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A CASE OF BILINGUALISM

Much is said about the "natural way" as the best method of learning a language. The "natural way" is commonly understood to be unsystematic everyday conversation. It is also commonly believed that a child learns its mother toungue easily if everyone in its environment speaks it. Some also think that a small child learns a second language most easily in the same way from a governess.

However, if we take into consideration the long period which elapses between the child's "taking notice" and its ability to speak coherently, we can state that the result is disappointing considering the eight or ten hours of daily practice. But has any mother ever tried whether better results can be obtained by keeping to a systematic order and giving a child not just random sentences, but systematically designed sentence patterns with a careful selection of words? That the latter method could be more effective seems to be a reasonable supposition.

In order to prove that a system properly applied gives better results than the "natural way" and also to test how the linguistic abilities of the child develop, I started to teach my son G. English in a purely Hungarian milieu when he was little more than one and a half years old. In the following I am going to describe the methods and results of my

experiments in chronological order.

First Stage (1953). G. began to say Hungarian words--but not sentences--when he was about *one and a half years old*. In this first stage of experiments G. could imitate English and Hungarian speech sounds and words only very imperfectly. The type of English I chose for teaching G. was American. The method first used was that I repeated the names of about six objects pointing them out at the same time. The first words were *lamp, picture, table, clock, door, bed*. I repeated them several times in the same order, then without any order. Since G. could not speak in sentences in Hungarian either, I first used the words in isolation. As G. would not say the names of the objects in English when he was urged to do so, a method had to be devised to test his passive knowledge. He was told (in Hungarian) to point to the objects the names of which I uttered. After I had repeated the words three or four times in the same order and as many times again without any order, G. could point out the corresponding objects without a mistake. The experimental "lesson" did not last longer than five minutes. The next day I said the same words again and G. was able to point them all out correctly. He tried to say the words after me when he was asked to do so, but would not say them if I pointed to a thing expecting him to tell the name of it. Then there came a few weeks with one or two such sessions during weekends when I could test whether G. had for gotten the words learned the previous week, but he retained them in his memory. Then I tried simple sentences like *What is this? It is a... Is*

What means "mi", *is* means "van", *this* means "ez". I repeat the question: What - is - this? Mi - van - ez? But in H. we always omit *van* in this type of sentence. Thus the corresponding H. sentence is: *Mi ez?*

After the meaning of every word in the sentence had been explained in a similar way, literal translation was no longer given, only the idiomatic because literal translations, aside from a first analysis, only impair the readiness of the learner to express himself correctly in the foreign language, and a literal translation is often more difficult (for children) to understand than an idiomatic one. As soon as G. could understand the sentences straight from English, their H. translation was omitted. After this, all the sentences he was supposed to know were used as often as opportunity offered. This method, which was no longer "direct" and in which translation was used only as the simplest and shortest explanation on first mentioning and later as an occasional reminder, but in which translation was dispensed with as soon as possible, might be termed the "indirect" or "intermediary" method as still distinct from a genuine translating one which all the time relies on translations. At this point the argument might be raised that understanding based on translation, even if translation is used only for first explanations, will always remain conscious, later unconscious, first slower, later faster, mental translation, just because understanding was originally based on an explanation by translation, which will always be remembered consciously or subconsciously. G.'s later development, however, seems to prove that this is not quite

this a...?, but the answer would not come although G.'s facial expression seemed to indicate that he understood them.

A few months later G. learned ready-made sentences, but not the separate elements constituting them. He seemed to feel them as long words, not as combinations of words. One could see that although he understood the meaning of a sentence which was explained to him by gestures and the circumstances in which it was used, e.g. *Give me the pen*, the meaning of the sentence elements was not clear to him. In other words, his way of thinking was of a synthetic nature.

At this stage I did not translate for G. the meaning of the sentences or words; therefore this initial stage can be regarded as the stage of direct method. Since, however, most of the time I had to be away from home, the experiment could not be continued. I did not regret it very much, for I thought that a year or several years later it would not yet be too late to recommence, but it was clear that at a later age the direct method would not be the most effective under similar circumstances.

Second Stage. The next experiments were carried out one year later in 1954, when G. was *two and a half years old*. By that time he had learned to speak Hungarian. Now the direct method did not seem to be so easy or effective as in the first stage. The method was therefore changed. The English sentences were explained in H. (Hungarian) first by means of literal, and then by free, idiomatic translation. The elements of the sentences were also explained separately. For instance: *What is this?*, literally means (in H.) *Mi van ez?*

so. (See Sixth Stage, Grade Nine, dreaming and school experiences.)

