syriac, and as a way of certification.

Neil’s decision to study Semitic languages at the University of Sydney enabled him to examine cognate languages from an academic perspective and envision career trajectories that he can pursue as a language and cultural specialist in the academic world. As he has developed a deep interest in teaching and acquired some work experience with language acquisition, he decided to tailor his linguistic abilities with his interests and experience. Hence, he decided to focus on teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) as well:

“The decision to focus on TESOL was because of my passion for being able to learn methods of teaching to create future learning materials for Assyrian Aramaic to preserve my critically endangered language.”

Neil is aware of his linguistic ability and its possibilities for the future, particularly mentioning the general need for interpreters and language professionals:

“I have more options than a monolingual, and I do not discount the chance of using Assyrian Aramaic or Arabic.”

From his own experience, he is highly aware of the need for bilingual translators and interpreters by non-governmental organizations dealing with refugees, and of his own ability to fulfill such a role. He cited other possible areas of language use as academia, international relations, humanitarian/aid work, human resources, and translation and interpretation, all possible career choices that can also be pursued. He is strongly motivated to maintain his bilingualism. He currently has no fear of losing bilingualism, expressing a love of languages as an advantage, and speaks either of them whenever possible. He emphasized, however, that his language ability did not necessarily make him a better person than others, i.e., his interest was intrinsic rather than motivated by any status or material value. However, he is aware of the possible economic value of his language skills.

Being a Non-Native Speaker Does Not Equate to Accomplishing Less: “Education Weighs Significantly More Than That of Being a Native Speaker.” (Sophie)

Sophie is a 31-year-old woman born and raised in the southern region of the Philippines. She is the youngest one of her seven siblings, and they were brought up in an extended family setting in a rural environment. Growing up in the southern region of the Philippines, she learned 4 languages to cope with both daily and academic interactions:

“English, Filipino, Bisaya, and Maranao are the languages that I have known since my childhood.”

Sophie currently resides in Turkey and is a graduate student majoring in civilization studies. She started learning Turkish in her late 20s when she was

first accepted to the programs on scholarship. Therefore, her case is referred to as emergent bilingualism as “the term emergent bilingual not only seeks an equality in the education of language minority students” (Turnbull 2016, p. 3) but also considers language learning to be a journey in which bilingualism is considered a continuum:

“I am exposed to a number of distinct languages since my childhood, but I have developed varying levels of skills in each language depending on the domains.”

As she reported, at schools, private and government institutions, English and Filipino are often used in the Philippines when local languages are often limited to settings within the community. English is formally taught from kindergarten up to university levels. It is the medium of instruction in all educational institutions. There is also a Filipino course at every level of education. For Maranao and Bisaya, these languages are not taught through the formal teaching system:

“Locals simply absorbed the way they are supposed to be spoken when they were children and retained onwards. Interactions with those who spoke these languages have aided one another, to some degree, to be competent enough to speak these languages.”

Bilingual Identity

Sophie identifies languages within the cultures they were born into:

“Language both shapes and is shaped within the culture and that language is the voice of a culture. I believe knowing the language, not just being able to speak it, is equated to knowing the culture.”

She reports that when a person dwells in an environment or a scenario where two different languages, hence cultures, interact, then the cohesiveness of communicating with people of different cultures becomes apparently effective. In this spectrum, she identifies herself with the cultures in which languages are spoken. She says her heritage language Maranao is mostly used by the elders

due to the nationalization program of the educational system wherein English and Filipino were prioritized over other languages. Even though she reports to be a member of the Maranao tribe and a speaker of the language that is also called Maranao, she says there has never been a first language in their community but a mixture of languages. The mixture in a sense that at times conversations shifted from English to Filipino to Bisaya to Maranao and vice versa. Often, words from all those languages are used to form a sentence.

Besides the languages and cultures she was exposed to in the Philippines, Turkish culture and thus Turkish community during her stay in Turkey have enabled her to gain transformative experiences. As Turkish has been used for casual communication with people representing different backgrounds within Turkish society for the past 6 years, she says it has been of great aid in her perceptions of the world. In this sense, it could be suggested that there is also not a first culture but a mixture of languages and cultures that help shape her identity as a bilingual speaker as she considers languages and cultures as a blended entity.

