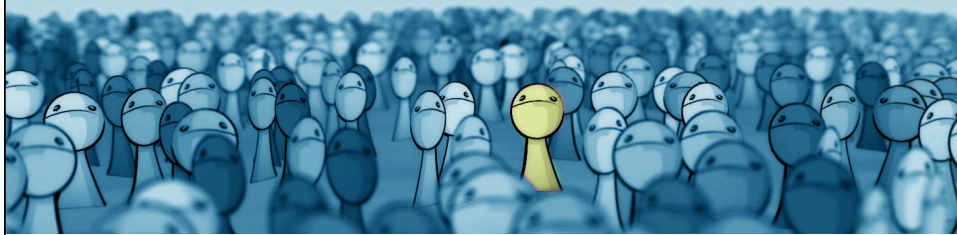


Raising a Bilingual Child

Benefits, Barriers and Family Dynamics



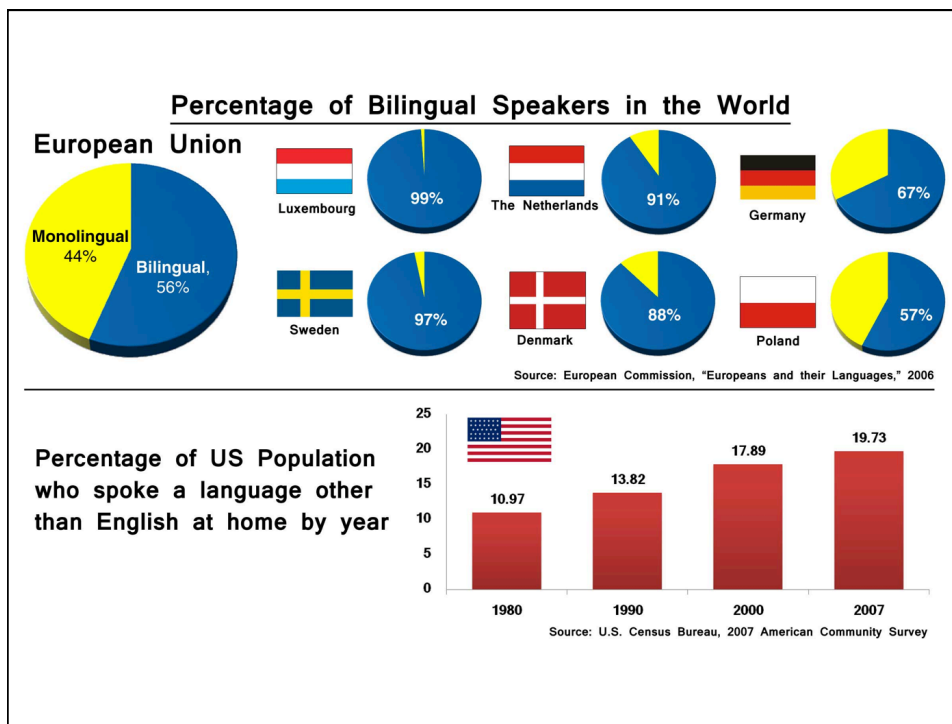
Anna S. Lau
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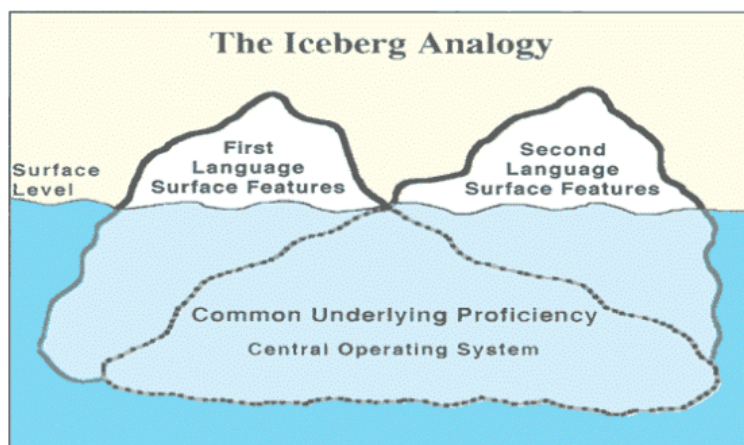


Overview

- What are the benefits of bilingualism for children?
- What predicts whether children will retain their heritage language?
- What happens when Chinese American children and parents communicate in the heritage language, English, or a combination of both?



Debunking Early Research



Old Myths:

- Bilingualism is a disadvantage in learning
- 'Container' view of the brain: learning one language pushes out the other.

