

Running head: BILINGUALS AND LINGUISTICS

Bilinguals and Linguistic Social Construction

Hiroko Nomura

19051061

Doshisha University

Faculty of Social Studies

December 24, 2008

Abstract

This thesis attempts to portray the social construction of linguistics that bilinguals undergo. This research has been made based on the interviews of 5 female bilinguals who have been abroad in various countries and period of time talking about their life. This thesis shows that the years being abroad and the language they answered do not always proportion. From the 5 participants, we may see that language itself is a product of societal practice, where it is given different characteristics, and our relational being is what gives it meaning. It is likely that this research will bring new aspects to the studies of bilinguals and the way they present themselves through language within society.

論文要旨

この論文はバイリンガルが言語的に社会構築を行っているかを研究したものである。この調査は5人のバイリンガル女性を対象に各々一時間のインタビューで海外経験や自己について語ってもらい、そのインタビューを基に分析を行ったものである。結論からすると、5人はそれぞれインタビューの最も多かった回答言語と海外年数が必ずしも比例しないことが明らかになった。しかし、言語によって対話の仕方が変わることが分かった。彼らを通して見えたのは、言語は社会的な習慣又は慣習の産物であり、他人との関係性の中で意味が与えられるということである。この調査はさらなるバイリンガルの自己表現における研究に新しい可能性を生み出すことであろう。

Bilinguals and Linguistic Social Construction

We live our life in narratives, where our life itself is a story that we have constructed. Each person has a narrative of their own, and in this narrative, we are the main characters. As we act our roles out in the narratives that we constitute, we interact with those around us. This process of interaction or co-operation with others is what helps us to constitute the self and existence of ourselves along with those around us in society.

Furthermore, it must be noted that communication is essential in representing ourselves towards others. We constitute our lives with discourse and through narrative, we identify ourselves. In other words, it is through language and dialogic relationship that we constitute the self.

In this paper, we will observe 5 female interviewees which have been abroad for various period of time in their life. Through their interviews, we will study the way they have expressed themselves taking a look at their interviews through various perspectives which reflect their life paths, and analyzing the way they communicate to others.

This is to further study the area of bilinguals, in hope to find and unlock the secret of how language helps to socially construct the way we present ourselves, especially looking upon how bilinguals represent themselves to others. My hypothesis is that bilinguals have different characteristics that have been socially constructed according to the different languages.

Method

The participants are 5 senior students at Doshisha University, who are graduates of Doshisha International High School. Of the 5 interviewees, 3 have been abroad in the United States and the other 2 had been from European countries. One having been a returnee from France and Holland, and the other having a nationality as a Russian who is currently studying abroad in Japan for more than half of her life. The other 4 have the nationality of Japanese.

All participants have been interviewed for an hour, having been asked about the following topics:

- Life abroad including topics about friends, school and family etc.
- Reason for going abroad
- Language barriers
- Life coming back to Japan including topics about friends, school and family etc.
- University life
- Job hunting or graduate school
- Future goals, plans
- Marriage and dating
- Cultural differences and Identity problems
- Thoughts and feelings about living in different countries, likes/ dislikes etc.
- Random conversation where the conversations do not fit the categories above

The topics of the questions are as shown above in particular to understand the different and unique background that each person has. With various topics given to talk about, the attempt was to find differences in the use of language according to the topic that the participants had answered.

Procedure of Analyzing

Each interview had been analyzed after they had been made into data. The interviews itself had been typed up word by word and then placed into Microsoft excel by sentences under the categories listed above.

Once the replies had been places into the sheet, it had been split into the different categories of answers replied all in English, Japanese and a mixture of both. For those that had been a mixed reply had been counted and put into categories of 1 to 5 English, Japanese words; 5 or more English, Japanese words; and half and half. In addition to this, each mixed replies had been put into a category of answers that had been answered mainly in English, Japanese or half and half.

With these categories, graphs had been made in accordance to analyze the structures of the interview overall to show the how the participants had answered the interview. And within the mixed responses, by categorizing the numbers of words and language used, we can see how frequent which language had been used to answer the interview questions. This is to show which language had been used more often, and to see which language had been used to talk about which topics. This is in attempt to find a pattern as to show how each person presents themselves through language according to topics and to see if there is a special feature.

Participants

Participant A

Participant A has been in the United States for 7 years, particularly in New Jersey. She had gone abroad according to her father's work, and moved when she was 3 years old and coming back to Japan at the age of 10. Her mother language is Japanese.

Her interview had been one of the longest when written out due to the fact that she speaks very fast. Her voice tone had been very confident throughout the interview but especially on topics where she was explaining about herself as a person and giving reasoning to the actions she take.

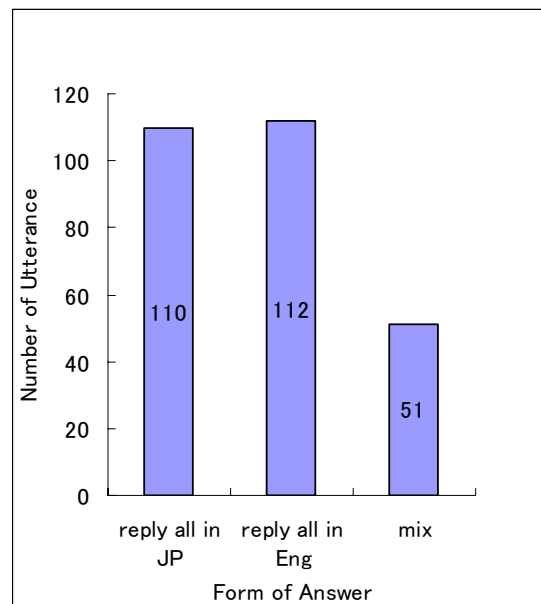


Figure 1 Utterance by Language of A

As can be seen from the graph, her replies had been about the same amount in English and Japanese. 110 replies according to Graph 1, was all replied in Japanese and 112 were replied all in English within the interview. There had been 51 totals of replies which had been a mix of both languages. It may be said that she had replied about the same amount in either language due to the fact that although she has been abroad for 7 years, she has been going back abroad every year for her vacations since her father is

currently abroad and has had opportunities of using English frequently.