If the learner of a foreing language is exposed to normally spoken foreign speech, he will generally have no time to associate the foreign expression (word, phrase or sentence) with the corresponding mother tongue expression and only after that with the thing (concept) /formula: F -- M -- T, or F T /, which are strong associations (indicated here by lines), but his mind, supported by experience and training, will strengthen the direct link between the foreign expression and the thing meant: F --- T

If at the same time and after this the F -- M association is neglected, not practiced, the result will be gradual weakening or possibly even loss of the same:

F --- T or F --- T

In the last case the translating ability of the learner will be through the indirect line F -- T -- M, i.e. the direct association between the F and M expressions will practically be wiped out. By the way, the formula F -- T is the M -- T starting point of the direct method, though the result is usually F --- T or F --- T or (and usually only in the very young age group, say between 1 and 16) F --- T .

Anyone with a gift for languages may have experienced

in a foreign language environment the drift from the first formula toward the last. Speaking of adults, the drift is faster in persons with a gift for languages than in those without it.

Little children (between 3 - 10 years of age) have been known to have completely forgotten their mother tongue and to have acquired another and even to have relearned their original mother tongue on their return to their home country, forgetting their second mother tongue. G.'s attention was concentrated on nouns. These he learned easily; not so the other words. He was surprised that "everything should have two names". A year earlier this problem had never occurred to him. Even now, however, he was unable to distinguish what was Hungarian, although I tried to explain to him what another people and another language means. He understood that other peoples speak differently from us, using different words, but he did not know whether *table* was an English word or just another Hungarian word for *asztal*. After all, certain things may have two or more different names in one and the same language.

In spite of my efforts, G. would not say English sentences. Perhaps he could not learn them or perhaps he was loath to use them because they differed so much from Hungarian sentence structures he was accustomed to or because the Hungarian structures had already taken root in him, while his mind was still open for the reception of new words which he could use in these Hungarian structures. This latter supposition seems to be borne out by the fact that he unhesi-

tatingly *used English nouns in Hungarian sentences.* It is significant that he did not use English form-words or suffixes, nor indeed any other kind of words but nouns. In spite of his clinging to Hungarian sentences, he *did not provide the E. (English) words with H. case endings but used them only as subjects so that the use of a case ending did not become necessary* because the nominative or subject case requires no case ending in H. The child must have felt that these words never take an ending except -s. He made sporadic use of English words when he spoke Hungarian, but did not mix H. words in his English, as he did not speak in English sentences. In order to avoid his mixing the two languages I thought it advisable to stop teaching him. My idea was that if H. was allowed to take deeper roots in his mind before an intensive study of E. was begun, he would be able to keep the two languages apart owing to his greater familiarity with the one than with the other. So teaching was again suspended until a year later.

The second stage of experiments lasted about a month with no more than a quarter of an hour of daily practice. So little time was used for practising in this stage because the family feared lest the child should be mentally overstrained. There could hardly be such danger though, for I only taught G. when, and as long as, he felt like it.

As to the mixing of two languages, I had seen an interesting example several years earlier in a family residing in Hungary where the father was Hungarian, the wife English. They had two sons. At home English was exclusively used.

The children's English grandmother was also with them during the Second World War because she could not go home when the war broke out. The elder boy, aged about six when I got to know him, had never had a tendency to mix the two languages, according to the parents. The younger was still mixing them at the age of four. He chose the Hungarian or the English word for his sentences according to which of the words presented itself first in his mind. Was this difference between the two boys due to individual abilities or was it due to a change in the environmental conditions? The parents could not tell.

It is clear that the environmental conditions of these boys were very different from, and from the point of view of learning English much more favorable than those of G. who is an only child and for whom the English language was represented in the family by myself alone.

Third Stage (1955). (G.'s age *three and a half years.*) Early in 1955 when the experiment was resumed, G. showed the same tendency to mix the two languages as a year earlier, so the experiment was not continued and G. was allowed to forget the few (about 100 or 150) E. words he had learned.

Fourth Stage. The experiment was resumed again late in 1955 when G. was nearly *four years old.* Even now he paid attention only to nouns, but he no longer had a tendency to use them in H. sentences. Practice, as in the first three stages, amounted to only a few minutes daily for about two weeks. The fact that G. heeded, at least apparently, only nouns, seemed to contraindicate beginning serious language learning

with him.

Fifth Stage (1956). In August of the next year, when G. was nearly *five years old*, I recommenced teaching him. He did not seem to recognize more than 30 or 50 words learned in the preceding year. He *was now willing to repeat* whole sentences, carefully chosen sentence patterns, after me and *could answer a few types of questions*, although *usually with one word, a noun*. His pronunciation E. was fairly good. The initial results at this stage were promising enough, but as I could not spend much time with G., I stopped teaching him after ten days.

