

Bilingual First Language Acquisition (MM Textbooks)

By Annick De Houwer


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Increasingly, children grow up hearing two languages from birth. This comprehensive textbook explains how children learn to understand and speak those languages. It brings together both established knowledge and the latest findings about different areas of bilingual language development. It also includes new analyses of previously published materials. The book describes how bilingually raised children learn to understand and use sounds, words and sentences in two languages. A recurrent theme is the large degree of variation between bilingual children. This variation in how children develop bilingually reflects the variation in their language learning environments. Positive attitudes from the people in bilingual children's language learning environments and their recognition that child bilingualism is not monolingualism-times-two are the main ingredients ensuring that children grow up to be happy and expert speakers of two languages.

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Editorial Review

Review

This book has everything the student needs. The survey of the literature is thorough and each study is related to the core "big issues" of language balance, language differentiation, lexical overlap, and language interaction. De Houwer explains in detail the use of important tools such as auditory preference measures, the Communicative Development Inventory, and the CHILDES bilingual database in ways that will allow the student to begin real research projects. The exposition is crowned by a final chapter on what it means for two languages to exist harmoniously in the young bilingual. This is a masterful introduction to one of the fastest growing areas in language studies.

(Brian MacWhinney, Department of Psychology, Carnegie Mellon University, USA)

The study of bilingual first language acquisition has truly come of age with the publication of a first textbook devoted to this fascinating topic. De Houwer's highly readable volume is both comprehensive and stimulating in its presentation of various aspects of bilingual language development - a must-read for students embarking on this field of research.

(Elizabeth Lanza, Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies, University of Oslo, Norway)

A timely contribution to a field gradually coming into its own, this is the first textbook to focus on bilingual first-language (L1) acquisition. With its userfriendly presentation, this volume should be accessible to an interdisciplinary readership and could help to popularize the field.

(Virginia Yip, Chinese University of Hong Kong *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, Volume 32, Number 3, September 2010)

About the Author

Annick De Houwer has recently been appointed as Chair of Language Acquisition and Teaching at the University of Erfurt in Germany. She is also the new Director of the Language Center there. In addition, Professor De Houwer holds the title of Collaborative Investigator to the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (U.S.A.). Her PhD was based on a dissertation on bilingual acquisition, a topic she has since continued to work on steadily. Her book *The Acquisition of Two Languages from Birth* (CUP, 1990) is widely cited in the bilingual acquisition literature. Dr. De Houwer has also published on Dutch child language, attitudes towards child language, teen language, and intralingual subtitling. She has extensive editorial experience.

Users Review

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