Also, with further inspections, as it will be explained later on, it revealed that even within the replies of the mixture, most of the sentences were constructed in English, and fewer Japanese had been spoken.

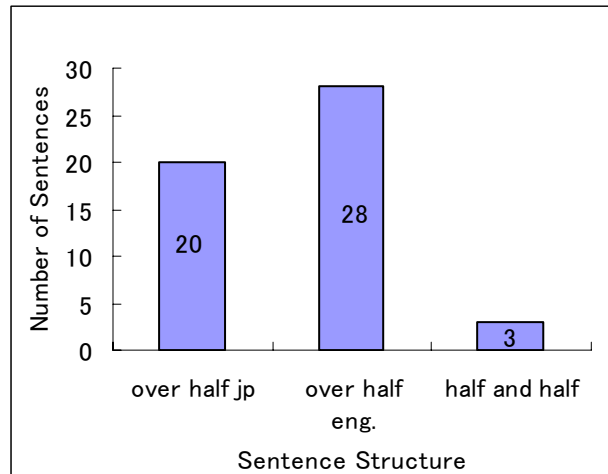


Figure 2 Comparison of Sentence Structure within the Mixed Replies

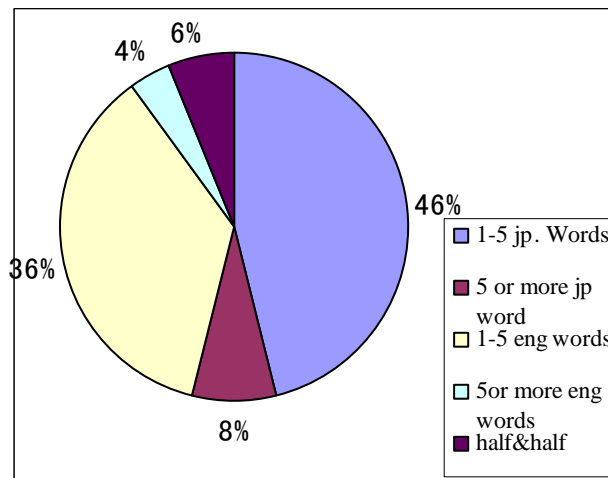


Figure 3 Usage of Language within Mixed Replies

According to graph 2, within the mixed replies, over half of them had been replies which were mainly answered in English. This amounted to a total of 28, out of 51 totals of the mixed replies. Furthermore, the amount of 1 to 5 Japanese words, used in the replies had been 46% and 5 or more Japanese words had been a total of 8%. This is more than half of the amount replies to the interview, and from this result, we can

understand that as it has been mentioned above, this interviewee has the habit of talking more in English and using Japanese words only when there is a need.

In addition to this, the topics that this person uses when speaking English were the following; about her experience abroad, right after she had come back to Japan, the time she had studied abroad for 6 months during high school, and when talking about her family. Despite the questions being asked in English, Japanese or mix, most of her replies had been in English where sometimes she speaks Japanese to add explanations.

The words that came up in Japanese that were one word answers were Japanese mobile phone companies such as “docomo” or “Vodafone”, “mixi”, “circle” (club activity) and such which are common Japanese words that are not common in the western cultures.

In contrast to this, the topics she had talked mostly in Japanese were the following; cultural differences and or identity, university life, language related conversations, future plans, job hunting and her thoughts and feelings. In most case, whether the question had been asked in English or Japanese or mix, these topics had been replied mainly in Japanese with few English words. As it can be seen, these topics need more explanation when answering, and hence, she has spoken more Japanese to add details and explanation in her answers.

Within these topics, most of the English spoken words had been 1 to 5 English words within the mixed replies which was equivalent to 38% as shown in Graph 3. Taking a closer look at these mixed constructed sentences, some of the English words that had been used were contractions such as “so” which she had used a many times within this interview. She talks about herself in third person perspective trying to be objective that when she tries to back up her thoughts and give reasoning, she had a

tendency of using this word. What was very interesting though was that she tends to make her explanations in Japanese despite beginning her replies in English. Other words that had come up were words that are more common to be used in English such as “identity crisis”, “TOEIC”, or name of countries.

Also, participant A had started talking more and more in Japanese after 30 minutes had passed during the interview. The more the questions had been asked in Japanese, the more she had a tendency to answer in Japanese as well.

What I have noticed not only to her but to everyone was that many people tend to speak in English for topics that are random conversations that are not related to the interview questions.

Participant B

Participant B had been abroad 10 years, mainly in the European countries. She had gone to France at the age of 5 and moved to Holland when she had turned 8 years old. Her mother language is Japanese but she is trilingual and can speak Japanese, French and English. Her tone of speech had been very calm and gentle and the speed itself had not been as fast as participant A.

