
CHILDHOOD BILINGUALISM:

ASPECTS OF LINGUISTIC, COGNITIVE,
AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Edited by
Peter Homel
Michael Palij
Doris Aaronson



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Aspects of Linguistic
Cognitive, and Social Development

Edited by
Peter Homel
Michael Palij
Doris Aaronson
New York University

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Preface

This volume is based primarily on a conference on childhood bilingualism held at New York University on June 25 and 26, 1982. The idea for the conference grew out of a series of discussions between two of the editors, Peter Homel and Michael Palić, who had substantial interests in exploring the nature of bilingual cognition and the effect of bilingualism on psychological development. We, the editors, were struck by the wealth of research but were appalled by the lack of communication between researchers in “mainstream” developmental psychology—those looking at language development in monolingual children—and researchers looking at similar developmental processes in bilingual children. We thought it would be of great interest and practical value to bring together researchers from both areas in an attempt to stimulate dialogue and interaction between the two groups.

The first step toward holding the conference was taken when Paul Dores, of SUNY, Stony Brook, gave us a copy of a request for proposals for the Society for Research in Child Development’s (SRCD) series of study groups and summer institutes. Our initial proposal to SRCD for funding for a summer study group focused on four areas of child development and how bilingualism might affect each one: language acquisition, cognitive functioning, social cognition and communication, and personality and emotional development. SRCD approved the proposal, adding the issue of bidialectism and its relationship to bilingualism as another area of focus.

The volume contains most of the presentations made at the conference and follows, with minor changes, the general organization of the conference. During each session, two “bilingual” researchers (i.e., doing research in the bilingualism) presented a general review of the issues within a topic area and gave

examples of their own research within this context. A “monolingual” researcher (i.e., one oriented toward research in monolingual development) then presented a discussion of the issues raised by the two bilingual researchers, indicating the points of contact and departure between bilingual and monolingual research.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank SRCD for recognizing the importance of the study of childhood bilingualism and for providing funding for the conference. In particular, we thank Dorothy H. Eichorn of the University of California—Berkeley, who was the Executive Officer of SRCD at the time of the conference, and Viola Moulton Buck, her assistant; Gray Garwood of Tulane University, who was the chairperson in charge of SRCD’s study group program; and Margaret Spencer of Emory University, who was SRCD’s observer at the conference.

Many people were very helpful at various stages, in both making the conference a reality and helping to complete this book. We thank Dick Koppenaar, Chairman of the Psychology Department of New York University, for his support of the conference. We also acknowledge the following people and departments at New York University for their help in setting up the conference: Peter Chepus of the Office for Funded Accounts, Michael Robbins of the Budget and Fund Accounting Department, and Sherry Daulet of the Psychology Department, who helped in handling the expenses for the conference; Jacqueline Downing of the Physics Department, and Grace Sun of the Housing Office, who helped make the arrangements for conference space and housing for the conference participants; the Catering Service of New York University for providing refreshments and meals during the conference; and Felix Scherer of the Psychology Department, for his technical assistance in setting up the equipment for the conference. We are also deeply thankful to Sally Thomason and Laura Brighenti for both their moral support and material help before, during, and after the conference.

Above all, we are indebted to Larry Erlbaum and Carol Lachman of Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Many difficulties are attendant with publishing a book that tries to span an area as large as childhood bilingualism. We sincerely feel that without their help and seemingly inexhaustible patience, the preparation of this volume would not have been possible.

Childhood Bilingualism

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INTRODUCTION

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Childhood Bilingualism: Introduction and Overview

Peter Homel
Michael Palij
Doris Aaronson
New York University

In 1962, Peal and Lambert published the results of a study comparing bilingual and monolingual children on various measures of intelligence and achievement. Their findings were surprising, at least in light of certain assumptions that had been prevalent in child psychology up to that time. They found no evidence to indicate any sort of intellectual deficiency in bilingual children. The performance of bilinguals on all measures was either equivalent or superior to that of their monolingual comparison group. These results were in clear contradiction to a belief that had come to be accepted as truism by psychologists and laymen alike, especially in North America: The acquisition of two languages in childhood impairs intellectual development—it leads to mental confusion or difficulties in coordinating language and thought in children. The results obtained by Peal and Lambert suggested that there are no detrimental effects of bilingualism, and there may even be some cognitive advantages.