BIG Benefits

GRAY MATTER

Why Bilinguals Are Smarter



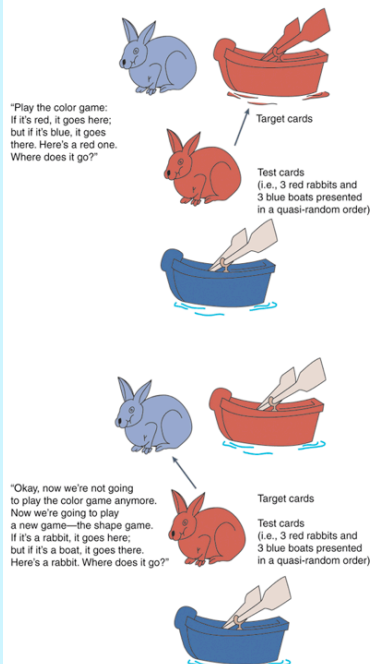
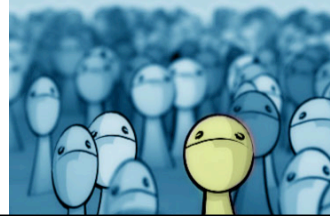
By YUDHIJIT BHATTACHARJEE
Published: March 17, 2012

Harriet Russell

Cognitive Boosts

A brain workout – constant activation of dual language systems results in greater cognitive flexibility and executive control.

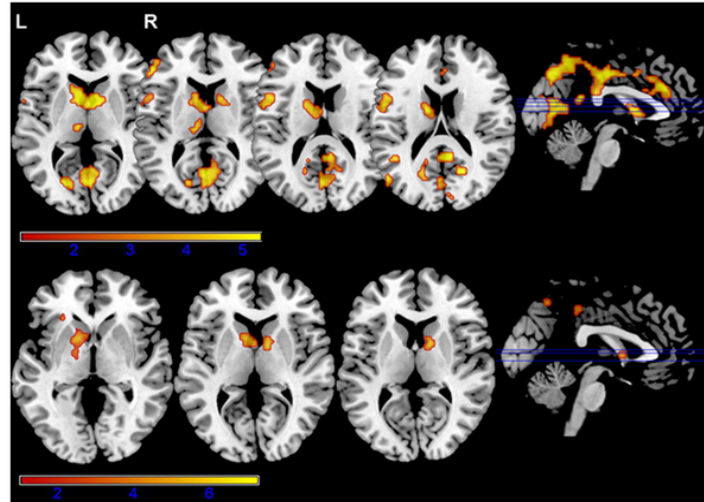
Seen in babies as young as 7 months old all the way through old age!!



Red
Yellow
Blue
Green
Green
Yellow
Blue

Blue
Green
Yellow
Red
Green
Blue
Red

Figure 3. Brain activations for each group in the comparison between switch and repeat trials.



Rodríguez-Pujadas A, Sanjuán A, Ventura-Campos N, Román P, et al. (2013) Bilinguals Use Language-Control Brain Areas More Than Monolinguals to Perform Non-Linguistic Switching Tasks. PLoS ONE 8(9): e73028. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0073028
<http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0073028>

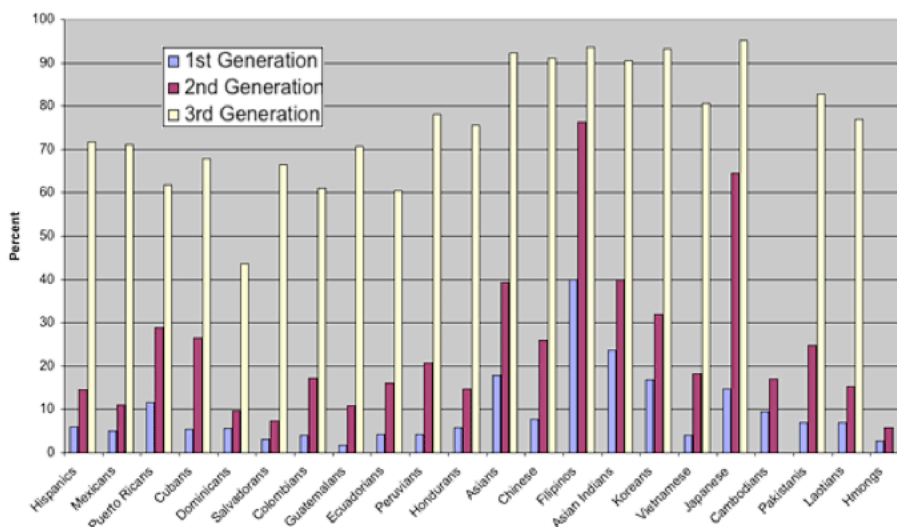


Other benefits

- Bilingual competence is related to
 - Higher academic achievement
 - More positive ethnic identity
 - Better emotional adjustment
 - Higher family relationship quality
 - Bicultural competence