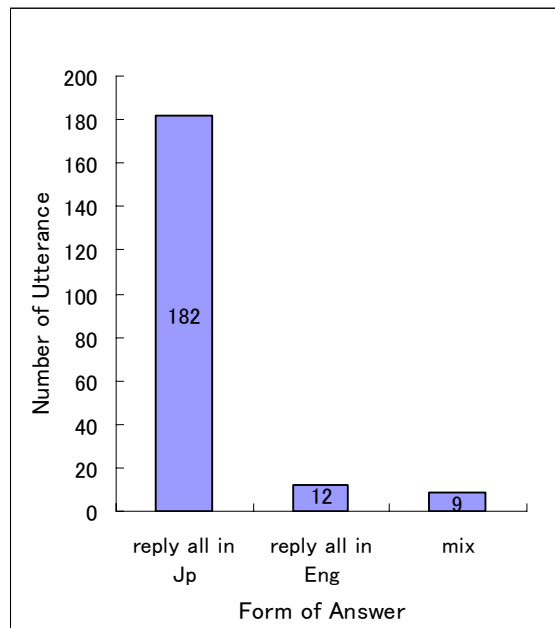


Figure 4 Utterance by Language of B

As can be seen from the graph, her special trait is that despite her long years abroad, she had mostly talked in Japanese during the interview with a total of 182 replies. This may be grounded to the fact that she is not in the environment that makes it necessary for her to speak English. Just taking the fact that she had been brought up studying English in Holland for 7 years, makes no difference with her and participant A. However, taking in account that she has not recently been in an environment to use English, it can be understood that she is becoming more comfortable speaking in Japanese which lessens her opportunity to talk in English even more.

In addition to this, one thing that can be said about her replies is that having been abroad for so long, she has some tendency to use English reflexively when answering questions.

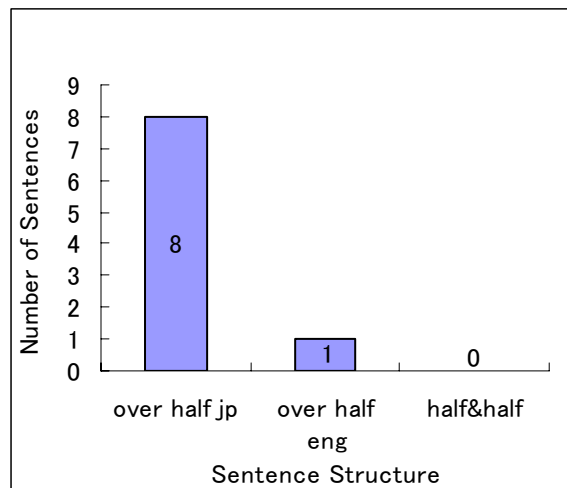


Figure 5 Comparison of Sentence Structure within Mixed Replies

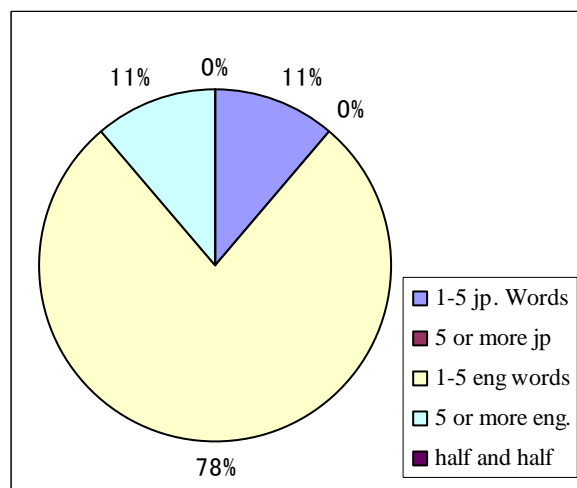


Figure 6 Usage of Language within the Mix Replies

With further inspections, within the 9 mixed replies, as can be seen from Graph 5, 8 had been answers where the sentence structures had mainly been in Japanese. Of the overall English being used in the mixed structured sentences which was 89%, one can see from Graph 6 that 78% of that had been one English words being used. These words were normally spoken reflexively or words that can only be expressed in English. As a result, participant B had clearly talked more in Japanese throughout the interview even with closer inspection within the mixed replies.

What is very interesting about this person was that she had been abroad for so

long and yet lost the tradition and practice of using English in the conversations, where, as a result, she talked the most Japanese out of the participants that had been interviewed. The topics of family had a response of 5 times which had been in Japanese. University life had 25 responses in Japanese with 2 mixtures and 0 in English responses. Last but not least was the topic of her experience of when she had come back to Japan which had been replied 23 times in Japanese and no English had been spoken except for once in a mixed reply where she had said “like me”. As a matter of fact, there was not even one topic where she had spoken more English. For every subject, she had replied mainly in Japanese.

In contrast to this, there had been some topics where she had talked in English a few times. The topics where she had spoken mainly in Japanese with some mixture of English words was when she had talked about her experience abroad, language related topics, about her future, job hunting, random conversations, thoughts and feelings and about cultural differences. Whether the questions had been asked in Japanese, English or a mixture of both did not matter, for the majority of her responses had been in Japanese with little English.

As it had been mentioned before, the English that had been spoken were 1 to 5 words. Except for language related topics and the random conversations, all the other topics listed above had only been replied in English once. For example, for participant B, some words that had been spoken in English were such as “um...” or “whoa” which are English sound effects as well as the “yes”, “no” answers that had been replied. Other than that, some of the words such as “definitely” which she had used when I had asked her a question in English, or being “open”, as in social, had been in English pronunciation and not in the Japanese katakana pronunciations.