Peal and Lambert's study had a major impact on at least two aspects of childhood bilingualism. First, it sparked a renewed interest in the study of childhood bilingualism among psychologists and educators. Second (and perhaps even more important), it provided one of the major justifications for the establishment of bilingual education programs during the late 1960s and early 1970s, especially in Canada and the United States.

The number of studies dealing with childhood bilingualism increased dramatically throughout the rest of the 1960s and 1970s. Most of this research concentrated on cognitive development, basically replicating the results of Peal and Lambert either with different measures of cognitive performance or with different samples of bilingual children. A few studies looked at the social and personal aspects of growing up with two languages. Yet another set of studies considered

the social phenomena closely related to bilingualism—biculturalism and bidialectism—and the role they play in the development of the child.

By 1982, research into childhood bilingualism had proliferated to such an extent that a major effort was necessary to bring together the available data on childhood bilingualism and provide some theoretical framework within which to understand them. On June 21–22, 1982, a study group was held at New York University entitled “Childhood Bilingualism: Aspects of Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Development.” Sponsored under the auspices of the Society for Research in Child Development and organized by Peter Homel and Michael Palij with the help of Doris Aaronson, the aims of this study group were (a) to summarize the current work on bilingualism and make it accessible to mainstream developmental psychologists; and (b) to provide researchers in both the bilingual and the monolingual research areas an opportunity to develop an integrated model of the developmental processes operating in the bilingual child.

The structure of the study group was specifically designed to achieve these ends. Researchers in bilingualism from a number of disciplines, including psychology, education, and linguistics, were invited to deliver papers reviewing specific aspects of childhood bilingualism. The papers were organized into sections covering the following areas of interest: language acquisition, cognitive development, social and emotional development, and the relationship of biculturalism and bidialectism to bilingualism. Each section also included a “monolingual” discussant—a researcher in the particular area (e.g., language acquisition) whose own work had been done primarily with monolingual children. This structure encouraged discussion and dialogue not only among scientists from various areas of bilingual research, but also between bilingual and monolingual researchers looking at similar aspects of child development.

It was not the purpose of the conference to evaluate existing governmental policies about bilingual education nor to make recommendations for changing such policies. Rather, the conference was intended to provide an impartial summary and synthesis of the research in childhood bilingualism and bilingualism’s effect on development. Ultimately, however, it was hoped that providing such a compilation of information about childhood bilingualism would prove to be of benefit to those involved making policy decisions concerning bilingualism and bilingual education.

The present volume is the end result of the SRCD study group on childhood bilingualism. It is intended as something more than a record of the proceedings of papers and presentations given during the two days during which the study group met. In preparing their manuscripts for this book, the original participants in the study group were encouraged to revise their original presentations in light of comments or discussions that arose during the course of the study group, as well as to address points of convergence or divergence they saw between their own presentations and those of the others. The result is a far greater degree of integration among the various papers than would have been possible in a proceedings-type volume.

The book is divided into several topic areas: (a) language acquisition and processing; (b) cognitive functioning, style, and development; (c) social and emotional development; and (d) bidialectism and bilingualism. Following the structure of the conference (at which most of these papers were originally presented), each topic area has two or three chapters written by researchers in bilingualism and a discussion chapter by a researcher whose main work has been in a monolingual context. The following is a brief overview of these chapters.

INTRODUCTION

The accompanying chapter in the Introductory section is by Peter Homel and Michael Palij and it provides a social and historical description of bilingualism and language policy in four countries: Canada, the Soviet Union, the United States and the People's Republic of China. In their concluding section, Homel and Palij discuss the future of bilingualism and linguistic diversity in each country, as well as some of the possible psychological relationships between childhood bilingualism and the social context in which it occurs.

