

Second Assignment
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The purpose of this assignment is to describe the multilingualism types that I identify myself, as well as the learning strategies I follow. Additionally, the characteristics of multilingual/ polyglots are also described at the end of the text, based both on the film that was recommended by the lecturer during class.

There are many criteria according to which multilingualism can be described. Some of them have to do with the chronology of languages' acquisition (simultaneous, successive, early bilingualism, etc.), other criteria examine the interaction of these languages focusing on the dominant language and whether the one affects negatively the development of the other, other examine the status of the languages as well as the someone's purpose to learn a language. Thus, there are plenty of different ways for categorizing multilingualism. At this point, based on a great number of these criteria, I will try to holistically illustrate the types of my multilingualism.

Language Status

Concerning language status, the Greek language can be regarded as my first language because I learned it from birth. Adversely, English and German are second and third foreign languages respectively, since I encountered them some years after my birth.

Current Level of L2 fluency

Even though I have achieved a high level of competence in English, I believe that I still have difficulty in speaking English without making mistakes, or without stopping to think about what I want to say in Greek and after this translating in English. So, I regard myself as being non-proficient with English.

L1- L2 Language competence

The languages that I have learned, have shown unequal development throughout the years, leading to some be dominant against the other. According to this, I will characterize my multilingualism as being dominant/ unbalanced. Elaborately, I believe that there are periods (especially during the latest years) when I cultivate my English language more, especially

because I am searching for a master's program abroad. Thus, I read more in English and less in Greek, which has shown that I become less used to Greek reading after a long period of high engagement with English. However, this is something unstable and not permanent, since these periods may be followed by periods of total engagement with Greek due to my university responsibilities and my internship here in Greece. Then, I retrieve the previous level of my performance in Greek. However, the above description shows that both these languages can not be equally developed, because when I come in close contact with one, I lose some of my competence in the other, or at least its level stays the same.

Age of L2 acquisition

Another significant feature is that my multilingualism can be characterized as early because I encountered a second foreign language (English) at the age of 3. It can also be described as sequential because I first learned the L1 and then the L2.

L2 on L1 influence

According to the order of languages' acquisition, my multilingualism can be characterized as successive, because I first learned the Greek language and after that English language followed at the age of three. This is because my parents and my close environment speak Greek, so I had the chance to develop this language through my first interactions with them. Additionally, the German language was learned very lately, in the last years of elementary school. Elaborately, the path that my multilingualism followed according to the order of languages' acquisition is depicted in the following relationship:

$$L_1 \rightarrow L_2 \rightarrow L_3$$

(L₁: Greek, L₂: English, L₃: German)

Context/ manner of acquisition

Additionally, there are also significant differences in the context of the acquisition of Greek in comparison with the acquisition of English. Specifically, the context of the Greek language

acquisition was informal at the beginning of my life, when my interactions with other people were informal and restricted at the tight borders of the home environment as well as they had mainly to do with the covering of my basic needs. After this period, I entered the school environment and started to learn Greek in a formal context. The reverse is true for the acquisition of English since I started to learn this language in the formal context of school. However, in the latest years, I spoke and learned English in an informal context when I was communicating in English with a familiar person.

Typology of languages

Additionally, it is worth examining whether the languages are close enough or if they are typologically distant. The differences in the typology of languages should be mentioned as they may show increasing ease of someone to achieve a high command in these languages or difficulty in imitating the accent or reproducing the phonetics of a highly different language from their mother tongue. Concerning my paradigm, the languages that I learned are different to a high extend. Specifically, Greek and English are typically distant, since the Greek language has its roots from the ancient Greek alphabet along with Indo-European influences, while English uses the Latin alphabet.

Language Prestige

I believe that English and German are two of the most widespread languages throughout the world. For this reason, they can offer great studying and job opportunities. They are an asset for someone who wants to have more chances of working abroad and they open many doors to the foreign world. Adversely, the Greek language is not so widespread and can not offer the same chances for people who want to pursue studies or occupations abroad. Also, Greek is not regarded as an asset for entering an international university, while a certificate of proficiency in English is mandatory for studies, jobs, and volunteering abroad.

Frequency/ recency of use

Concerning the frequency of use, in the past, I mainly used the Greek language, while English was used only at school and not orally. Today, I use more English for writing and reading as well as I try to speak English every day to increase my good performance in speaking as well.

However, whether you will have the opportunities to develop some languages or not it is fluid and depends on the conditions, the period, and the environment in which someone is living.

Purpose of use

Another key feature is the purpose of use. Specifically, my purposes of using the Greek language are varying from private reasons, communication, and coverage of basic needs to work and academic purposes. Adversely, English is mainly used for academic reasons and unfortunately, this is the reason that I do not have yet the opportunity to speak enough English to obtain a more proficient level in English or to speak the language more like a native speaker.

Control Ability

Finally, another important factor that can show the high command of someone in two or more languages is the control ability. This term refers to someone's cognitive ability to control one language from interfering during their attempt to learn or use a different language. Moreover, it can also be someone's ability to adjust their brain on switching from one language to the other without intention. Thus, two categories occur, the Switchers who are those who can implement Unintentional switching, and the Non-switchers, who are not as capable as the first concerning the above ability. Furthermore, there are also switching habits that play a crucial role in the control ability. Specifically, some live in a "multilingual mode" and implement frequent switching, while others follow a "monolingual mode" and do not switch between languages very frequently. These habits are under someone's incentives as well as the environmental conditions that are offered for evolving a language.

Learning Strategies

At this point, it is worth mentioning some of the learning strategies that I followed, and I continue to follow for keeping my languages to a high level of competency. I believe motivation and repetition are important strategies for someone who wants to preserve their language proficiency. From my personal experience, I practised my writing, listening, reading, and speaking skills to a great extent. Moreover, I watched videos and films in English or hear podcasts. All the above are extremely significant for meeting the idioms and the informal speaking style that people in foreign languages use. As I mentioned before, motivation is crucial for this procedure because it will allow someone to be patient and persistent during their

practising of another language. Also, it is important to speak the target language with native speakers or fluent people to develop different topics of discussion, as well as unfold their thoughts through this foreign language. For this reason, someone can search on the internet to find websites in which they can chat with people from all over the world to develop the languages they are interested in. Finally, another significant strategy is to read a lot of books to learn the grammatical and the syntactic rules of a language.

By watching the film which presented polyglots, I gathered some features which I regard as important for describing polyglots. First, polyglots have a high incentive to learn as many languages as they can. So, the first and most important feature is motivation. Additionally, they study a lot and set the goal to practise many languages per day. Moreover, they compare languages and distinct differences between the typologically distant ones. They are also talented in accent mimicry. All the above characteristics show their ability to switch from one language to the other without facing difficulties due to cross-linguistic interference. They also seem able to preserve much information on their brain and classify them without losing cognitive control. The above ability shows that their selective memory operates more than that of the average person. However, this is something that creates questions concerning whether the brain of polyglots shows a typical development or not. Finally, one of the polyglots also mentioned that he experiences voices in his head that never stop, and he compared it with schizophrenic episodes. Summing up, most of them characterized their ability to speak so many languages as a talent that requires a great motive and will from someone who wants to become a polyglot to achieve their goal.