

When Language Becomes the Accent-Free Bilingual Tongue

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Abstract

A child born into a dual-language speaking family has the potential to grow into an accent-free bilingual; yet, with all the ubiquity of bilingualism, this tongue is rare. While the mere occurrence of such uniqueness, emerging in a nearly monolingual environment, deserves attention, experiencing the child being accent-free allures the mind of the accent-stamped bilingual parent. Through an autoethnographic inquiry, the author questions why this rare tongue arises in her child's psyche, reasoning that, since it cannot be the child's choice, it must inevitably stem from the parent. Involuntary projection of the unconscious contents turns the child's tongue into what it appears to the parent, not the child. Therefore, the understanding of emerging childhood bilingualism, conventionally perceived as dual language, is subject to parental interpretation and its inherent subjectivity. Influenced by the sensation of being accent-free, the author's perception of her child's bilingualism associates not with two languages but one, shaped by an intuitively grasped collective image. It is the parent's attitude toward the child's language that ultimately renders him speaking his only bilingual mother tongue.

Keywords

Accent-Free Bilingualism, Analytic Autoethnography, Analytic Psychology, Childhood First Language Acquisition, Acquired Bilingualism, Bilingual Mind and Experience, Psychology of Consciousness and the Collective Unconscious, Jungian Theory

1. Introduction: The Accent-Free Bilingualism—Two Languages or One?

Experiencing the musicality of inarticulate tones of an unfamiliar foreign language draws one in with its charm and allure, but the meaning is elusive and ungraspable. Yet, one's imagination is revived, and the language is lived, and it feels like

something is understood at a deeply personal level without words. In a similar manner, the “accent-free bilingual tongue” of one’s own child, with either language sounding natural and effortless, is mysterious and enigmatic to the bilingual parent, whose second language is unavoidably stamped with a foreign accent.

A command of two languages, as bilingualism is habitually perceived and, therefore, defined (Cambridge, 2023; Dewaele, 2015; Dolgunsöz, 2013; Hamers & Blanc, 2000; Shelestyuk & Ershova, 2020; Sia & Dewaele, 2006; Stepanova, 2020; Taskaeva, 2018; Thomas, 2015; Wagner, Bialystok & Grundy, 2022; Merriam-Webster, 2023; Zubrzycki, 2018), is a valuable practical and social skill (Antoniou, 2019; Dolgunsöz, 2013; Morley & Kerans, 2012; Stepanova, 2020); yet, understanding its role in advancing the human cognition has become the cornerstone of controversy that ensues more questions rather than clarifies the established ambiguity circling back to “What is a bilingual language?” (Afanasieva, Zakharchenko, & Mogileva, 2022; Antoniou, 2019; Luk & Bialystok, 2013; Maftoon & Shakibafar, 2011; Shelestyuk & Ershova, 2020; Taskaeva, 2018; Wagner, Bialystok & Grundy, 2022; Xia, 2023).

If I desire to learn a foreign language, my success will depend on many factors: age, education, experience, aptitude, teacher competence, perseverance, practice, and finally, the social environment. My understanding, however, is defaulted by the existing mother tongue, and what transcends its sensibility makes me rely on words, the very definition of which is controversial (Ledford, 2008). Since such a “knowledge-about” rather than “knowledge-of” the language is always relative (Bergson, 2002; James, 1950a), a researcher’s idea of the bilingual language of the other is subjectively colored, rendering the choice of the investigating method to omit what does not suit it. But as the question, so the answer: this bias falsifies the findings, while their relative truth (Haselton, Nettle & Murray, 2016; Wilson & Dunn, 2004) and our dependence on the causes necessary for explanation have brought us to a vast classification of types (Barinova & Nesterova, 2015; Bhatia, 2017; Dolgunsöz, 2013; Shelestyuk & Ershova, 2020; Stepanova, 2020): natural-acquired, early-late, simultaneous-sequential, and balanced-dominant, to mention a few—all highlighting an unceasing effort to supplement the elusive feeling of lack of clarity about bilingualism, thus, escalating the oppositions across scholarly opinions (Antoniou, 2019; Luk & Bialystok, 2013; Nichols, Wild, Stojanoski et al., 2020; Taskaeva, 2018; Wagner, Bialystok, & Grundy, 2022; Zubrzycki, 2018).