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND PROCESSING

The first chapter in this section by Kenji Hakuta focuses on the processes involved in the acquisition of a second language and how these processes contrast with those involved in first language acquisition. Hakuta examines these processes and how they are affected by such factors as cognitive maturity, similarity in linguistic structure of the first and second language, transfer from the first language to the second, and age effects. He concludes by arguing that the best way to guide future research in first and second language acquisition is to adopt a conceptual framework that identifies language universals and typologies (i.e., categorical membership features that identify how one language systematically differs from another). Within this framework, research on second language acquisition is seen to be complementary to research on first language acquisition instead of being separate from or tangential to it.

Next, James Cummins examines the interrelationships among bilingualism, linguistic proficiency, and metalinguistic awareness. According to Cummins, it is easy to misperceive these factors as being categorical (saying, for example, that a child is either bilingual or not), thereby glossing over the fact that these factors constitute continua—that the performance of individual children may vary considerably along any one of these factors. Cummins provides a two-dimensional scheme for understanding the interrelationship among these three factors: one dimension reflects the degree to which there is “contextual” support for understanding a communication (by context Cummins means the sociocul-

tural setting in which the communication is being made); the second dimension reflects the degree of cognitive involvement for the task to be performed.

The first dimension ranges from one extreme, which can be referred to as context-embedded—where a communication is embedded in an appropriate situation, a context in which to understand the communication—to the other extreme of being context-reduced, where there are very few contextual aids in interpreting the communication. The dimension of cognitive involvement ranges from those tasks that require little cognitive processing to those that are very demanding in processing demands. This model allows Cummins to characterize a number of different studies on bilingual proficiency and metalinguistic awareness.

The chapter by Aaronson and Ferres examines some of the differences they have found in English language processing by native English speakers and Chinese-English bilinguals. Striking differences between the two groups seem to be directly attributable to differences in the structures of the English and Chinese languages. One of the most intriguing conclusions drawn from these results is that traditional grammatical categories found in English may not have exact counterparts in Chinese. Differences in linguistic performance appear to be related to the bilingual's knowledge and experience with the differences in both languages, especially when the languages derive from different language families.

Martin Braine provides a discussion of these three chapters focusing on the implications of each for theory building and future research by monolingual researchers in language acquisition and processing.

BILINGUALISM AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Palij and Homel examine the question of how bilingualism affects cognitive development in Chapter 7. This chapter is divided into three subsections: (a) a historical review of studies relating cognitive development and processing to bilingualism, (b) theoretical issues involved in directing research in this area, and (c) methodological problems with past and present studies and the use of contemporary statistical techniques in constructing more comprehensive and valid models.

The next chapter by Edward DeAvila examines how intelligence and cognitive style, interest and motivation, and educational opportunity and access all interact to influence school behaviors. DeAvila argues that the poor academic performance seen in many school situations is not directly related to students being bilingual, or even directly related to other factors that are related to being bilingual. Instead, it is the interaction of the three previously stated factors that gives rise to the poor academic performance. For school performance to improve, these factors must be faced and effectively dealt with. DeAvila reviews a

study that clearly identifies these factors and suggests one means of improving students' school performance.

Joseph Glick concludes this section with a discussion of the chapters by Palij and Homel, and DeAvila. He raises issues regarding the role of traditional goals in education and how the methods for implementing them often overlook the specific needs of students. This becomes particularly important in the consideration of classroom goals and performance of students from different sociocultural backgrounds and ethnolinguistic groups.

BILINGUALISM AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In this section, Chapter 10 by Donald Taylor focuses on social psychological factors that promote or inhibit the acquisition of a second language. Taylor stresses the importance of intergroup relations, the sociocultural goals of each group, and how these factors influence the acquisition of second language by children from different groups. He describes a possible model for depicting such intergroup situations: a 2×2 classification scheme where one dimension reflects either positive or negative relations among groups, and the other dimension reflects whether a group desires to maintain its own culture and language. Taylor details the social and psychological consequences that follow from each of these possible conditions within this scheme and provides examples from contemporary society.

Wallace Lambert's chapter is concerned with how experiences in bilingual and bicultural settings affect the attitudes and perspectives of the developing child. He goes on to show how these attitudes and perspectives then influence language learning and the development of bilingualism. Lambert presents examples of some of the historical forces that have affected both social attitudes and research in Canada. He also reviews the findings of the Canadian language-immersion programs and how attitudes and language learning were affected within them.