Career Prospects

The benefits of bilingualism in terms of career advancement are not limited to language-related occupations as seen in the case of Sophie as she is a graduate student majoring in civilization studies:

“I have acquired indispensable aid in relation to my perceptions of the various concepts in social and scientific domains thanks to my exposure to a number of distinct cultures.”

This was what led her to be affiliated with research projects that pertain to a wide range of areas from health sciences to philosophy, politics, and history. Tailoring these distinct skills, she says, in the near future, she is planning to be involved in public policy research as a professional. In her quest to become a transliterate, she considers being literate in several languages a multilingual ability, which paved the path to see the world from a multilingual perspective.

Discussion

In this study, two research questions were probed. The participants' answers were compiled to address predetermined codes designated with our research questions. We firstly explored the perceptions of adult bilinguals on their development of a bilingual identity. This is the first subsection of the discussion section. The next subsection addresses the second research question, the influence of one's bilingual identity on their career choices and prospects.

The Perceptions of Adult Bilinguals on Their Development of a Bilingual Identity

Linguistic complementarity of bilinguals heavily depends on their individual histories, which indicate unity with their social spheres (Hammer, 2017) and are sociolinguistic manifestations of their cultural identity (Joseph, 2004). John's identity shift is similarly linked with the languages spoken in his immediate surroundings. Hence, his early affiliation with English instead of Spanish spoken by his paternal migrant family indicate sociolinguistic patterns in his bilingual identity. He has gone through conflicting processes in his childhood, which have affected his bilingual identity formation. He, first, rejected Spanish and therefore bilingualism as he associated one language of the dyad, Spanish, with his negative feelings related to his parents' divorce when he was 2. This notion brings us the fact that preferences and experiences play an active role in a bilingual speaker's identity formation process (Herrera & Wedin, 2010; Wong, Athanses, & Banes, 2017), despite the common notion that being raised in a bilingual environment does automatically render children bilingual speakers. The case of John indicates that the individual is also an active participant in the bilingual identity formation process, instead of assuming that being exposed to a second language is adequate to embrace a bilingual identity.

He embraced Spanish though, only when he started spending more time with his father in his childhood. He enjoyed playing musical instruments with his father and learned Spanish songs, as a result of which he felt affiliated with Latin music and culture. Therefore, he was an active participant and

controller of his bilingual identity formation.

The case of Neil follows a similar pattern, in which his struggles to preserve his heritage languages indicate his active participation in his bilingual identity formation process. Examples to this notion could be shown with his active problem-solving process with questions in his mind such as *How would an Australian vs. Assyrian think about the problem?*, instead of simply relying on either one of the languages and cultural problem-solving resources. During this questioning process, he benefited from all the culture-related knowledge at his disposal to find solutions that transcend what the sum of his language-related knowledge could individually suggest. In other words, he actively sought answers to his individual problems, and solutions arose from a combination of all the languages at his disposal. To this end, he embraced both his heritage languages and the majority language he was exposed to. As a heritage speaker who looks for ways to make most of his linguistic resources, Neil is a vivid example of the issue delineated by Brecht and Ingold (1998), who claim that heritage language speakers are “an important, but largely untapped, reservoir of linguistic competence” (p. 2.). Neil considered English and Assyrian Aramaic as a complementary unit rather than quite distinct languages when he decided to take TESOL in order to create future learning materials for Assyrian Aramaic. This was a quite unique perspective and, in many ways, this fresh view on languages exemplifies translanguaging. As Garcia and Lei (2015) assert, translanguaging provides bilinguals with the opportunity to use their “full linguistic and semiotic repertoire” (p. 226) and Neil would like to benefit from his linguistic and semiotic repertoire of Assyrian Aramaic and English. In addition to considering teaching languages as a possible career prospective, in his imagined community Neil also would like to help refugees and is aware of his own ability to fulfill such a role by working for non-governmental organizations or doing humanitarian/aid work. As Pavlenko and Norton (2007) define it, “humans are capable, through our imagination, of perceiving a connection with people beyond our immediate social networks” (p. 670), which is called imagined community. Yet, in his self-perception language ability does not necessarily make him a better person than others even though he is aware of the possible value of his language skills. What makes his language skills valuable in practice is receiving education in

languages and contributing to the society he is affiliated with.