Despite my effort of trying to have her respond in English, she had answered my questions all in Japanese. Whether I had asked questions in English, mixed, or Japanese, all of her answers had been responded in Japanese.

Participant C

Participant C is a Russian student at Doshisha University. She has been in Japan for over half of her life, while studying abroad in Russia for about 3 years, England for 3 months, and the United States for 6 months. She speaks Japanese very fluently in Kansai intonation along with her first language Russian and English. Her voice tone had been higher when spoken in English and her speed when talking was faster in Japanese.

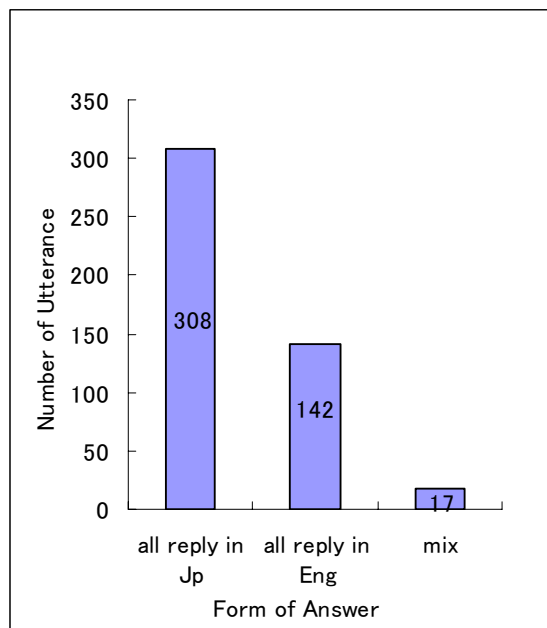


Figure 7 Utterance by Language of C

According to Participant C's results, from graph 7, we can see that she had been talking in Japanese approximately twice the amount of English. Her replies in Japanese had been 308 times and 142 times had been in English. For the mixture of both languages, she had replied 17 times throughout the interview.

When counting the times spoken in either language according to the topics, she had talked in either language for all. Therefore, for each topic more or less, she had replied in either language.

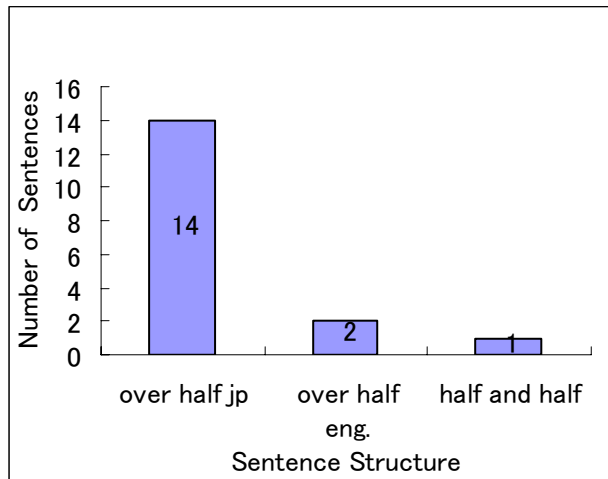


Figure 8 Comparison of Sentence Structure within Mixed Replies

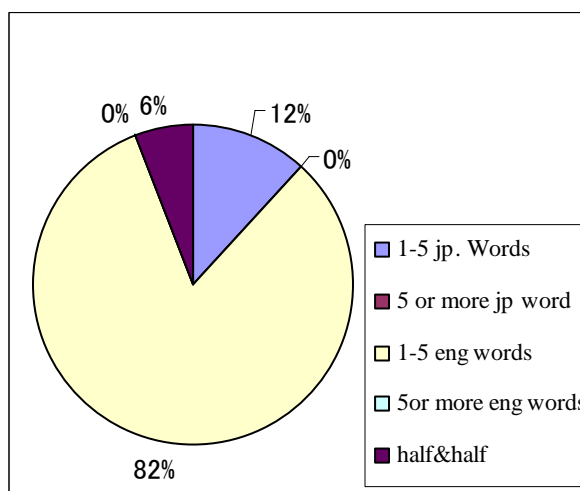


Figure 9 Usage of Language within the Mix Replies

For the category of mixture, we find that out of 17 times spoken in mixture, 14

times had been replies which had mainly been spoken in Japanese from Graph 8. And with further inspections according to Graph 9, 82% of the replies within the mixture had been replies where only 1 to 5 words had been spoken in English. Hence, it can be said that even within the mixed replies, this participant had a habit of speaking in more Japanese.

Most of the one word conversion of either language was due because it had been names of a place or because it is an official word that can only be explained in that language. As participant B, she had used English words such as “Williams (University)”, “TOEIC”, “TOEFL”, “GRE tests”, “Princeton” and such words are words that can only be expressed as shown above and that is the reason why she had come up using them. In contrast to this, she had talked more in Japanese on the topics of her experience abroad in Japan (during her youth) and Russia, cultural differences and identity, family, language related topics, graduate school and thoughts and feelings.

The topics that she had talked more frequently, mainly in English, were the topics of when she had lived in England with a response of 15 times all in English as to 12 times answered in Japanese and 2 responses in mix. Out of the Mix replies for participant C, she had been speaking more in Japanese, since she has been acquainted with Japanese far more than English. However, as a fact, she has begun to speak in English a lot more than from when I knew her from before she had gone abroad to study in the United States. As a fact, she had talked more in English when chatting about topics other than the questions from the interview. As a result, the topic of when she had studied abroad in the United States had also equaled the same with 28 responses all in Japanese with 4 responses in mixture. This was actually quite an amount of response made in English compared to the other topics.