E. Tory Higgins provides the discussion for this section. He ties together the threads common to the several chapters and indicates how new research on the role of social cognition may provide additional insights into the relationship between social reality and cognitive functioning.

BIDIALECTISM

Although the distinction between what constitutes linguistic variation and what constitutes dialectal variation may be contestable, bilingualism itself may be described as language variation at the interlanguage level and bidialectism as the study of language variation at the intralanguage level. Dialects represent system-

atic and coherent linguistic systems that operate within a larger monolingual framework. For example, Black English has specific features that identify it as a bona fide language system that also uses many Standard English grammatical forms and words.

William Hall and William Nagy examine how differences in communication patterns between black and white children can be attributed to differences in the children's cultural background. Hall and Nagy report that black children use *state* words like "think," "know," "happen," "see," and "want" much less often in their classrooms than they do at home, where the level of usage of such words is comparable to the home-usage level by white children. Apparently black children experience some sort of discontinuity between their home and school environments that results in reduced usage of state words in school. This finding contradicts the notion that black children come from linguistically deprived backgrounds and indicates that the problems that black children encounter in school may be due to factors that are far more subtle than has been previously considered.

Next, John Roy, in his chapter, reviews the development of Black English and contrasts its development with that of bilingualism by immigrant groups who had not forcibly been brought to American shores. He begins with the development of Black Creole and discusses how various social processes caused it to give rise to the more familiar Black English of contemporary times. He points out that this pattern of development apparently differs from that of other dialects, particularly regional dialects. Black English represents a convergence toward Standard English from Black Creole, whereas other dialects usually represent a divergence from Standard English to their present form. Roy concludes by examining the factors that make it important for teachers of English to be sensitive to the dialectal background of their students.

William Stewart provides the discussion chapter for this last section and describes some of the linguistic and psychological implications of cross-dialectal communication.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This volume is intended to serve a dual function. On one hand, for those unfamiliar with bilingual research, it provides a comprehensive summary of past work in this area. We feel that there are many aspects of bilingual research that can cast light on research done in other areas of developmental psychology, and vice versa. For those familiar with bilingual research, this book should serve a heuristic function, providing a source of ideas for future investigation. Many of the chapters presented here highlight the need to take into account the mediating role of social and cultural factors; others describe possible research designs and statistical procedures that might be used to handle such multivariate situations.

We hope that this book will stimulate further research into the complex relationship between bilingualism and psychological development and provide a more comprehensive view of the linguistic, cognitive, social, and emotional processes involved in the development of the bilingual child.

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Bilingualism and Language Policy: Four Case Studies

Peter Homel
Michael Palij
New York University

In this chapter, we examine the language policies of four countries: Canada, the Soviet Union, the United States, and the People's Republic of China. In particular, we try to indicate the different perspective that each of these countries has taken with regard to linguistic diversity and bilingualism and how this is reflected in the manner in which each country approaches bilingual education.

We first present a general overview of each country, including a description of the general linguistic and ethnic composition of the country, as well as some of the past and present trends in policy of the particular country toward minority languages and bilingualism. We then discuss some of the implications certain social policies may have for the psychological development of bilingual children.

CANADA

Canada is officially a bilingual country, with English and French enjoying equal status as the languages of government. Of a total population of approximately 24 million in 1976, 67% of all Canadians reported English as their first language and 26% reported French (Beaujot & McQuillian, 1982). The French speakers are concentrated primarily in the provinces of Quebec (87% of the population of the province) and New Brunswick (34%). In addition to English and French, programs for the maintenance of languages spoken by Native Indian groups and the Inuktitut (Eskimo), as well as those spoken by major immigrant groups (German, Italian, Hungarian, and Ukrainian), are also supported by the Canadian government.