The case of Sophie suggests that languages learned later in life continue to influence the bilingual identity process. Her exposure to Turkish, firstly in her 20s, opened up the chance to embrace transformative experiences, blending her home languages and experiences with those she acquired in Turkey. To this end, we suggest that bilingual identity formation does not have rigid end (Turnbull, 2016) but is instead a fluid stance in a continuum (Larsen-Freeman, 2011).

Francis (2010), in his quest to trace models of bilingualism, posits that second language learner with non-native “knowledge of the target language nevertheless may perform adequately or even more effectively than the average native speaker in a wide variety of language use contexts because of... skillful mastery of pertinent, culturally specified, pragmatic rules” (p. 145). This phenomenon defines Sophie’s mastery in Turkish school settings even though she started his journey as a second language learner of Turkish. From this perspective, we can see that native speakers should not be the unique model for language learners (Ping, 2017). Sophie has developed language expertise in academic settings in Turkish by transferring her academic language skills from her L1(s) and L2(s). When it comes to the daily use of Turkish, Sophie reveals her awareness of the semiotic means of languages (Hornberger, & Link, 2012). She often identifies languages via culture – with concrete examples within her immediate surrounding and the interaction between Turkish culture and Turkish language. Her recognition of the shift in her identity as she meets people from different backgrounds supports the notions by Teng (2019) as “identity can be transformational and transformative” (p. 43).

How One’s Bilingual Identity Influences Career Choices and Prospects

Robertson et al. (2013) indicate that “bilingual practitioners have the potential to draw on their funds of knowledge” (p. 610) since “diverse resources nestle within each other and emerge from [these] funds of knowledge” (p. 611). Hence, “syncretizing languages, literacies, learning, discourse styles, and

experiences create something that is greater than the sum of the constituent parts, this new energy enables them to be a head taller than in any one of their separate worlds" (Gregory et al., 2003, p. 323). The case of John as a linguist supports these hypotheses as he benefited from his bilingual resources as an asset in hard circumstances in which he was raised by a single mother. Despite his earlier negative feelings towards Spanish in his early childhood, his work on the Spanish translation of some documents of the company he worked for when he was at the community college sparked his academic interest in linguistics. He considered his bilingual skills as a career asset and got accepted into the department of linguistics. This indicates complete adoption of a bilingual identity as an English and Spanish speaker who no longer discriminate against languages but instead view them as a resource to benefit from.

The career trajectory of John, from being raised by a single woman to becoming a speech linguist working as a contractor for Google, is a tangible example of how early bilingualism could pave the path to pursue a promising career. Besides the benefits such as the potential to connect to extended family, facilitation of travel and broadening of social spheres, and enrichment from widened horizons from language, arts, and culture, bilingualism provided him with "increased opportunity for employment in a global economy" (Bialystok, 2016, p. 675). An important proportion of these aforementioned advantages of bilingualism come into being in John's life.

The notion of language as a resource (Ruiz, 1984), instead of language as a problem has taken deep roots in research on bilingualism (Herrera & Wedin, 2010). As Agirdag (2014) states "[w]hat is generally missing in this literature is a strengths perspective, that is, an investigation of what immigrants might have (i.e., being proficient in an immigrant language)" (p. 449). Therefore, being proficient in their immigrant language might also pave the path to make a living out of it. Neil has pursued a career to make most of the literature in teaching English as a second language to design teacher training materials to teach his mother tongue. To this end, he repurposes English, making it an end to produce learning materials in another language.

The career choice of Neil is heavily impacted by his identity as

a bilingual speaker who aims to preserve his heritage languages. He felt closely affiliated with his heritage languages and this was what led him to pursue a career in Semitic languages and Syriac studies. In his case, Neil does not only take his bilingual skills granted to pursue a career and find employment, but he also feels responsible to protect them. To this end, he decided to produce language learning materials in his heritage language, blending his experiences in the field with the majority language when he decided to take TESOL credentials. However, he is also aware that his bilingual skills might also bring him economic returns with the rising demands for bilingual translators and speakers at governmental departments and private organizations.