Orellana, 2009; Kim & Chao, 2009; Lee, 2003; Phinney et al., 2001

Bilingualism in America and the threat of Linguistic Assimilation



Alba, 2005

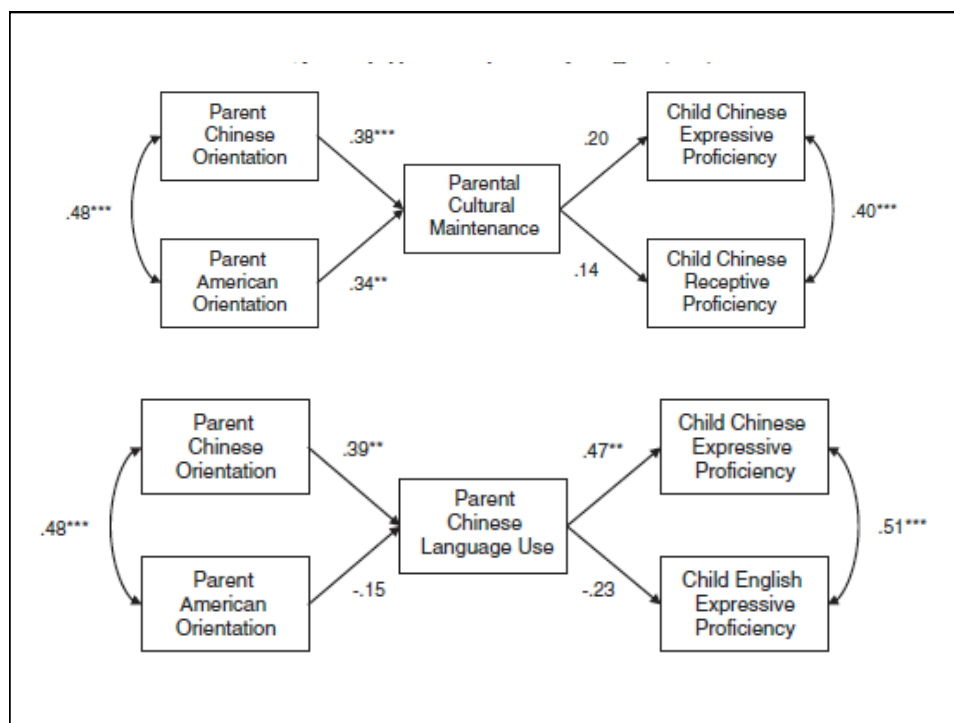
Bilingualism through the Maintenance of Heritage Language

- What increases the likelihood of HL maintenance in immigrant families?
- What are the consequences of HL loss in immigrant families?

Do Parent Characteristics predict whether young children maintain HL?

- 79 parents and their child (4-7 years old)
- 85% Mandarin speakers, 34% Cantonese speakers
- Parents report:
 - Chinese/American values and cultural practices
 - The extent to which they teach child cultural values/behaviors
 - Parents' language use with child
- Child's Chinese and English language proficiency assessed