The total rate of bilingualism in Canada is 13%. The breakdown is 33% for

French Canadians; 8% for English Canadians. One cause of such different rates of bilingualism among French and English speakers appears to be the geographical distribution of bilingualism. Approximately 57% of all bilinguals in Canada live in Quebec province. In fact, 35% of all bilinguals in Canada live in the Montreal area (Beaujot & McQuillan, 1982).

The English and French each established colonies in Canada in the 17th century. By the mid-18th century, the number of English settlers had increased enormously as compared with the French. In 1763, after defeat by England in the Seven Years' War, France was forced to cede all of her territories in Canada to the British.

Over the years, a number of official concessions were made to French-speaking Canadians. The Quebec Act of 1774 recognized Quebec as a French-speaking area and allowed the French there to maintain their own religious and public institutions. In particular, the Catholic Church remained in control of the educational system in Quebec. These concessions were maintained under the Confederation Act of 1867, which also gave all Canadians the right to political participation at both the national and provincial levels.¹

Unfortunately, the official rights accorded the French failed to offset widespread social and economic discrimination that they experienced from the English-speaking majority (Whitaker, 1984). One of the major means of control over the French was the use of English in almost all aspects of government, commerce, and higher education. Added to this was the generally conservative role of the Catholic Church in French Canadian society, encouraging the passive acceptance of the status quo among the French.

Even in Quebec, with its majority of French speakers, the English-speaking community still succeeded in maintaining political control at both the local and the provincial levels by means of their economic power. They owned most of the businesses and factories and tended to show favor either to other native English speakers or to those French who were fairly well assimilated into the English-speaking culture.

By the 1960s, however, there was a growing movement in the major French-speaking areas calling for the Canadian government to show a greater recognition of the linguistic and political rights of French speakers. It was in response to this that a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was convened between 1965 and 1968 to look into these problems. On the basis of the suggestions of the commission, the Official Languages Act was adopted in 1969, declaring that English and French were to be the official languages of Canada and that they possess equal status in terms of their use in all aspects of government.

The primary purpose of the act was to encourage bilingualism at an institu-

¹Kaalt (1977) has also suggested that, in deference to the French Canadians who would have seen such an attempt as the first step in its own assimilation, attempts to assimilate other non-English speaking groups who came as immigrants were not as strong in Canada as they were in the U.S.

tional level in an effort to provide equal social and governmental services for both English and French speakers. Coupled with this, however, were official efforts in support of educational opportunities for minority students, as well as the establishment of programs of bilingual education and second language instruction for both French and English speakers.

According to Grosjean (1982), the results of the Official Languages Act appear to be encouraging. For example, census results indicate that a growing number of Native English speakers especially in Quebec are learning and using French. On the other hand, however, about a third of the French children outside of Quebec province apparently still do not receive instruction in their native language.

One of the fears expressed among French Canadians is that because they constitute a minority group within Canada, the general encouragement of bilingualism might result in an increased tendency toward assimilation of French Canadian speakers into the dominant English-speaking community. This would compound the loss of French speakers that is already taking place in Quebec as a result of the low birth rate among the French, the migration of French speakers to other, non-French speaking areas of Canada, the preference of new immigrants settling in Quebec to learn English rather than French, among other factors (Beaujot & McQuillan, 1982).

The late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed the growth of a separatist movement among the French in Quebec. The *Parti Quebecois* came into power in Quebec province with a platform calling for the preservation of a French speaking Quebec and a greater degree of autonomy of the province from the rest of English-speaking Canada. In 1977, under the administration of the *Parti Quebecois*, an act was passed making French the only official language of the province. Businesses were required to adopt French as the language of everyday affairs, children of immigrants were compelled to learn French in schools, and children of English-speaking parents were allowed to be taught in English only if their parents could prove that they themselves had been taught in English in the province.

The federal government of Canada generally maintained a policy that sought to counter the separatist movement among the French in Quebec while at the same time continuing to encourage a bilingual Canada. In 1982, a new Canadian constitution was proclaimed that essentially contained all the provisions of the original Act of Confederation of 1867, as well as all of the amendments that had been made to it over the years. In addition, it contained certain proposals that had been worked out with the leaders of the various provinces.