Bilinguals' "linguistic capital is integral to their affective, cognitive, social, cultural, academic, and economic capital that can potentially radicalize their experiences as agents of change in their own lives" (Babino & Stewart, 2019, p. 155). Sophie's case is a reminder of bilingualism considered as a multimodular system that is comprised of various linguistic, sociocultural, affective, and other relevant mediating knowledge of a person emerging when acquiring a new language (Lin & He, 2017). In other words, she has acquired new perceptions of the world when she has acquired new languages. These perceptions led the way to her academic interests in civilization studies thanks to various emerging concepts presented to her with each language she was exposed to.

Cummins (2001) positioned multilingual and multicultural resources as an advantage in a society's ability to play an important social and economic role on the world stage. Sophie's understanding of the world through a multimodular perspective exemplifies how linguistic capital transcends economic gaining, which therefore brings her novel mindsets to envision the world. It is possible that this novel mindset has enabled her to conduct interdisciplinary research blending civilization studies with philosophy, politics, and history.

Conclusion

The study has implications for language teachers, school administrators, and other private and government organizations. As seen in the cases of

the participants, feeling affiliated to the languages learners are exposed to plays a central role in their language learning process. The findings indicate that simply being exposed to two or more languages even in childhood may not necessarily yield bilingualism as children actively embrace or reject languages they are exposed to. Secondly, the career prospects of bilingual speakers should not be considered limited within the spectrum of language-related studies and occupations. Since bilingualism is beyond the linguistic aspect of it, career prospects it brings transcend the linguistic realm and is heavily related to how a bilingual person views the world, taking advantage of languages, cultures, experiences, and other mediating factors that influence one's thinking system. In the longer term, it enhances people with a new way of meaning-making process which leads to one enhanced sociocultural and socioeconomic identity.

References

- Agirdag, O. (2014). The long-term effects of bilingualism on children of immigration: student bilingualism and future earnings. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 17(4), 449–464.
- Babino, A., & Stewart, M. A. (2019). Multiple pathways to multilingual investment: a collective case study of self-identified Mexican students in the U.S. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 13(3), 152–167.
- Barrett, A., McGuinness, S., & O'Brien, M. (2012). The Immigrant Earnings Disadvantage across the earnings and skills distributions: The case of immigrants from the EU's new member states. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 50(3), 457–481.
- Bialystok, E. (2016). Bilingual education for young children: review of the effects and consequences. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 21(6), 666–679.
- Blackaby, D., Lesley, D. G., Murphy, P., & O'Leary, N. (2002). White/ethnic minority earnings and employment differentials in Britain: Evidence from the LFS. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 54, 270–97.
- Block, D. (2007). Bilingualism: Four assumptions and four responses.

Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 1(1), 66–82.

- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Polity Press.
- Brecht, R., & Ingold, C. (1998). Tapping a national resource: Heritage languages in the United States. *Eric Digest*.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED424791.pdf>
- Bucholtz, M. (2003). Sociolinguistic nostalgia and the authentication of identity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 7(3), 398–416.
- Burkert, C., & Zeibert, H. (2007). Labour market outcomes after vocational training in Germany. Equal opportunities for migrants and natives?, IAB Discussion Paper No. 31, Institut für Arbeitsmarkt und Berufsforschung, Nurnberg, Germany.
- Callahan, R., & Gandara, P. (2014). Contextualizing bilingualism in the labor market: New destinations, established enclaves and the information age. In R. M. Callahan & P. C. Gandara (Eds.), *The Bilingual Advantage: Language, Literacy and the US Labor Market* (pp. 3–16). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Carlson, S., & Meltzoff, A. (2008). Bilingual experience and executive functioning in young children. *Developmental Science*, 11(2), 282–298.
- Chiswick, B., & Miller, P. (1995). The Endogeneity between language and earnings: International analyses. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 13(2), 246–288.
- Chiswick, B., & Miller, P. (2007). *The Economics of Language*. Routledge.
- Cresswell, J., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry, *Theory into Practice*, 39(3), 124–130
- Creswell, J., & Plano Clark, V. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Cummins, J. (2001). Bilingual children's mother tongue: Why is it important for education? *Sprogforum*, 19, 15–20.
- Duff, P. A., Anderson, T., Ilnyckyj, R., VanGaya, E., & Wang, R. (2013). *Learning Chinese: Linguistic, sociocultural and narrative perspectives*. Mouton De Gruyter.