Finally, superseded by prejudice in the pursuit of conformity to a set intellectual standard, the naturally arising early bilingualism with its minimum accent production is frequently viewed as a detriment to child development (Berken et al., 2015; Bialystok, 2006; Dollmann, Kogan, & Weismann, 2020; Emelyanova, 2010; Guiberson, 2013; Kormi-Nouri, Moradi et al., 2010; Kupisch, Barton, Hailer et al., 2014; Lee, 1999; Li, 2005; Soltero, 2003). Hence, the opinions persist that the absolute command of two languages is unattainable, and the children nearly fluent in both languages are rare; whereas, speaking both languages accent-free is an exception (Grosjean, 2012, 2016; Kupisch, Kolb, Rodina, & Urek, 2021; Polinsky & Scontras, 2019; Rudenka, 2017; Zubrzycki, 2018). Whether it is monolingualism

or multilingualism, the nature of language does not change—its manifestation differs, but since the world is not independently objective, but begins with how it appears to oneself, any analysis is rendered insufficient to understand what constitutes the essence of a child’s bilingual tongue. And although one’s heritage language is believed to fall victim to the sovereignty of the societal ethnocentrism and may reach the point of being forgotten (Flores, 2010; Garcia, 1975; Polinsky & Scontras, 2019; Schmid & Köpke, 2007; Stepanova, 2020), the organic modifications, once impressed onto the child’s brain have the potential to endure throughout life if reinforced by practice, education, and culture (James, 1950a).

It is, therefore, questionable whether the natural from-birth and the acquired bilingualism could be subsumed under the same name. Not inheritable, the former is innate, instinctive, and emerges without an educative act in the process of creative reorganization by the very conditions to which the causal analysis attempts to reduce it. Arising as an emergent property of language (Claussenius-Kalman, Hernandez, Li, & MacWhinney, 2021; Hernandez, Li, & MacWhinney, 2005; O’Connor, Wong, & Yu, 2015; Kroll & Bialystok, 2013), the unaccented bilingualism, while being the product of the child’s unconscious adaptation to the family milieu, is an unfolding personality, the manifestation of which is inherent to the very child. Embodying the parental tongues, it harbors novelty by irreducibility to their single entities since speaking accent-free cannot be imitated or faked. Thus, the absolute knowledge of language, not limited by one’s worldview and being potentially inclusive of all possible experiences, requires knowledge of the language acquired in childhood: organic, instinctive, and, therefore, whole. Monolingualism is an example of this. A monolingual is not in need of any translating or interpreting—the culture renders his language authentic and indistinguishable from others, and despite the individuality of everyone’s manner of speech, no one doubts the absence of accent among monolinguals! The “mono” language preserves the unity of the collective thought—the quintessence of humanity itself.

But the world gravitates to bilingualism.

Being unconscious of the psychic reality beyond that of one’s consciousness makes others and their languages appear external to oneself conceived through one’s sense of the “I.” In this relativity, one’s cultural identity (Hurtado & Gurin, 1987; Taylor, 2014; Xia, 2023), experience, and knowledge are involuntary projected out imparting others with one’s own subjective qualities and the assumption that one’s psychology is like that of others. However, these projected attributes characterize the observer rather than the observed (Bergson, 2002; James, 1950a; Jung, 1960), reflecting one’s only partial consciousness of the bilingual language. Convinced of the existence of linguistic multiplicity (Cenoz, 2013), research is prone to monolingual and bilingual stereotyping that assumes the form of one’s own judgment entrenched in the idea of two languages but not in what belongs to the bilingual proper. Moreover, since it is unimaginable otherwise, perception is compelled to delineate in the bilingual tongue a dominant (Birdsong, 2014; Grosjean, 2016; Polinsky & Scontras, 2019; Sim, 2019; Stepanova, 2020;