Among these was a Charter of Rights and Freedoms that contained a provision giving parents the right to choose either English or French as the language of instruction for their children in any province where the numbers warranted it. This charter served as the basis for the Canadian Supreme Court's decision in 1984 to strike down the provision of the Quebec Act that restricted English

instruction to children of parents who had been educated in English in Quebec.

On the other hand, the Canadian government's actions with regard to the province of Manitoba seemed to underscore the government's dedication to the cause of bilingualism. Although Manitoba had entered the Canadian Confederation as a bilingual province in 1870, the provincial government subsequently rescinded the language rights of its French-speaking minority. In 1979, the Canadian Supreme Court ordered that these rights be restored. After 4 years of delay by Manitoba, a bill was passed in the Canadian Parliament in support of the original court decision to restore bilingualism in Manitoba.

In summary, Canada appears to have established a long-term commitment to encouraging and maintaining bilingualism at both the national and the provincial levels. Practically, this may be viewed as an effort to ensure that both French- and English-speaking Canadians enjoy equal access to social services, business, and education. More important, however, this may be viewed as a solution to the general problem of reconciling the demands of national unity with the needs of its multilingual–multicultural society.

One indication of the success of this policy may be the fact that ethnic polarization has become less of an issue in recent years. This notion has some support in the apparent decline of the Parti Quebecois during the early 1980s, which culminated in the defeat of the party in the provincial elections of 1985. On the other hand, Whitaker (1984) has suggested that the decline of the Parti Quebecois may have been the unintentional result of its own efforts. Because of its language programs, it may have succeeded in strengthening the French identity of Quebec, thus relieving the very anxiety that had originally compelled French speakers to support the Parti Quebecois. In any case, bilingualism in Canada appears to be a key element in its national policy, and there are no indications at this time of any movement away from that position.

THE SOVIET UNION

The Soviet Union (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), with a population of approximately 262 million people, is a constitutional federation consisting of 15 member republics. The largest is the Russian Socialist Federalist Soviet Republic (RSFSR), which serves as the center of the Soviet government. The remaining republics are referred to as “national” republics. They correspond more or less to the traditional homelands of the major non-Russian national or ethnic groups that make up at least half the population of the Soviet Union.²

²The popular practice of using the term “Russia” to refer to the Soviet Union (which even Soviets are prone to do) thus represents a failure to appreciate the extent of ethnic and linguistic diversity in that nation. It parallels the use of the term “America” in referring to the United States—something that has often been criticized by the other peoples of both North and South America.

There are some 130 distinct languages spoken within the borders of the Soviet Union (Comrie, 1981; Isayev, 1977). Some idea of the extent of linguistic diversity in the Soviet Union can be gotten from the following list of major language families spoken in the Soviet Union, as well as some prominent examples of each family:

1. *Indo-European*, including the Slavic languages (Russian, Ukrainian, and Byelorussian), Baltic languages (Lithuanian, Latvian), Iranian languages (e.g., Tadjik and Kurd), Moldavian (a romance language similar to Romanian), Yiddish, and Armenian.
2. *Altaic*, including the Turkic languages (e.g., Uzbek, Kazakh, Azerbaijani), Mongolic languages (Buryat and Kalmyk), and the Tungus-Manchu languages.
3. *Uralic*, including the Finno-Ugaric languages (e.g., Estonian, Karelian, and Mordovian) and the Samodic group.
4. *Iberian-Caucasic*, including the Kartvelian languages (e.g., Georgian), along with the Abkhaz-Adyghe, the Nakh, and the Daghestani languages.
5. *Paleo-Asiatic*, including the Chukchi-Kachatdal and Eskimo languages.

In the Soviet census, a distinction is made between national or ethnic identity and native language (Narodnoe Khozjajstvo SSSR 1922-1982, 1982). For example, Russian is the declared language of 58.6% of the total population of the Soviet Union. This group can be further divided into ethnic Russians who live within the borders of the RSFSR (approximately 114 million according to the 1979 census); ethnic Russians who live in the other republics of the Soviet Union (24 million); and nonethnic Russians who declare Russian as their native language (13 million, or 5% of the total population).