As stated before, what is interesting and different about her from the other interviewees was that she tends to speak in either language 100%, and the only time she mixes English and Japanese is when she speaks either language due to the fact that it can not be expressed in the other language. In other words, she only converts the languages when there is a need for it, and if there is no need for it, her answers are fully in either of the languages she had answered in. No other participant had such a clear conversion of languages such as her even after further analysis had taken place.

This clean conversion may be due to the fact that she does this with her first language, Russian, and 2nd language Japanese that she can convert the languages she use cleanly. She would never speak Russian to her Japanese friends for many do now know it, and therefore, she keeps it in Japanese at all times. However, when she goes home, she converts back to Russian for she only speaks to her family in Russian.

For this reason, she can keep using one language when talking since she has no tradition of mixing the languages. She herself has states that she had not liked using English until she had gone abroad, and since her first language had been a minority in the Japanese society where she had grown up most of her youth, she had little opportunity of using it with people other than her family. As a result, it can be said that the environment that she had grown up in, had been quite different from the other returnees who convert and mix English and Japanese constantly when talking to other English- Japanese speaking bilinguals.

Participant D

Participant D has been abroad for 9 years, in the United States but had experienced moving a couple times within the country. She had lived in New Jersey, Maryland, Illinois, New York and then in California. Her mother tongue is Japanese and she speaks English sometimes with her friends when she has the opportunity but recently, talks in Japanese most of the time. She has the tendency to talk a lot and switch to different topics as well as suddenly, start talking to random people she sees during the interview. Her speed was quite fast and her voice tone is very energetic and higher when speaking in English. She seems to speak with more intonation in English, changing the speed and voice tone quite often.

As you can see from the graph below, her replies had been mostly in Japanese with a total of 477 replies. Her replies in Japanese had been nearly over four times of that in English, and the mixture of both amounting to 36 times.

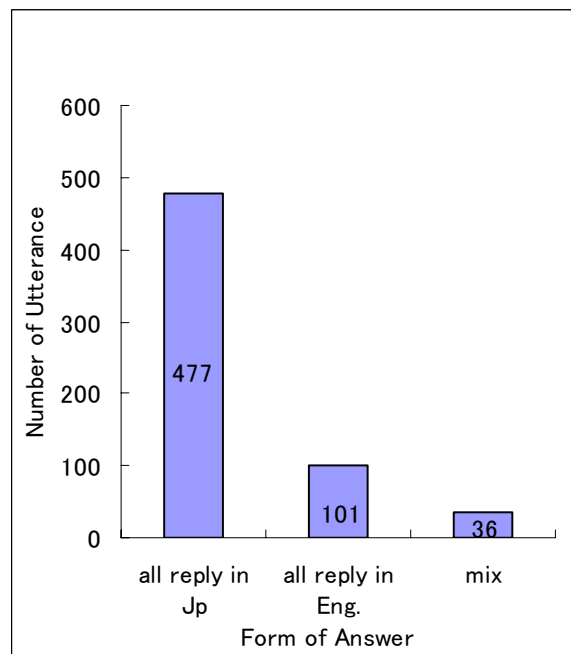


Figure 10 Utterance by Language of D

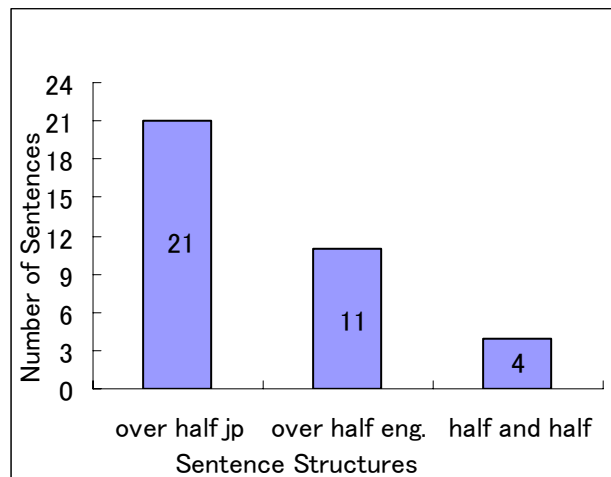


Figure 11 Comparison of Sentence Structure within the Mixed Replies

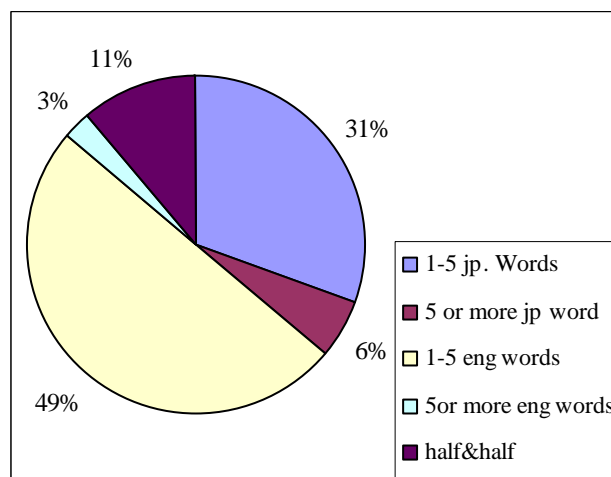


Figure 12 Usage of Language within the Mix Replies

According to Graph 11, 21 replies out of the whole mixed replies had been mainly been spoken in Japanese, and of those replies, about half of the replies overall had had only 1 to 5 English words used in them. Also, there were 3% replies that had more than 5 words in English within the mixed replies, which in addition to the 1 to 5 words in English totaled to 52%. As a fact, even for the mixed replies it can be said that Participant D had frequently replied in Japanese overall through the interviews, but uses English frequently in them. As a fact, there were no topics that amounted to more English responses than Japanese. All of the topics had been spoken in Japanese and

mainly had been answered in Japanese.