- Dustmann, C., & Van Soest, A. (2002). Language and the earnings of immigrants. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 55(3), 473–492.
- Fang, G. (2011). Linguistic capital: Continuity and change in educational language policies for South Asians in Hong Kong primary schools. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 12(2), 251–263
- Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America's children: Key national indicators of well-Being*. 2017. Government Printing Office.
- Flynn, N. (2013). Linguistic capital and the linguistic field for teachers unaccustomed to linguistic difference, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 34(2), 225–242.
- Francis, N. (2010). Modular perspectives on bilingualism. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 5(3), 141–161.
- García, O., & Wei, L. (2015). Translanguaging, bilingualism, and bilingual education. In W. E. Wright, S. Boun, & O. García (Eds.), *The handbook of bilingual and multilingual education* (pp. 223–240). Palgrave.
- Gregory, E., Lytra, V., Choudhury, H., Ilankuberan, A., Kwapong, A., & Woodham, M. (2003). Syncretism as a creative act of mind: The narratives of children from four faith communities in London. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 13(3), 322–347.
- Grin, F. (2003). Language planning and economics. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 4(1), 1–66.
- Grosjean, F. (2010). *Bilingual Life and Reality*. Harvard University Press.
- H'madoun, M., & Nonneman, W. (2012). Explaining differences in job retention between alien and nonalien workers after an in-company training. *Applied Economics*, 44 (1), 93–103.
- Hakuta, K. (1986). *Mirror of language: The debate on bilingualism*. Basic Books.
- Halliday, M. (1990). *The place of dialogue in children's construction of meaning*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Analysis of Dialogue. (3rd, Bologna, Italy, May 2–5, 1990).
- Hammer, K. (2017). They speak what language to whom! Acculturation and language use for communicative domains in bilinguals. *Language & Communication*, 56, 42–54.

- Herrera, L., & Wedin, A. (2010). Bilingualism and bilingual education in a complex context. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 23*(3), 235–249.
- Hornberger, N., & Link, H. (2012). Translanguaging and transnational literacies in multilingual classrooms: a biliteracy lens, *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 15*(3), 261–278.
- Joseph, J. (2004). *Language and Identity: National, Ethnic, Religious*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kalashnikova, M., & Mattock, K. (2014). Maturation of executive functioning skills in early sequential bilingualism. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 17*(1), 111–123.
- Kapa, L., & Colombo, J. (2013). Attentional control in early and later bilingual children. *Cognitive Development, 28*(3), 233–246.
- Kim, A., Park, A., & Lust, B. (2018). Simultaneous vs. successive bilingualism among preschool-aged children: a study of four-year-old Korean–English bilinguals in the USA. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 21*(2), 164–178.
- Knox, S., & Burkard, A. W. (2009). Qualitative research interviews, *Psychotherapy Research, 19*(4–5), 566–575.
- Kovács, A., & Mehler, J. (2009). Flexible learning of multiple speech structures in bilingual infants. *Science, 325*, 611–612.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2011). A complexity theory approach to second language development/ acquisition. In D. Atkinson (ed.) *Alternative approaches to second language acquisition*. Routledge.
- Lin, A. M. Y., & He, P. (2017). Translanguaging as Dynamic Activity Flows in CLIL Classrooms, *Journal of Language, Identity & Education, 16*(4), 228–244.
- Makalela, L. (2015). Moving out of linguistic boxes: the effects of translanguaging strategies for multilingual classrooms. *Language and Education, 29*(3), 200–217.
- Miller, E. R. (2014). *The language of adult immigrants: Agency in the making*. Multilingual Matters.
- Mitchell, R., Myles, F., & Marsden, E. (2013). *Second language learning theories*. Routledge.
- Odom, S. L., Barton, E. E., Reichow, B., Swaminathan, H., & Pustejovsky, J. E.