Treffers-Daller, 2019), but the asymmetry lying “in the eye of the beholder” reveals not so much the linguistic disposition of the other, but one’s own unrecognized uncertainty and vulnerability in the face of bilingual continuity, and such a mindset, in large, constitutes the understanding of bilingualism.

To cognize a bilingual, one must be bilingual.

Owing to the outward attention to bilingualism, the dominance rationalized from code-switching declares comparability of tongues reduced to proficiency, competency, production, fluency and usage, or self-reporting (Bentahila & Davies, 1992; Grosjean, 2012; Heredia & Altarriba, 2001; Luk & Bialystok, 2013; Maftoon & Shakibafar, 2011; Wagner, Bialystok, & Grundy, 2022). Yet, as everything psychic is Janus-faced (Jung, 1954), this explicit dominance hints at its invisible counterpart that complements the singularity of consciousness nurtured by the mother tongue, the only one of thousands of languages that has left the rest of all reality in the unconscious shadow. Therefore, the true experience of bilingualism lies in the unrecognized and undiscovered, while the researcher’s own unconsciousness is projected onto the bilingual speakers, who, possessing too great a value for his anticipating consciousness, turn into the subject matter for studying their bilingualism.

Accents that vary wildly but inevitably shadow the acquisition of the foreign language have become a benchmark of the bilingual nature (Dollmann, Kogan, & Weismann, 2020; Kupisch, Kolb, Rodina, & Urek, 2021; Love & Ansaldo, 2010; Moyer, 2014; Sim, 2019; Vishnevskaya, 2018; Zhang, 2009; Zubrzycki, 2018). Interestingly, the accent, always giving the bilingual away, is imitable by others, yet, its absence is not reproducible by the same bilingual implying some autonomy of its complex. While accent is not an absolute, but like music, “is in the eye of the beholder,” the state of being accent-free has become an unspoken ideal, for which one strives in speaking, and others do when they are spoken to (Barry, 1974; Bent, 2014; Levi, Wintersc, & Pisoni, 2007). Then, is it not precisely this fact that becomes the very criterion demanding some insight into its meaning? Requiring a resolution into a new level of understanding, one ought to view bilingualism from the perspective of not linguistic, but psychic reciprocity (Bhatia, 2017; Duarte, 2018; Grosjean, 2016; Kroll & Bialystok, 2013; Mahjabeen, 2022; Rethorn, 2021; Taskaeva, 2018; Xia, 2023).

Cognitive neurology and psychology have examined bilingual mastery intensively. These measurements, however, relying on the bilinguals’ self-assessment conveyed through predesigned questionnaires (Olson, 2023) break down to acknowledge the experiences non-communicable or not offered by surveys (Buckley, 2015). Not surprisingly, the opinions of high-proficiency bilinguals who, defying logic, perceive themselves as monolinguals (Wagner, Bialystok, & Grundy, 2022), suggest that the command of their tongue involves some concealed extent of the bilingual being: it is inevitable that the scientific judgment, adopting a thesis of the monolingual identity, gives rise to the bilingual antithesis (McDermid, 2017), but, in doing so, it takes no notice of the synthesis of dialectical opposites through the change of personality.

