Reflecting upon languages: When Bilingual Children’s Metalinguistic Discourse inform about Multilingual Awareness

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I- Theoretical sociocognitive framework
Multilingual awareness in psycho & sociolinguistics
Metalinguistic discourse in psycho & sociolinguistics

Content
Discourse

Dialogism: discourse defined by other discourses.
Praxematics: meaning through speech realization.

II- Methodology
Participants - Material/Procedure

III- Results

IV- Further research
Theoretical framework: Multilingual Awareness (MLA)

Sociocognitive framework of bi/multilingualism
A Holistic & Dynamic Model of Multilingualism
(Herdina & Jessner, 2002; Grosjean, 2015)

→ Psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors

Jessner et al. (2016)

Multilingual Awareness (MLA)
= Metalinguistic Awareness (MA)
  + Cross-linguistic Awareness (XLA)

→ This study: focus on syntax
Theoretical framework:

Metalinguistic awareness (MA) in psycholinguistics

Metasyntactic awareness

→ Consciously reflect on, analyze, or exert control over syntactic structures. (Simard et al., 2016)
→ Subfield of metacognition
→ Grammaticality judgment task

but...

→ verbal behavior and metalinguistic reports account for MA (Pinto & El Euch, 2015)
Theoretical framework: (MA) psycholinguistics ≠ ? sociolinguistics

Epilinguistic vs. Metalinguistic processes (Culioli, 1990; Gombert, 1990)

**EPI**: instinctive, covert, unconscious.

**META**: controlled, overt, conscious.

EPI ≠ META

Epilinguistic awareness: subcategory of MA

→ Conscious and overt discursive/speech activity during *time-to-say* (Canut, 1998, 2000)

EPI in META.
Theoretical framework: MA in sociolinguistics

MA is a social construct → between social & cognitive aspects (Sajavaara et al, 1999)

Language objectivation process → through social interactions and intersubjectivity (Dufva & Alanen, 2004)

→ Use of metalanguage in discourse
“reflecting upon language(s) in use and through establishing similarities and differences among the languages in one’s multilingual mind” (Angelovska & Hahn, 2014 : 187)

“[...] the awareness of the relationships between languages.” (Jessner, 2016 : 160)

“[...] tacitly or explicitly during language production and use.” (Jessner, 2006 : 116)

→ Cross-linguistic influence (CLI)
→ Continuum “epi----meta” in Speech/discourse

Foursha-Stevenson & Nicoladis (2011)
CLI weakens metasyntactic awareness

→ More than XLA, Study of epi/metalinguistic comments (Jessner, 2005)
Study of MD focused on (Donaldson, 1986)
→ Faculty of *explicative* discourse & *Cognitive* understanding
→ Study of causality: *causal connectives*

The EPI phenomenon
→ *Episyntactic judgment*: extra-linguistic consideration (Gombert, 1990)
→ Uncontrolled metalanguage (Culioli, 1999)
Theoretical framework:

MD in sociolinguistics

Dialogism: Any discourse is orientated to/interacts with other discourses (Todorov [Bakhtine], 1981; Brès et al, 2019)

- MD is polyphonic and intersubjective

Interdiscursive

- MA/MD appropriation of speeches, opinions (Dufva & Alanen, 2004)

Intralocutive

- MA/MD is intralocutive (distance, self reflexion or representation) (Detrie et al, 2017)

- MA manifests
  - through intralocutive explicative discourse strategies (Moirand, 2009)
Theoretical framework:

MD in sociolinguistics

Praxemetics: Analysis of meaning production through speech. MD related.

(Lafont, 1978, 1980; Detrie et al. 2017)

Operative time & Cognitive processing of the speech → the to-be-said / time-to-say / the said.

IMPERFECT – OVERLAPPING – CONFLICTUAL DIMENSION → Slips → traces left by the construction process in speech production time

Slips interacts with metalanguage
Epi/Metalinguistics markers (Rey-Debove, 1983; Authier-Revuz, 1995)
Research Questions

How French Norwegian bilingual children’s discourse can indicate epi/metalinguistic skills and influence of cross-linguistic transfer on multilingual awareness?

Children manifest multilingual awareness in discourse:

▪ (Content) They show:

H1: Metasyntactic awareness by analyzing and correcting, commenting errors.

H2: Crosslinguistic awareness of transfers from Norwegian to French when explaining their strategies.