Sixth Stage (1957). G.'s age *about five and a half*. Regular teaching began in January 1957. G. could still remember the words he had learned in August 1956, but it was only passive knowledge. His pronunciation of new and recapitulated words was very good, though not perfect.

The material for study was everyday conversation and a pictorial dictionary (Csehov, *Az orosz nyelv képes szotára*. Athenaeum, Budapest, 1950).

The method was the same as in the Second Stage. I first pronounced the E. sentence, then translated it into H., then repeated it in E. Then G. had to say it after me and then I asked him what it meant in H. In this way he was obliged to observe, reproduce, and remember, that is, to perform all of the essential actions that go with the use of a language. This method now proved very effective. G. was no longer inclined to mix the two languages. Because of the bad weather he was at home all day and scarcely had an opportunity

to play with other children. So it was easy to make him interested in the game of learning English. I say "game" because it was presented to him as such; there was no coercion.

The successive grades in the course of learning were the following:

Grade One. (First week of January 1957.) We began with recapitulation of the formerly studied sentence patterns. A large enough vocabulary had to be built up so that elementary conversation might become possible. The first patterns were: *What is this? -- This is a ... That is a ... It is a ...*

The words that completed these sentences were the names of objects in the room and the street and names of animals. At first only six or eight words were practiced at a time, later ten or twelve. Practicing was done as described in the Second Stage. The sessions lasted five to eight minutes at first; later they were gradually extended to ten or fifteen. The sessions were only held when G. was interested and willing to learn and were stopped as soon as he showed signs of tiredness or boredom. This was very important if I wanted him to go on playing this disguised "game" willingly. At first, instead of answering he only repeated my questions. This was annoying, but after a week or so he gave one-word answers (nouns!).

Grade Two. (Second week of January 1957.) The plural of nouns was introduced together with the pluralized verb: *What are these? These are ... They are ...*, etc.

Then came yes-no questions,

Where-questions with the definite article:

Where is the ...?, etc.

a few commands: *Come here! Sit down! Open the door!*, etc.

question beginning with *What kind of ...*

genitives with *'s* and those with *of* .

possessive adjectives.

Of course G. had no notion of grammatical categories yet. Such things as singular and plural had to be explained to him. His attention was called also to the inversion of the word order in questions and to the fact that such inversion of the word order does not necessarily take place in H. No more grammatical notions were explained in this grade.

Aside from form words, G.'s active and passive vocabulary now consisted of about 80 words. He could recognize six to eight new words immediately after hearing them once. He usually recognized them the next day too, but I took care that the same words should be repeated many times on the following days. G. knew them actively usually after two or three practice sessions.

Of course it would not be wise to generalize from this one case, the more so because G.'s abilities are above the average. Proof of this are his excellent reports from school. Besides this it often happened that G. knew a word after a single mentioning and never forgot it, but there were other words that he could not remember even after five or six mentions. The probable explanation for this is the child's greater or lesser interest in this or that word or this or that thing. Again, the child's interest in a given word de-

pends on the circumstances he lives in, the context of which it occurs, the acoustic impression created by the word, etc.

It turned out in later years that G. knew many words mentioned only once, a year before in a tale, but it also happened sometimes that he did not recognize a word he had met several (4-8) times.

Because of this phenomenon it would have been misleading to keep a record of his vocabulary by means of a card index. Beyond 1000 words it is very difficult to check the actual knowledge of words because of their great number. Therefore I contented myself with making sure that G. recognized the meanings of the words in the text of the books we read at a later date. That he recognized their meaning in a new context, too, could easily be checked by asking for the H. translation. I found that my having read a book aloud to G. meant his having learne its vocabulary, at least passively, except for a small percentage of forgotten words--less than 10 per cent by my estimation. So after all it was possible to determine roughly his passive vocabulary by means of books.

Grade Three. (Third week of January 1957) The former sentence patterns were constantly being repeated and the vocabulary enlarged by 48 additional words, while new patterns were introduced. Prepositions were introduced and the Present Progressive. After this the present tense of the verb *be* was practiced in isolation, too: *I am*, *You are*, etc. This grade included in this way the Personal Pronouns.

The Infinitive of verbs was simply explained by trans-

lation. Then came sentences with the there-construction. Together with these the use of *any*, *some*, and *none* was practiced.

Grade Four. (Fourth week of January 1957) Forty-seven new words were added. This grade introduced Adjectives, the pronoun *one* standing for a qualified noun, and the gradation (comparison) of adjectives. The patterns were: *What color is ...? It is ...? What color are ...? They are ...*

G. was told to observe that words answering the question *what ... like?* (i.e. adjectives) do not take the plural ending in contrast to words answering the question *who* or *what*.