Within these answers of 1 to 5 English words having been used, these English words had been conjunctions that were used when answering questions or it was formal English words such as a name of a place. Also, she had a habit of calling her parents “mommy” and “daddy”, which most likely had been a tradition of usage that she had learned while she grew up in the United States, and that habit had still been with her that when she came to talk about her parents, she had used those words naturally even when answering in Japanese.

Most of the topics had been spoken mainly in Japanese where some English had been used within the conversation. However, there had been one topic where she had not responded in English which was the topic, difference in cultures. She had responded 42 times with this topic, but has not had an answer that had been fully in English at all despite the fact that questions had been asked both in English and Japanese, sometimes also with the mixture of both.

Another trait she had had also similar to participant B is that participant D, too, has the trait of replying some easy words in English reflexively. When showing emotions, it seems that for participant D, it is easier to express herself in English such as “aww” or “uh-huh” (as in ‘no’) which show emotional feelings verbally and when exaggerating or making jokes.

As we take a look at the graph above for participant D, we can see that she tends to use Japanese when replying even if she mixes English and Japanese together. It can clearly be said that participant D, like participant B, talks in Japanese when the answer to a question is long. For example, the topic where she had talked about her experience abroad had had 97 Japanese responses as to 9 English and 6 mix responses.

Another is where she talks about her thoughts and feelings, where she had responded 75 times all in Japanese and only 4 times all in English and 3 in mixture. When answers in one or two sentences can be answered in English, her responses are in English, but when asked to explain what she means in more detail to some topics, she has the habit of switching to Japanese to explain herself clearly for that is the language that she can speak easier and more fluently.

Participant E

Participant E has been abroad in the United States for 7 years. She had gone to New Jersey when she was 2 years old until the age of 9 when she had come back to Japan in 4th grade. She had learned English as her first language and she did not know Japanese when she had come to Japan for she had not had any kind of Japanese education as the other participants had had. Her voice tone throughout the interview had been very calm and gentle, but overall, she had a high voice tone speaking in English more than in Japanese, and she tends to speed up when talking in English.

According to Graph 13 below, this participant has answered in English overall through out the interview in contrast to the others, with a total of 403 times replied in English. As to this, her replies all in Japanese had been 21 times. Mixture of English and Japanese replies had been 35 times total.

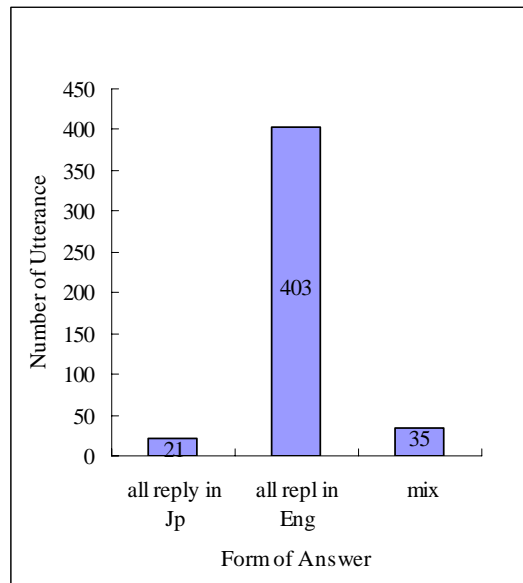


Figure 13 Utterance by Language of E

This is indeed interesting, since she had learned English as her mother language. It can be said that from the data above, we can assume that each participant has spoken mainly in the language that they have been acquainted with. Especially in most cases, it can be said that the interviewees have come to use the language they have grown attached to in the recent years.

When analyzing the times she had spoken in Japanese according to the different topics, she had spoken less than 10 times for each topic. Therefore, most of the language she had spoken was in English. In other words, for this participant, according to this participant, it may be said that the interview had been replied mainly in the English that had been her mother language.

Furthermore, there had been some topics that she had not replied fully in Japanese at all, which were the following; when talking about her experience abroad, language related conversations and about her university friends. In other words, when she had talked about these topics, her replied had all been in either English or a mixture of English and Japanese.