This leaves us with a method of analytic autoethnography that aspires to understanding of the bilingual self (Buckley, 2015). Having been endowed with such a lived experience, it is this subjectivity of the perception by the author of her own child speaking accent-free that hinted at the existence of another linguistic dimension. Yet, it is not our task to prove the absence of the accent but it is experiencing the very unaccentedness that compelled to look past straightforward interpretations and ask if there was another perspective on bilingualism. Therefore, we want to understand not the causes and factors influencing the accent, but specifically aim at comprehending its absence. Consequently, this study addresses the prominent scientific issue of bilingualism in light of self-reflected comprehension of the child's accent-free bilingual tongue. Not merely elucidating the personal experience but revealing the awareness not otherwise available, this work makes a unique contribution to the phenomenology of the perception of bilingualism that could serve as an empirical hypothesis against the recollections of ethnographic subjects and lead to renegotiating the approaches to the scientific inquiries about the psychology of language (Heller, 2008; Su & Cetin, 2021).

2. Oxford's Accent-Free Bilingualism: An Autoethnography

Sparked by the accent-free bilingualism of the author's own child, this case presents an exclusive occurrence of the observed phenomenon. While raising a bilingual child, participating in his educational process, and experiencing his "bilingual becoming"—one cannot escape the allure and fascination of his accent-free tongue.

The center of this study is a twelve year old boy named Oxford. His mother is a fluent sequential Russian-English bilingual immigrant; the father is a monolingual native speaker of American English. Oxford was born into an originally English-speaking family, which instantly transformed into a dual-language environment with the mother-infant interacting in Russian, while maintaining English communications between the spouses. In the process of the emergence and development of the child's speech, no special effort was made in equalizing the exposure between the languages, and each parent naturally communicated with him from birth using one's own mother tongue. However, in this one-person-one-language family, the dominance of English prevailed given by the spousal interactions as well as by being the language of the social environment. Oxford's exposure to the cultural milieu began at the age of three month by the daily attendance of daycare followed by the enrollment in school as well as numerous extracurricular activities. His only exposure to Russian was afforded by the interactions with his mother along with viewing the children's programs. The child has gone through the normal stages of development, and no speech delays or difficulties associated with the emergence of his dual-language were observed.

Presently, Oxford is a balanced bilingual, fluent and accent-free. Being literate in both languages, he is attending school on par with his peers, while being tutored in Russian by his mother, who takes a considerable part in his educational process.

He has grown to be indistinguishable from the native speakers of either nation, both language- and behavior-wise. This is evidenced by the subjective judgment of his parents, but is also inferred from the interactions with the local English-speaking community including school, friends, relatives, and from the local Russian-speaking group, as well as friends and relatives in Russia. Upon questioning the child of his linguistic self-perception, the reply was the Russian language.

2.1. Child's Instinct or Family's Environment?

A child's mental state during infancy is fused with that of his parents, particularly with the maternal psyche, while simultaneously, it reciprocates the innate tendency of instinct. Being born with the vivid memory of the archaic world and passing through the ancestral stages in his psychic development, the child remains under the power of the unconscious mythology-thinking. At the same time, being in a state of participation mystique with the mother, he falls under the spell of her psyche as well, the influence of which leads to his specific reaction. By the age of six, a child is still the psychic product of his parents, yet is already endowed with a nucleus of his ego-consciousness, the differentiation being marked by referring to himself as "I." It is his individual psyche that begins to emerge with this word dividing the world into "I" and "not-I" (James, 1950a; Jung, 1916, 1954, 2008). Yet, at this point a small child does not comprehend speech the way adults do: for him, it is a conglomerate of sounds, like a foreign language for a new learner. But a child has a different kind of knowing: it is that of the instinct (Bergson, 2007); and children may be exposed to the same influence, but would react in opposing ways as the conditions either favor or hinder the development of their individuality (Jung, 1954, 2008). Emerging out of the family identity is a reaction of nature to the conscious situation of the present; therefore, the psychology of the mother needs to be considered next.