Gradation was first practiced in sentences, after that a few times also in isolation.

Grade Five. (February) This grade concentrated on verbs and further increase of the vocabulary. The verbs were first used in the *Imperative* in Grade Two. Now came *Negative Imperatives* such as *Don't drink! Don't cry!* etc. The explanation was simply a H. translation given *only once*. This proved to be quite satisfactory. At the same time the *Negative Contracted Forms of be and have* were practised.

The Present Continuous, little used in Grade Three, was practised extensively now. The explanation was literal translation first and then an idiomatic one. Literal translation was given only in the first one or two instances. Here, as in all grades, translation was omitted as soon as possible, i.e. as soon as it could be ascertained that G. understood the sentence with the verb in question, which did

not usually require repetition or more than one repetition. The adverb phrase *éppen most* or *most éppen* (H. for "just now") was very appropriate to use in the H. translation because it made the idea of continuity clearer.

Next came the *Present Non-continuous* to express usual actions in such examples as: *When do we get up? When do you go to bed? What do you do during the day? Where do we wash? Do you go to bed in the morning?* , etc. and of course the answers to these.

After some practice with sentences like those above, a few verbs were practised in isolation too: I go, you go, etc., do I go, do you go, etc.

This served to show the system of conjugation better than by practice in sentences only,as in the "natural method".

Grade Six. (Second half of February This grade introduced the Future, the Present Perfect and the Past Tenses in this order.

The *Future Tense* was easily explained by saying that *shall* and *will* with an infinitive express future actions just as *fog* in H. (although H. uses the Present whenever the context makes the idea of futurity evident). The Future of a verb was said in isolation: *I shall go, you shall go*, etc.

The five-and-a-half-year-old child hadn't a very clear idea of futurity, but the fact that E. *shall* or *will* correspond to H. *fog* was easily understandable for him. Nevertheless I gave the explanation: "What we do or what anybody does is an action. It is an action if we go or eat. Going is an action, eating is another. If the action took place

some time ago, that is before now, the action is a past one; if it is taking place now, it is a present one; and if it takes place after the present time, later than now, it is a future one. The time when the action takes place can therefore be past, present or future time." (H. has only these three tenses and uses the same word *idő* for both "time" and "tense".)

Shall I open the window? Shall I read? In connection with these examples I explained that *Shall I open* asks a wish or order and also that the English Future Tense must often be rendered with the Present in H.; also, that *will* can nearly always be used instead of *shall*.

I shall come home in the evening. I will read to you in the evening. In these sentences the adverbial modifier of time makes futurity evident. In such cases H. uses the Present.

After this the Present Perfect Non-Continuous was used, though relatively rarely, in sentences like *Have you washed your hands? I have opened the window. It is still open. Have you closed the window yet? I see you haven't closed it yet, for it is still open.*

Here again I did not content myself with making sure that G. understood the meaning of such Present Perfect forms, but gave a short analysis of the construction thus: The word *have* or *has* is coupled here with a verb or action-word and this latter usually has then / t / or / d / at the end.

The *Past Tense* was introduced in such sentences as *What day was yesterday? Yesterday was Sunday. Did it rain*

yesterday? Yes it did.

By the end of Grade Six G. knew some 550 words, including all the 500 words of the picture dictionary, both passively and actively.

Learning English was not a burden but an amusement for G. He was never given tasks: we just practiced together.

Grade Seven. (First and Second week of March) G. was now prepared for the understanding of *stories with carefully simplified texts*. Since however no such texts were available, I had to write some. The first story was that of the Selfish Giant. The sentences were divided in word groups (as shown by the dividing lines in the text). At the end of each group followed the H. translation. First every word within the group, and then the meaning of the whole group was explained. Then the whole sentence was read again slowly or at least not too fast. The basic forms of the most important words (such as the singular of a noun, the infinitive of a verb) were also mentioned. The group was first read in E., then in idiomatic H., translation, then again in E.