- (2018). Between-case standardized effect size analysis of single case designs: Examination of the two methods. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 79*, 88–96.
- Pavlenko, A. (2001). Poststructuralist approaches to the study of social factors in second language learning and use. In V. Cook (Ed.) *Portraits of the L2 User*. Multilingual Matters.
- Pavlenko, A., & Norton, B. (2007). Imagined communities, identity, and English language learning. In J. Cummins, & C. Davison (Eds.), *International Handbook of English Language Teaching*. Springer.
- Pearson, Z. B. (1998). Assessing lexical development in bilingual babies and toddlers. *International Journal of Bilingualism, 2*(3), 347–372.
- Ping, W. (2017). Understanding bilingual education: an overview of key notions in the literature and the implications for Chinese university EFL education. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 47*(1), 85–102.
- Richards, L., & Morse, J. M. (2013). *Read me first for a user's guide to qualitative methods*. Sage Publications.
- Robertson, L. H., Drury, R., Cable, C. (2014). Silencing bilingualism: a day in a life of a bilingual practitioner. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 17*(5), 610–623.
- Ruiz, R. (1984). Orientations in language planning. *NABE Journal, 8*(2), 15–34.
- Teng, M. F. (2019). Learner identity in foreign language education: Research nexus and implications. In: *Autonomy, Agency, and Identity in Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language*. Springer.
- Turnbull, B. (2016). Reframing foreign language learning as bilingual education: Epistemological changes towards the emergent bilingual. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. Advance online publication.
- Vannest, K. J., Peltier, C., & Haas, A. (2018). Results reporting in single case experiments and single case meta-analysis. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 79*, 10–18.
- Vygotsky, L. (1986). *Thought and Language*. MIT Press.
- Werker J. F., & Byers-Heinlein, K. (2008). Bilingualism in infancy: First steps in perception and comprehension. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 12*(4),

144–151.

- Wong, J. W., Athanases, S. Z., & Banes, L. C. (2017). Developing as an agentive bilingual teacher: self-reflexive and student-learning inquiry as teacher education resources. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 23(2), 153–169.
- Zarobe, Y. R., Sierra, J. M., & Puerto, G. M. (2011). *Content and foreign language integrated learning: contributions to multilingualism in European contexts (Linguistic insights)*. Peter Lang AG.

Onur Ural

Arizonos universitetas, JAV
onurural@arizona.edu

Kenan Dikilitas

Stavangerio universitetas, Norvegija
kenan.dikilitas@uis.no

DVIKALBIŲ SPECIALIŠTŲ TAPATYBĖS FORMAVIMASIS IR KARJEROS PERSPEKTYVOS: KALBŲ ĮGŪDŽIŲ DERINIMAS SIEKIANT SUKURTI NAUJAS KARJEROS GALIMYBES

Santrauka. Plačiai paplitusi klaidinga nuomonė apie dvikalbystę, kad sąlytis su antrąja kalba vaikystėje automatiškai padaro vaikus dvikalbiais, ir kad savo subalansuotus kalbinius įgūdžius jie galės pritaikyti visose būsimos karjeros srityse. Deja, šis įsitikinimas yra klaidingas ir neatspindi daugumos dvikalbių realios gyvenimo patirties. Šiuo tyrimu, sutelkus dėmesį į atskirus atvejus, buvo siekiama atskleisti (1) dvikalbio tapatumo formavimąsi ir (2) anksti ir nuosekliai tapusių dvikalbiais karjeros perspektyvas. Analizuoti duomenys surinkti taikant individualias apklausas ir asmeninius interviu su suaugusiais dvikalbiais profesionalais. Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidė, kad sąmoningas įsitraukimas į kalbas su kuriomis jie susidūrė vaikystėje, atlieka aktyvų vaidmenį dvikalbių kalbėtojų tapatybės formavimosi procese ir daro įtaką jų karjeros siekiams, ir paneigė vyraujančią nuomonę, kad norint tapti dvikalbiu užtenka turėti sąlytį su antrąja kalba bendruomenėje. Šio tyrimo rezultatai gali būti svarbūs dvikalbiams asmenims renkantis karjerą, nes rodo, kad dvikalbių asmenų karjeros siekiai peržengia su kalba susijusių profesijų ribas.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: dvikalbė tapatybė; dvikalbis profesionalas; karjeros perspektyvos; tapatybės formavimasis; kalbinis kapitalas.