▪ (Discursive/speech markers)

H3: Epi/Metalinguistic awareness in speech is suggested through dialogism

H4: Slips are markers of Epi/Metalinguistic discourse
Methodology

Participants

Materials

• French-Norwegian bilingual children (33) → Couple, Age, French school, BFLA/OPOL

• TRIGGER : Silent reading grammatically judgement task at school → 14 phrases in French.

  7 Mistakes : Norwegian syntactic calque

  In this research : non-verbal syntactic transfer → word order (verb, prepositional verb construction)

• One to one semi-structured interviews
Results
Tests: An asymmetry

(No CI overlap, statistical tests: R).

Sentences 14-3-5: word order (verb) related mistake
Sentence 2-8-11-13: preposition construction related mistake

→ Cross-syntactic transfer when preposition involved
Explicit comparison between French and Norwegian

→ to reference to syntax

“because [...] in Norwegian [...] one can make the same sentence, but you wouldn’t have the same word one after another »” (IN1)

→ to usage of metalinguistic terminology

“in my opinion it’s a Norwegian mistake [...] here the subject is after the verb like in Norwegian” (IN7)
Results
Interviews :

MD & Content

Metasyntactic comments (verbs>prep)
Conscious manipulation of constituents of sentence with/out usage of autonyms and verbs of movements
→ Suppression Substitution Addition Reorganization

Usage grammatical terminology
→ “here, the subject must be after the verb” (IN9), “those are grammar mistakes” (IN10)

Norwegian consciously activated as a tool (translation/comparison)
→ “I do it in Norwegian in my head and then I understand better and I see if it’s correct or incorrect” (IN5)
Results
Interviews:

MD & Content

Epilinguistic comments (prep>verbs)
Intuitive strategies: norms and attitudes
→ “it sounds odd” (IN8)
Semantic strategies (blurred with syntax)
→ “it is correct because, to me the sentence makes sense” (IN3)
Instinctive epilinguistic judgment
→ “I don’t know how to explain [...], I think we understand better that way” (IN13)
Interviews:

MD & dialogism

Intralocutive (META): explicit comment markers during the time to say
- Autonyms + rather + I would say/ have said/I woud think
  → “[quoting the mistake]... I understand the meaning, but I would rather think that Alex should be at the front” (IN4)

- Autonyms + It means that, it would mean (gloss)
  → “[...] ‘he listens ON the birds’, it means that he actually IS on the birds’” (IN14)
- ....at least (enfin), actually (en fait), the same (la même chose)

Intrerdiscursive (EPI):
→ “Actually, my mum, she says a lot of sentences which are like hm [use of autonyms], she says a lot of things like this “
→ “SEB : how did you do to find the answer?
  IN9 : Well it’s** I KNOW it, like...I learnt it at school.”
Results

Interviews:

MD & slips

Specific configuration in the *time to say* with (no particular order):

- Hesitation: *hm*
- Silence/interruption: *(0.6)*
- Sentence reprogramming: *or **

- leading to MD
  → “*hm: (5.1) hm: I think they** that it’s because *hm:: (1.0) they wrote the:: (0.6) the:: (1.3) the:: subject after the verb and normally, the subject it is before the verb*” *(IN3)*

- leading to epilinguistic discourse
  → “*yes but after I don’t kn-***(0.6), hm: if it’s***(0.5) to me it’s correct*” *(IN1)*
Results

Conclusions

H 1:
• Syntactic transfers occur when prepositional constructions are involved
• Unconscious CLI $\rightarrow$ XLA & MA weakened
  $\rightarrow$ MLA $\downarrow$
  $\rightarrow$ BUT: presence of *epilinguistic discourse*

H 2:
• XLA strengthens MA mostly with mistakes related word order related to verbs.
  
  *When conscious CLI $\rightarrow$ MLA $\uparrow$*
H 3: MA in discourse
- intralocutive dialogic markers
- interdiscursive dialogic markers
→ EPI (attitude & norms)

H 4: Hesitation, silences, sentence reprogramming are markers of EPI/MA in discourse.
EPI is NOT less conscious than META

RESULTS

Conclusions

BEYOND XLA...

→ Existence of EPI/MD

EPI/MA → MODULATES MLA
Discussion
Further research

• Epilinguistic discourse
  → part & influence in MA & XLA so in MLA?
  → better understanding of MLA?

• Sociolinguistic environment
  → weight of sociolinguist awareness in MLA?
Dank u!
Merci !
Tusen takk !
Thank you !
Sources

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