Since the Past Tense was still insufficiently practiced, the child's attention was called to the distinctive marks or forms of this tense. For each occurring verb the three principal parts, Infinitive, Past Tense, and Past Participle, were given thus: *to go -- /he goes/ -- he went -- he has gone.* (At the beginning I also mentioned the third person of the Present.) I called these parts the pricipal or main "forms" of the verb. After a few examples had been taken out of the text, it was enough to mention the pricipal parts thus: *go* --

went -- gone. The principal parts of the strong or irregular verbs were always mentioned when such verbs occurred in the text. G. said the text after me by groups (each group once). Here is the text of the Selfish Giant:

Once/ there was / a selfish giant. He lived/ in a beautiful large castle. But/ his garden/ was still more beautiful/ than his castle. It was the most beautiful garden/ in the country./ Every day/ the children came there/ to play./ One day/ as the giant looked out of his window,/ he saw the children/ playing in the garden./ He went out/ into the garden/ and cried:/ "You mustn't play here!/ Go away from here!/ Go and play on the street!/ The children went away./ They were very sad,/ because/ they liked/ the beautiful garden./ It was winter./ When Spring came,/ he saw no children/ in the giant's garden./ He said:/ I don't go/ where there are no children./ The giant didn't know/ why Spring didn't come to his garden./ One morning/ as he looked out of his window,/ he saw/ a small child/ in the garden./ He went out/ and asked him/ what he wanted./ The child answered:/ "I have come/ to tell you/ that Spring/ will come/ to you/ if you let/ the children/ play in your garden."/ Then the giant/ called the children/ to come and play/ in his garden./ Spring came/ and the giant and the children/ were happy./

This story contained 20 new words for G. I read the story once according to the method just mentioned. Next day I read it again slowly and asked G. to tell me what the text

meant. Group by group he translated it impeccably. In order to find out whether he just remembered the H. translation of the tale, or whether the E. words were meaningful for him, I asked him what this or that word of a sentence meant. He invariably gave correct answers. It was unbelievable, but however I tested him, he could remember everything. I then tried to work up the theme by questions in E. but G. would not answer; he said he could not. I did not insist for fear of discouraging him, but decided to wait.

After the first story came others. G.'s passive knowledge of words grew rapidly. The second story, The Musicians of Bremen, was three times as long as the first, with 63 new words. The third story was Little Red Riding Hood with 50 new words. The fourth was The Fisherman and his Wife with 51 new words.

These texts gradually became more difficult. By way of illustration here is a passage from The Musicians of Bremen:

An old donkey/ which had carried bags to the mill/ for many long years/ heard/ as his master said/ that he would kill him/ the next day./ The poor donkey/ didn't wait for that,/ but left the house./ As he was going on the way,/ he met a dog/ who was very sad./

The more complicated tenses in this text presented no difficulty. It must be noted that at this time G. could not read either E. or H.

In April, May, and June there was a pause in learning because of my own occupation and because G. spent nearly all

his days playing with his chums. In the evenings, when I had some time for him, he was already too tired to learn. During this period nearly 60 per cent of his knowledge of E. seemed to be lost.

Grade Eight. When we resumed the study of E. at the end of June (1957), it was evident that a systematic recapitulation/revision had become necessary. All the grammatical constructions already learned were practiced again, and the words of the earlier grades repeated. This took about two weeks. Then there was another pause until fall.

Toward the end of September we began reading stories again. After my introductory simplified stories illustrated above, it was now easier to find suitable literature for G. We read four books of the Little Golden Books series (Simon and Schuster, New York). They were: Walt Disney's Sleeping Beauty; From Then to Now; The Sky; The Seashore.

After these we read *The Yellow Fairy Book* (edited by Andrew Lang, New York: A.L. Burt) which was in normal E. We could make only slow progress because of the large number of new words. I read only half a page daily and explained the new words partly in E., partly in H., and often in both. When I re-read the text the next day, G. understood it. He also understood my questions, but still answered merely Yes, No, Here, Red, etc. and would not say more.

In October I got some more books with simplified texts and returned to these easier stories. They were published by Uchpedgiz in Moscow or Leningrad. In the autumn and winter months we read the following:

Oscar Wilde: *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*

Thomas Mayne Reid: *The Boy Hunters*

Mark Twain: *The Prince and the Pauper*

It was disheartening, however, that though he understood so much, G. showed no inclination to speak in sentences. I thought it was no use forcing the thing and it was better to drop it altogether, though G. often asked me (in H.) to read English to him.

Grade Nine. It was then (in November 1957) that my wife, who knew only a few lessons of an English textbook, provoked G. into speaking by saying to him that she could speak English better than he. She said a few sentences with several mistakes. G. triumphantly corrected her. Then my wife asked him how this or that sentence could be rendered in E. G. readily translated them. After this he went on speaking to show how he could speak and continued to speak for quite a long time. Although my wife had suspected that G. knew more than he let appear, she was astonished. She told him to speak English to Dad too.

This happened in my absence. When I returned home I was not a little surprised to hear G. speak to me in incorrect but fluent English. The fact that he spoke English was less surprising than the fluency of this utterance.