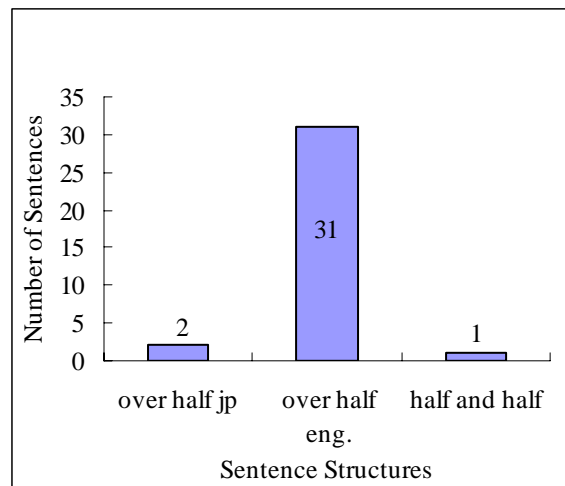


Figure 14 Comparison of Sentence Structures within Mixed Replies

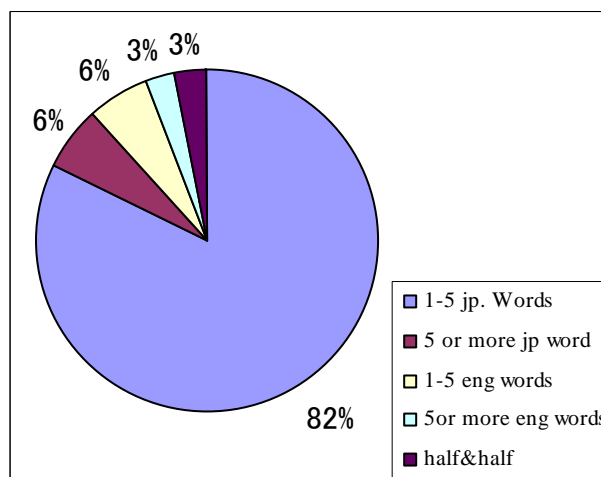


Figure 15 Usage of Language within the Mix Replies

When taking a closer look on the mixed replies, as it can be seen from Graph 14, 31 replied of 35 replies had mainly been in English. With closer inspection on the language of mixed replies, it is clear that 82% of that had been made up of 1 to 5 Japanese words used. In addition to this, there had been 6% of 5 or more English words. Thus this participant had answered more in English, even within the mixed replies which were constructed with Japanese.

Most of the times, for her, she had switched to Japanese taking in account that she could not explain some words in English, and had no choice but to switch to

Japanese. In many cases, they had been special terms that she could not speak on the top of her head with English such as academic terms of studies, names of Japanese School (ex. Tokyo University, Doshisha International High School), Japanese cultural terms (ex. sister complex) and Japanese conjunctions.

It can be said that for her, she may sometimes be lead on to speak Japanese but only for short answers and most of the long answers, she has replied in English. Although she has been abroad for 7 years likewise participant A, it is interesting to see that she has a lot fewer mixed replies as to participant A who had quite a lot. The most replies that had been in a mixture of both language for participant E was the subject of when she had come back to Japan, which amounted to 10 times. For the other topics, the most mixed replies she had had, was 5 which was when she had talked about difference in cultures. Except for the topic of thoughts and feelings, of 0 mixed replies, she had a medium of 3.4 replies throughout the 10 topics.

It is clear that for this person, whether the question had been in English, Japanese or a mixture, she had a tendency of answering the questions in English and she did not have much of a problem explaining her thoughts in English as to others who had converted to Japanese when adding explanations.

Overall analysis

Through the 5 participants, it can be seen that each person has their way of explaining themselves when communicating. Each person had their different voice tone, and expression as well as hand gestures to give reasoning to what is being asked.

Participant A and participant E were the only two that had spoken English more overall in the interviews. The other 3, participant B, C, and D have been utilizing Japanese more often than English despite the years they have been abroad. For participant B, she had been broad 10 years, and she has been in Japan for only 7 years to this present day. Even when we look at the years she had been using English as her main language, she had been in Holland for 7 years commuting to a international school where English was the main language, which equals to the years she had been using Japanese after coming back. The amount of years has been the same, but she still uses Japanese a lot more in recent days which were the reason she had answered mainly in Japanese. Then, it may be said that from this research, each participants had come to use the language they use daily, the language that they have been familiar with in recent years, despite the years of having been abroad.

I believe that this is reflected especially on the topics where random conversation had been categorized. This is when people talk freely about anything that is not related with the interview, and this is where the language they are more used to speaking is utilized. This can be seen from the chart below.

Number of Utterance Participants	All in Japanese	All in English	Mixture
A	4	20	5
B	12	4	0
C	102	44	2
D	52	38	10
E	3	87	3

Chart 1 Comparison of Utterance for the Topic of Random Conversation

In each case, those that speak English more, automatically speaks more in this category and those who have spoken more Japanese overall, has also spoken far more in this category than the others. Participant A and Participant E has spoken more English for this topic as to the other three who had spoken more in Japanese. This is reflected also to the overall structures of how each person had answered the interview.

According to Ludwig Wittgenstein, language was what he called *form of life*ⁱ where he believed that language games are embedded in actions and objects in a broad sense. Games have specific words which have meanings within that game, but have little meaning in our social world outside of that game. In the game UNO for example, the word 'Uno' has an important meaning within the game, but has little meaning outside of it. However, without this word this game would not have a form of life. In this sense, it may be said that language then, is the doing of life itself. It is of practice and tradition. Language, then, is *performative* and we are engaged in a performance of some kind within a relationship.

ⁱ Gergen, K. (1999), *Invitation to Social Construction* p. 35.

When we take a look upon our society, words itself do not describe the world as is. Rather when it is successfully functioning within our society, it gives meaning within the relational ritual according to the certain conventions of certain groups. In this sense, it is essentially part of our world of action, where we come to constitute the social life itself. We are in a process of continuous constitution where we are generating meaning together with others. This is, in other words, a constant reconstruction.

According to Erving Goffman, language is to be understood as a form of social action where we are giving off signals and defining who we are to othersⁱⁱ. Not only the words we speak, but our actions such as gestures, the way we dress, personal belonging and such are part of these signals. He believed that our main task is to create a sense of identity in social life which is a self image of our self as an acceptable person. George Herbert Mead himself has also believed that our gestures are a form of language as wellⁱⁱⁱ.