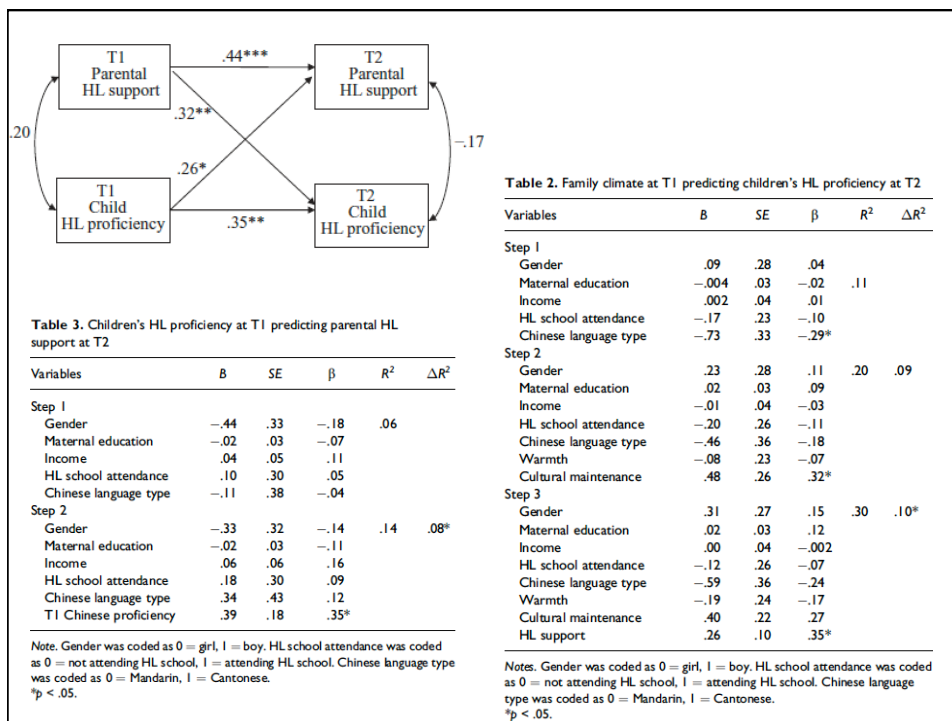
Kim et al., 2012



What parent behaviors predict whether young children maintain HL?

- 68 Chinese immigrant parents and their children
- Mean child age = 5.11 years
- Interviewed in the families' homes twice (1 year apart)
- Parents report on motivation to maintain their heritage culture
- Parental warmth & HL support were rated in parent-child interactions
- Child's Chinese language proficiency was assessed

Park et al., 2012



Implications of Child HL Maintenance for Family Relationships

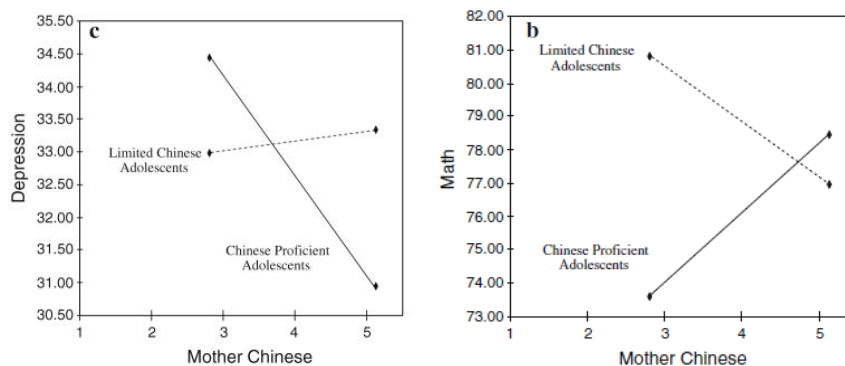
- Does it matter whether adolescents and their parents speak the same language?
- Does it matter whether adolescents and their parents speak in the heritage language or English?

Mother-Child Match in Chinese Language Use and Youth Adjustment

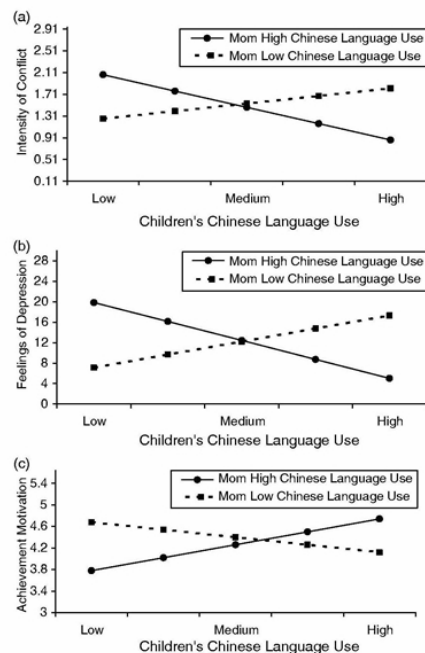
- 444 Chinese American adolescents (mean age = 13.0 years) and their mothers
- Adolescents report:
 - Perceived Chinese & English language proficiency
 - Depressive symptoms
 - Academic achievement (GPA, Math & Reading Skills)
- Mothers
 - Perceived Chinese & English language proficiency

Liu et al., 2009

Mother-Child Match in Chinese Language Use and Youth Adjustment



Liu et al., 2009



Mother-Adolescent Match in HL Use, Family Relationships, and Adjustment

Mother-adolescent match in Chinese language use was associated with

- Less conflict
- Less depression
- Greater achievement motivation

Costigan & Dokis, 2006



HL Use and Family Relationships

- A large sample of 620 adolescents with East Asian, Filipino, and Latino American backgrounds
- Adolescents who mutually communicated in the native language with their parent had the closest relationships with their mothers.
- They were also the most likely to discuss their present and future concerns with both parents.

Tseng & Fuligni, 2000

Conclusion

- There are a lot of benefits associated with a bilingualism for children in immigrant families
- Parents' actual behavior matters much more than attitudes or values.
- What does HL support look like?
 - Speak Chinese with your child
 - Encourage your child to speak Chinese
 - Assist your child in translating English words/phrases into Chinese
 - Restate your child's English statements in Chinese
 - Praise your child when s/he uses Chinese

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