Adapting to a foreign country entails mastering non-native culture, which starts with acquiring the command of language. The latter requires suppression of the mother tongue as well as one's native identity; and lack of controlling it can often be observed in speech of acquired bilinguals as slips of the tongue and strengthening of the accent under emotional effects. Learning a new language from the perspective of the already existing one is bound to the knowledge of what is already known, which limits the assimilation of the new to the phenomenal surface, taking on the form of imitation rather than adaptation. This way of being leads to a growing feeling of self-inadequacy and incompatibility with the environment and turns into a heightened self-awareness of one's accent—the problem not existing originally, but arising when some assimilated contents are trying to become more effective in life. Living a life unnaturally deprived of the original "I" forces one into an identification with the new environment further alienating the instinctive integrity of the familiar self—a dissociative process that splits the individual into two mutually estranged personalities (Jung, 1976). The idea of the *Doppelgänger*, or a Double, expresses it well: feeling whole, but not being one,

leads to a contradiction in the conditions of one's own childhood as the individual's disposition is already a factor in one's infancy, innate, and not acquired in the course of life. This psychic disorientation threatening one with a loss of mental equilibrium weakens the consciousness, thereby, making it liable for a spontaneous eruption of the unconscious contents no longer able to remain suppressed in order to restore the harmony between the conscious and the unconscious parts of one's personality (Jung, 1969b, 1976).

Coincidentally, Oxford's language was emerging and growing accent-free impressing with its organic integrity and sound perfection, and what was expected to be the ordinary turned out to be the rarity, rendering a commonplace process of the child's speech development to be emotionally influential. Like beauty that either has an effect or not, the actual self-being of Oxford's language attracted by the very fact of being accent-free.

Agreeably, without the physical environment of two languages, there could be no bilingualism: owing to the pure sensations of the earliest days of life (James, 1950b), the formative mind is most amenable to the directing influences of the unconscious identity with his family (Jung, 1954). However, acknowledging the extraordinary plasticity of the brain that has not yet reached the level of any developed habit, the unbalanced linguistic duality alone was highly improbable at creating such a rare outcome. Yet, this presented case is the evidence that Oxford's unaccented speech originated in a nearly monolingual setting suggesting that despite the incalculable importance of the family, the decisive factor still lay in the disposition of the child's psyche: having his personality already contained within himself as the being that he will be in the following years, the "future him" was but present in an unconscious form, and in this case, distinguished itself through his language. Therefore, the autonomous functioning of the psyche appeared to be decisive for Oxford's adaptation by overcoming the monolingual dominance of his environment and preventing the child from becoming unoriginal from his own personality as nature's purpose is in living itself (Jung, 2008). But the future is unknown.

2.2. Why Does This Rare Tongue Arise in the Child's Psyche, and Is It in His Psyche Where It Does Arise?

With all the ubiquity of bilingualism, the accent-free tongue is rare; and the same question persists: how could it arise in the psyche of the child in the unbalanced bilingual environment? From the position of an external observer, such a question is logical, but it leads to a dead end: the existence of a foreign-country environment for an immigrant or a dual-language family for a child, or the idea of bilingualism at all—each is a conception but not a cause for knowing it. Being instinctual for acquisition and imitativeness, the child is led by the identity with his environment of which his yet prelogical mind knows nothing; conceptualized as monolingualism or bilingualism, if the latter were never conceived, the child's language would have been his only known language, the mother tongue.

Restricted to the understanding of the obvious as judged from the outward appearance and subsuming “the accent-free” under the general term by analogy, one discards the connotation of its rarity and with that overlooks the essential quality inherent to the child’s state of mind. What determines the bilingual dominance of a child we ask?—it cannot be the child’s choice as the child yet makes no choice. Then, it is no one’s but that of a bilingual parent, whose own unconscious acquires independence of the tangible reality in the personal image projected onto the child’s language that assumes the form of a contrasting duality named bilingualism. Owing to extraversion of the observing consciousness, this juxtaposition necessitates formulation of the bilingual dominance.