I believe that communication is essential in giving existence to ourselves within the society. However this must be done with the existence of an “other”, and through co-operation, we are to give meaning to ourselves and others. People participate in multiple and broadly distributed relationships where multiplicity of our local realities emerge. This includes the myriad ways of our talking and being; through the different and variational relationships including friends, family, colleagues at work, classmates, neighbors and so on.

ⁱⁱ Gergen, K. (1999), *Invitation to Social Construction* p. 77.

ⁱⁱⁱ Mead, G. (1992), *Mind, Self & Society* p. 13-14.

	Years Abroad in English Speaking Country	Main Language used for Utterance	Language Spoken Faster	Higher Voice Tone	Frequent English Speakers	Shows Effort to Maintain English
A	7 years	English	English	English	○ with bilingual friends	○
B	7 years	Japanese	English	English	× rarely speaks	×
C	10 months	Japanese	English	English	○ with friends sometimes	○
D	10 years	Japanese	English	English	△ occasionally according to people	△
E	7 years	English	English	English	○ with sister, and bilingual friends	○

Chart 2 Comparison of Participant's Background and Presentation of Speech

As for these 5 participants, each has their own different local communities in which they belong to, and this community is what gives influence to each person. The more the community has others that are more acquainted with English, it will influence the participants to utilize that language more and vice versa. This is where our various ways of talking and being emerges. Those that talk in English, when asked about their close relationships with others would answer those that are bilinguals that actually speak English frequently. It shows that their sense of belonging is stronger with those that speak more English, as to those who answered mainly in Japanese to the interview. It should be understood that those who speak more in English are influenced by the other bilinguals which had lead them to speak more in English.

We give meaning to our existence through one another, and we are constantly

reconstructing ourselves through this process. In this sense, the actions of bilinguals speaking in different languages is sending out signals in different forms where we are fixing our thoughts into the words that gives them the precise meaning that we want it to have. In other words, we are placing our words into motion giving it new meaning towards each person with the languages that we are capable of speaking. This meaning is what gives the participants the image of their self and identity in the society, which Mead calls 'the generalized other'^{iv} where he also quotes "the attitude of the generalized other is the attitude of the whole community" (Mead, 1992, p. 154). The action of speaking in English is the output of their local community of bilingual friends.

As Gergen quoted "Thus, who I am and the nature of my actions come to be negotiated and defined within relationships" (Gergen, 1999, p. 82). This clearly shows that our actions are defined within relationships. As for the participants, their actions have grounds within their relationships with those that belong in their local communities which define themselves and give meaning to their actions.

Both participant that talked more in English, speaks mainly in that language, with more humor than speaking in Japanese as shown in the chart above. The way they spoke had more characteristics as to those who had just spoken in Japanese. The way they answer questions, give reasoning, their voice tone, their humor are more flexible in this sense as to those who had a more stabled voice tone of answering when spoken in Japanese. The context itself has more color, as one can say it, when answered in English.

In addition, those who spoke in English tend to use a mixture of both Japanese and English when answering, and it can be said that the words spoken in Japanese had

^{iv} Mead, G. (1992), *Mind, Self & Society* p. 154

been specific words that exists only in the Japanese society. It clearly is the example of how words and language themselves are defined within society and local communities.

Taking in account of the difference in the Western culture and Japanese culture, it is true, that there are differences. This cultural difference also is the essence, I believe, which gives the languages different characteristics. Humor itself in the Japanese society and western society has its distinction and this is what is reflected when one speaks in that language. Jokes in English that have been translated in Japanese lose its point of a joke and the same can be said vice verse.

These are differences in which only those who speak more than one language can understand, and is what makes them distinctive from others whom can only speak in one language. It is unfortunate that those who are monolingual cannot experience this difference as to those who are multilingual. Those who are multilingual utilize their language in accordance to who they are speaking to, giving their context different characteristics and color which they have learned to do from their background history of being abroad in a different country other than Japan.

The other 3 participant who had spoken more in Japanese, may have gotten familiar with the Japanese culture where they have lost the practice of speaking in English as they had done before. However, when taking in account of the gestures and tone of voice of when they had spoken in English, it is clear that they have had different characteristics than that of when speaking in Japanese.

This research indeed has proven that bilinguals, the two participants who had replied more in English in particular, have different characteristics that differ according to the languages they speak in. These characteristics are socially constructed from the cultural history in which they have lived through. The way they present themselves

towards others, differ according to language for cultural practice and traditions itself are different. Those who are capable of understanding those languages will be presented the different characteristics according to the language.

Conclusion

As it has been stated before, this thesis has looked upon 5 interviewees in which have had different backgrounds but all whom have had experience of living in at least 2 different countries with different cultures. The purpose of this interview was to find if out if bilinguals have different characteristics that have been socially constructed according to the different languages, and my conclusion is that they in truth do.

The years of the experience of being abroad does not relate to how they have answered the interview questions. However, it was clear that when the participants talked in English, the way they had presented themselves had differed. Each participant had different voice tone, speed and gestures and so forth which distinguish themselves from when speaking in Japanese. This is believed to have grounded from the fact that the western culture shows more emotions that when they had presented themselves in English, they had a variety of ways of expressing themselves which gave more color and character to its context of speech.

Our expressions gain their intelligibility from cultural history, and our traditions of discourse is what constitutes the background of our current constructions of the world and self. When we express ourselves, we are performing and representing ourselves carrying the history of relationships, manifesting them and expressing them. Language is a byproduct of our history of relationships where we have socially constructed.

Reference

Gergen, K. R., (2007). *An Invitation to Social Construction*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

Mead, G. H., (1992). *Mind, Self & Society*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.