It is clear that the child had been under the effect of an inhibition. He had not dared to speak English in my presence because he was afraid of making mistakes and being censured for them. Incidentally but importantly, I had never censured him for the mistakes. This inhibition was removed

by my wife's clever interference. When G. discovered that nobody ridiculed him and that he knew something better than Mother, he was no longer afraid to speak English; in fact he liked to do so and my corrections did not disturb him either. Whenever he made a mistake, I immediately corrected him without lengthy explanations. After this his linguistic skill in English developed spectacularly. In December of the same year (1957) he began the telling of tales improvised by himself in English. In January 1958 he was able to hold conversation exclusively in English and to understand new words that were explained to him in the same language, because since November I had been following the practice of explaining every new word first in E. and telling the H. equivalent only after that, and that only if I thought it advisable, i.e., when I was not sure that G. understood it exactly.

We returned to reading the Yellow Fairy Book again. While I was reading the texts, I checked whether G. understood everything properly by asking the meaning of the more difficult words or sentences but took care not to make him translate more than was enough for checking. G. *was soon more ready to explain them in E. than to translate them.* It was clear then that finding the corresponding terms of H. was more difficult for him than explaining them in E.:

F --- T

M

This meant that when he was listening to E. speach or reading, he *thought in E. and did not translate mentally into H.* This was most evident when he easily explained the meaning of a word by a periphrasis or by gestures but *was at a loss how*

to say it in H.

Then one day in January (1958) G. asked me to always speak E. with him. Since that time we have used E. between ourselves. So with me he always speaks E., with other family members H. We have now got so much used to this that we would find it strange to do otherwise. G. himself said not long ago (in 1962): "It would be so funny to speak Hungarian with Father." So the language of conversation between us is E. but alongside of E. explanations of new words and expressions, I often mention their H. equivalents on first occurence at least (This statement is dated: 1962).

It was also in January 1958 that G. met a Canadian. G. easily understood her and was able to converse with her. She, too, was surprised at G.'s knowledge.

Now my task was to eradicate the mistakes in his speech and increase his vocabulary. All sorts of verb forms and tenses had already occurred in the texts. Now even the grammatical explanations were given in E. Abstractions were of course so far as possible avoided.

G.'s pronunciation was fairly good but not perfect. His articulation base was slightly fronted as compared with normal general American articulation. Therefore I once told him to try and speak with his tongue "drawn back". In order to make him notice the effect of retraction more clearly, I first pronounced a few sentences in H. with exaggerated retraction saying that an American learning Hungarian would probably pronounce it so. I also told him to watch my mouth and tongue at the same time. G. was very much interested because

he found this rather funny. Then I told him to say a few H. sentences in this way. He did so. Then I pronounced E. sentences in the same way and G. repeated them after me. From that moment his articulation was quite or nearly perfect in this respect. I also called G.'s attention to the diphthongal pronunciation of *o* and *a* in words like *no, home, day, same.* For a long time after this I often noticed that G. was closely watching my mouth while I was speaking to him. The improvement in his pronunciation was striking.

The type of American pronunciation used with G. from the beginning was so chosen that it should parallel Southern Standard British as consistently as possible.

By April 1958, when he was *six and a half years old,* G. recognized the meaning of some 4000 - 5000 words in their context. On each normal book page printed in normal-sized characters and written in normal, non-simplified English there were in general about four or five new words; I just gave an explanation of the new words and read on. I do not think it would have been good to make him mug. Talking could be practised during walks best because then it was easy to find topics to talk about.

By the time he went to the first form of the elementary school in September 1958, his E. had much improved in correctness too. He had been studying E. for 20 months then, but if we discount the pauses, for not more than 15. During this period E., probably through the charm of fairy tales, had gained such ascendancy over his mind that it became the dominant language with him. Although his E. was not as correct

as his H., his E. word hoard was as rich as the H., if not richer.

True, there were words that he knew in H. and not in E., but there were also words that he knew in E., but not in Hungarian.

Some might think the practice of two languages retarded the normal development of his vocabulary in the one and the other.

I had no English children about me for comparison, but it can be safely said that his H. was neither better nor worse than that of his playmates of the same age. Similarly the "Canadian lady's" impression was that, except for correctness, he knew as much English as English-speaking children of the same age do.

G. still made mistakes with the conditional subordinate clauses *if I would be* for *if I was /were/*. Besides, he sometimes used a wrong government as a Hungarianism: *full with* for *full of*; look *something* for *look at something*, but the number of these mistakes was rapidly dwindling.

When he had no playmate and was playing alone, he spoke E. to his tin soldiers.

In sleep he often spoke aloud, as he had done before the language study was started, but *now* it was *always in E.*, that is, he dreamed in E.