Other major languages (presented in order of percentage of speakers) spoken in the Soviet Union include: Ukrainian (14%), Uzbek (4%), Byelorussian (3%), Kazakh (2.2%), Tatar (2.2%), Azerbaijani (1.8%), Armenian (1.3%), Georgian (1.3%), Lithuanian (1.1%), Moldavian (0.91%), Tadjik (0.86%), Chuvash (0.61%), Latvian (0.58%), Kirghiz (0.58%), and Estonian (0.37%). Bilinguals make up 21.5% of the total population of the Soviet Union (Comrie, 1981). Among non-Russians the rate is 42.6%; among Russians, it is 3.1%. Even among those Russians living in non-Russian areas, the rate of bilingualism still tends to be far lower than that for the non-Russians in the particular area.

The linguistic and ethnic diversity of the Soviet Union is a direct result of its prerevolutionary past. The Russian empire was formed as the result of a series of military conquests between the 16th and 19th centuries. During the course of this period, what had begun as the relatively small principality of Moscow-Suzdal expanded west as far as Poland and the Carpathian mountains, south as far as the Black Sea and the Caucasus Mountains, north as far as Finland and the Arctic, and east as far as China and the Pacific Ocean.

The language policies which the tsarist government adopted toward individual non-Russian minorities in these conquered areas were based primarily on political considerations specific to each group. A relatively liberal approach to language policy was adopted for Estonia and Finland. At the time of their annexation by the Russian empire, these areas already had high levels of culture and industry comparable to those in western European countries. Moreover, both regions were already under the political and economic domination of non-indigenous minority ethnic groups—ethnic Swedes composed the ruling elite in Finland, with Germans holding power in Estonia. These minorities maintained their dominant status by serving as overseers and government officials for the Russians. The Russian government accorded these minority groups a limited degree of political and linguistic freedom in return for their loyalty.

The case of the Ukrainians represents a more extreme policy. To discourage Ukrainian separatism, an imperial decree was issued in 1876 banning the public use of Ukrainian (Savchenko, 1970). It prohibited, among other things, the teaching of Ukrainian in schools, the publication of original works and translations in Ukrainian, and the public performance of plays and songs in Ukrainian. The general ban against the use of Ukrainian remained in effect until the Revolution of 1905.

For the rest of the non-Russian languages within the Russian empire, discouragement was carried on through a policy of social neglect rather than of restrictions. In those regions, no schooling was allowed in the native language aside from that connected with religious training or missionary work. More able non-Russian students were encouraged to learn Russian and to assimilate into Russian culture in order to succeed in government or business.

Despite the efforts of the tsarist government, nationalistic movements steadily developed within several ethnic groups during the 19th century. As a result, a number of these groups attempted to form their own independent (and, in some cases, socialist) governments during the period of the Bolshevik Revolution. However, faced with the potential loss of raw materials and food from many of these areas, the Bolsheviks took immediate military action against these nationalist groups. At the same time, the Bolsheviks adopted policies designed to gain favor among the non-Russian minorities.

Thus, one of the aims of the new Soviet state, as outlined by Lenin in 1917, became the full and equal development of all ethnic and linguistic minorities in the Soviet Union (Comrie, 1981; Kreindler, 1982). There was to be no official language for the new Soviet state. All Soviet citizens were to have complete freedom to use their native languages in private and in public. Public usage included the right to use one's native language for addressing public meetings, corresponding with the government, and giving testimony in court. Moreover, all Soviet citizens were guaranteed the right to receive an education in and to have access to literature and cultural materials in their native languages.

In addition, the establishment of a system of national republics gave the major ethnic groups at least some degree of autonomy and self-government, although primary power always lay with the central government in Moscow. Each national republic was allowed to use its native language as the official language of government. Each national republic was given control over local aspects of educational policy and over the development of the national culture.

The 1920s witnessed an active campaign aimed at encouraging the development of non-Russian languages and ethnic cultures. For languages with an already existing written language and literary tradition, programs were created for setting up schools, publishing newspapers and books, and so on. For those languages without a writing system or for which the already existing systems of writing were cumbersome and unsuited to easy acquisition, linguists were sent to study the languages and develop writing systems for them.