Often he *was embarrassed how to say something in H.* to Mother. At last he said the whole sentence in E. or just inserted an E. word in the H. sentence and said: "Sorry, Mother, I just can't say this word in Hungarian." At such times he

was angry with himself. His attempts at an explanation were not always crowned with success. Sometimes it happened that I had to solve the riddle when I arrived home.

In spite of the deficiencies described above, it was obvious that G. had become in a sense bilingual.

There are widely divergent views on, and definitions of, bilingualism. W.T. Elwart[1] says that "By bilingualism we can understand: A. Bilingualism of the individual, B. Bilingualism of a social group in a certain geographical and social sphere, C. Stylistic bilingualism, which consists in using two forms of the same language in the same social group, each form having its own sphere of function. In the linguistic literature the term Bilingualism has yet another, still more specific meaning, namely: the speech of the bilingual or bilinguals."

Further, he (Elwert) says that bilingualism is commonly understood by non-linguists as the equal or nearly equal command of two languages.[2]

A similar view is held by P. Christophersen[3], who defines the bilingual person a "a person who knows two languages with approximately the same degree of perfection as unilingual speakers of those languages."

Much more liberal is Einar Haugen[4] when he says: "Bilingualism is understood here to begin at the point where the speaker of one language can produce complete, meaningful utterances in the other language."

By bilingualism I understand the knowledge of two languages in such a degree that the person in question can under-

stand, speak, and think in either of them without mental translation from one into the other.

That G. had become bilingual in the sense of the last definition is proved by three facts:

a. He dreamed in English;

b. He could speak both lanuages fluently, but was scarcely able to translate from one into the other;

c. According to his own confession he thought now in English, now in Hungarian.

It must have contributed to G.'s quick progress in E. that from the fall of 1957 on, the sessions had gradually grown to one, two, or even three hours.

When he began to speak E. in November 1957 (Grade Nine), I was surprised to hear from his mouth words that I had mentioned only once, half a year earlier. This showed that he had a very retentive memory. This then was another factor.

Grade Ten. School was a major factor working in favor of H. but it did not interfere with G.'s already acquired knowledge of E.; it only slowed down his progress in the latter. Nor was the practice of E. at home a drawback at school. Although his H. was more correct than his E., the latter seemed to have a stronger hold on his imagination and to have gained his preference. The reason for this was that he had heard tales regularly first in E., not in H. Thus he had emotionally more agreeable associations with E.

In the first semester of the schoolyear, that is in the fall months, G. learned the H. alphabet, but even in the second semester, after Christmas, he, as well as his class-

mates, had difficulty in reading the letters fluently together into words, though H. spelling is in a high degreee phonetical.

From the beginning of his study of E. I had been trying not to let G. see written E. because I feared lest it should interfere with his pronunciation. But when he had a little school practice in reading H., he became interested in written E., too. This happened in early autumn. From this time on he liked to see what I was reading aloud to him. Then I explained to him that in E. several letters often stand for one sound, one and the same letter may stand for different sounds, that the letters have sound values other than in H., and that there are also silent letters.

It is interesting that in spite of the greater consistency and relative simplicity of H. spelling, after a little practice G. could read E. texts more fluently than his H. textbook.

Speaking of the First Stage of experiments, I have already referred to the child's synthetic way of thinking. Reading E. better than H. may have been related to it.

G. practiced reading E. very little and I still did not encourage him to read E. and only showed him how it was done in order to please him when he was interested. Of course, partly the consistency and simplicity of H. spelling, partly the preponderance of the school practice of reading H. soon turned the tables in favor of the latter.

From this time on G. could recognize, i.e. read out, nearly all the words he knew acoustically (that is by hearing), but did not like to read new texts; he preferred to read again

and again what I had already read and explained to him. He did not tire of reading the story (Robinson Crusoe, The Black Arrow, The Boy Hunters, Pinocchio, etc., all in adapted version) as many as five or even ten times. Although I soon taught him how to find a word in the dictionary, he did not like it and did not use it. In 1962 he had not yet used the dictionary for independent reading, although he could now find the words if he wanted to.

Experimenting with the IPA phonetic script used in the dictionary I found that it was more difficult for G. to read than the ordinary spelling. In fact, the phonetic script only confused him. So I did not insist upon his learning the IPA symbols. The diacritics used in other dictionaries seemed to be more useful. But most helpful was the indication of a few basic rules by means of grouped examples, such as: out, house, mouse, down, brown, now, etc.

Of further progress there is little to say because there was no longer any need to use a peculiar system or trick. The essential thing was to read and practice speaking. There were days and even weeks when I could not practice with G. because of my own occupation, but when we could, we read and talked for half an hour or an hour. Reading still meant that I read aloud to G. Sometimes he followed the text with his eyes.

Sometimes even, usually at the weekends, we played together imagined stories or enacted Treasure Island, and G. greatly enjoyed these games.

From the summer of 1959 on, he was able to understand

American and British films.

During 1960 I sometimes showed him what the same passage would sound like in American, British, and Scottish style.

In August 1961 he had an opportunity to speak with several Englishmen who spoke with heavy Southern, Western, Midland and Northern accents respectively. G. understood them.

G.'s ability to translate had much improved since 1957-1958.

In 1962 he could translate easily enough, at least orally, though sometimes he became embarrassed. Although his H. and E. vocabularies may have been different, he was at home in both languages at this time and could think in one or the other. The words of the two languages were first of all associated with the ideas in his mind, and not with the corresponding words of the other language. An example illustrating that the languages were associated direct with ideas in his mind is that once in that year, when he was reciting his geography lesson in H. at home, I interrupted him with some questions in E. After the interruption he continued to recite the lesson in E. and did not notice he was speaking E. instead of H. until I warned him after the first two sentences.

In the following years we had more simplified and non-simplified texts. During the summer of 1962 I read R. Haggard's novel, *The Wanderer's Necklace*, to G. as an example of slightly archaic (non-simplified) English.

In the achievement of success four principles have played decisive roles:

(1) the principle of following the line of least re-

sistance or the principle of no coercion;

(2) the principle of provoking the child to emulation;

(3) the principle that the subject of talk or tale must appeal to the fantasy of the child;

(4) the principle that the child must be given opportunity to use the language while he is engaged in some activity.

During later years of schooling G. had no time to practice E., but during the university years he refreshed and further developed his knowledge of it. At present he feels that both languages are his own.

The facts here described are not based on reminiscences but were collected from records made simultaneously with the observations.

N O T E S

1 Elwert, Dr. W. Theodor: *Das zweisprachige Individuum*. Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz, 1960.

"Unter Zweisprachigkeit kann man, mit Grootaers, folgende Sachverhalte verstehen: A. Zweisprachigkeit des Individuums, B. Soziale Zweisprachigkeit: zwei Sprachen werden von einer Mehrzahl von Individuen als Gruppensprachen in einem Bestimmten geographischen und sozialen Bereich gesprochen, C. Stilistische Zweisprachigkeit: zwei Formen derselben Sprache werden in der gleichen sozialen Gruppe mit je eigener Gebrauchssphäre verwendet. In der sprachwissenschaftlichen Literatur nimmt der Terminus "Zweisprachigkeit" noch eine speziellere Bedeitung an, nämlich: die Sprach des Zweisprachigen oder der Zweisprachigen, dh, den Gegenstand der Untersuchung bildet das Ergebnis des Zustandes der Zweisprachigkeit des Individuums oder der Gruppe (und meist wird nur der zweite Fall überhaupt der Betrachtung unterzogen: das Ergebnis der Sprachbetätigung der Zweisprachigen, die Sprachmischung.)"

2 *Ibid.*

"Ausser den Unklarheiten hinsichtlich des Begriffes 'Zweisprachigkeit", die oben erwähnt wurden, weswegen auf die Unterscheidungen von Grootaers Bezug genommen wurde, begegnet man noch divergierenden Meinungen darüber, bei welchem Grad der Sprachbeherrschung von Zweisprachigkeit gesprochen werden könne. Die landläufige Vorstellung, die den meisten und insbesondere nicht-linguistischen Publikationen zu grunde liegt, ist wohl die, dass man als zweisprachig nur denjenigen ansehen könne, der eine zweite Sprache ebenso gut oder fast ebenso gut spricht wie die sogenannte 'Muttersprache', oder aber sie jedenfalls so beherrscht, dass sie im täglichen Gebrauch ihren Zweck er-

füllt, was freilich bereits eine erhebliche Einschränkung bedeutet (Hall, l.c.S.16: 'the effective command of two languages'). Dieser Begriff ist jedoch viel zu eng, denn alle an Zweisprachigen zu beobachtenden Phänomene setzen ein, sobald sich die Kenntnis eines anderen Ausdrucksmediums über die Kenntnis vereinzelter Vokabeln erhebt... "

3 Christophersen, Paul: *Bilingualism*. 1918. London: Methuen and Company

4 Haugen, Einar: *The Norwegian Language in America. A study bilingual behavior*. 1953. Philadelphia

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Christopersen, Paul. 1918. *Bilingualism*. London: Methuen and Company

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