Under Stalin's leadership in the 1930s, however, a general retrenchment occurred in Soviet policy with increasingly greater emphasis being placed on the need to unify the nation and develop centralized control of the state. This led to a growing encouragement of the use of Russian as a common language for communication among members of different ethnic groups.

Many of the non-Russian writers, intellectuals, and scientists who came into prominence during the previous decade either perished during the purges of the 1930s or were forced to conform to more ideologically acceptable (and less nationalistic) topics of writing or research (Luckyj, 1975; Simirenko, 1969). Yet another example of retrenchment was the discontinuance of the publication of materials in some languages (e.g., Lapp, Karelian) on the excuse that they had very few speakers, most of whom were bilingual in other, more prevalent languages.

As a result of the emphasis on national unity during the Second World War, the 1940s saw increases in the greater prominence given to Russian than to the non-Russian languages. This trend was exemplified by Stalin's victory toast of 1945, wherein he publicly referred to Russia as the nation that served as the "leading force of the Soviet Union" (Bilinsky, 1964). Russian was proclaimed as the language of high culture, as well as the language of socialism. As a result, linguistic reforms were effected in various non-Russian languages to bring them closer in appearance to Russian. These reforms consisted primarily of changes in grammar and orthography based on Russian patterns, and the introduction of many Russian loan words or calques, which often replaced words that had already been well established in the particular language.

After Stalin's death in 1953, there was a period of relaxation in the Soviet Union that lasted until the resignation of Khrushchev in 1964. An official acknowledgment was made of the contribution of the non-Russian nationalities to the life and culture of the Soviet Union: The development of an international culture was not to result in the leveling and disappearance of national traditions.

Non-Russian minorities were granted greater concessions in educational policy and in literary and intellectual freedom of expression.

Since the late 1960s, however, the Soviet government appears to have returned to a tacit policy encouraging the status of Russian as the official language of the Soviet Union. It is considered to be the only language with the status of a *lingua franca* within the Soviet Union and is the only language that can be used in communication with individuals from other nations.

There has also been a general acceptance of the eventual consolidation of smaller ethnic groups and languages into larger ones, with the eventual goal of developing a unified Soviet People with a common Soviet language—Russian. Bilingualism appears to be encouraged as part of this gradual incorporation of smaller language groups into larger ones. According to Isayev (1977): "...bilingualism should be viewed as a transitional stage to monolingualism which will be reached by the smaller ethnic groups when their assimilation into the corresponding nations is complete" (pp. 199–200).

Evidence indicates an active policy of promoting both the assimilation of non-Russian minorities and the increased use of Russian vis-à-vis the non-Russian national languages. The non-Russian republics in the European portion of the Soviet Union have shown steady decreases in the percentages of their native ethnic populations with a corresponding increase in the percentages of persons declaring themselves as being ethnically Russian.

Similarly, there has been a steady decline in the number of copies and number of titles of books and publications in non-Russian languages, with a corresponding increase in the number of imprints in Russian (Lewis, 1972). Scientific and technical journals that were formerly published in non-Russian languages are now published in Russian, presumably to make them more accessible to readers both within and outside the Soviet Union.

Yet another trend is indicated by the fact that non-Russian parents have increasingly begun to send their children to Russian-language schools rather than to native-language schools in order to increase their children's chances of success in entering institutions of higher education (Comrie, 1981; Kreindler, 1982). Even in the national language schools, Russian is a compulsory subject in the early grades, and efforts have been underway to introduce it as early as kindergarten and preschool classes.

In short, it appears that bilingualism is currently being viewed as a transitory phenomenon in the Soviet Union—a necessary part of the process of assimilating non-Russian minorities into a Russian-speaking Soviet nation. Part of the justification for this may be demographic. Brunner (1981) reports that birth rates among ethnic Russians, as well as among the non-Russian nationalities in the European portions of the Soviet Union (Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Estonians, etc.), have been declining considerably over the past 2 decades. Over the same period, birth rates among the Muslim-Turkic nationalities (Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Azerbaijanis, etc.) have increased.