In this conceiving of bilingualism as two languages, a notion of the accent inevitably arises as a mark of their disparity, yet, the unconscious desire to combine the two projects the existence of their harmony idealized as being accent-free. Then, is it not precisely in this psychic autonomy, the insensitiveness to which conditions the accent, one should want to discover something new? But on the contrary, turning a blind eye to the fact that one can be either native, or not, one invents “nativelikeness” and “near-nativelikeness” (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2000; Lee, 2005; Zubrzycki, 2018)—the terms that do not clarify the understanding of bilingualism, but exacerbate the “confusion of tongues” in the very monolingualism. Favoring the intellectual cognition rather than the nature of things by discriminating the unity of unrecognized psychic image into the imposed dichotomy, one settles with the term that suits the clarity of logic objectifying bilingualism into the diversity of immiscible opposites; and modern myths and legends persist populating the knowledge: in what language do you dream?—is the most frequent question a bilingual is asked, as if dreams need the human language to express themselves.

A similar way of thinking is reflected in the existing multitude of tongues, because it also overlooks the fact that the perception of this plurality conforms to an unconscious projection of one’s own contents. And since bilingualism is omnipresent, such a state of mind is inherent to the majority. Yet, when the contents of the unconscious are tending towards the balance with consciousness, a psychic association with a single language arises instead. Such an idealized perception of one’s child undoubtedly lurks within one’s own aspirations to speak accent-free, which may seem to be the cause of the projection, but since one cannot be conscious of projecting, the desire to speak accent-free cannot be its source. Compelling the attention, the unconscious enforces a psychic grasp of the situation from within, transferring the latent contents of its sphere onto an object, being in this case the child. This way, the author’s personal projection arises as the accent-free tongue carried by her child, which strikes the mind by an association with one language, not two. The fact that it chooses the child cannot be a coincidence as there must exist a priori source common for such an experience of language since its impersonal expression originates in its own independent way.

2.3. The Accent-Free Tongue as a Recognition of the Image of the Collective Unconscious

The very word “language” had a double meaning: the expression of thoughts through speech, under the cover of which language carried in itself some kind of hidden knowledge, not transmittable by speech but evocable as mental representations through pictorial symbolism concealed in geometry, numbers, ratios, and measures. From the reading of nature, the geometric and numerical symbols arose among the archaic peoples, who expressed and delineated thoughts that carried the same concepts for all; and the evolution of their consciousness was reflected in the geometric changes of the forms of the cosmos (Blavatsky, 1993). This reminds us of the dream symbolism and at the same time of the children’s drawings, where the symbols-archetypes of numbers and geometrical forms, universal for all mankind, are unconsciously reproduced.

The world can be viewed not only literally, but also symbolically.

The analogy with one language is suggestive of the familiar biblical motif “And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech,” and one could draw this parallel from many myths and legends (Mosenkis, 2007; Parrish, 2003). The existence of a secret language of prehistoric races, which later became the secret language of the Mysteries and is now lost, testifies to a certain world language of antiquity, which was understood by everyone, and is now called symbolism (Blavatsky, 1993). Thus, the idea of one language has been stamped upon the human mind from within manifesting through the graphical language of early consciousness as the natural disposition of the original perception. Therefore, the author’s association of the accent-free tongue with the idea of one language is not subjectively conceived but is of a collective significance; and like all the external arising from being a priori psychic, the primordial image of this non-phonetic language comes forth as an archetypal matrix of human languages.

2.4. The Bilingual Mother Tongue—Language and a Symbol

Like a work of art that reveals more about the viewer than the art, bilingualism casts off a different light when viewed not as the mere knowledge-about it, but is allowed to exert its influencing power. It is the sensations and emotions arising from the unconscious nervous excitations that are the antecedents of any awareness and a starting point of cognition, and must be interpreted a priori by the reacting mind itself to give rise to its own idea of reality (James, 1950a, 1884). The fragile mental organization of a small child being a gateway into the collective psyche filled with primordial images is susceptible to the impressions of the ever-repeated experiences that tend towards self-repetition perpetuating anew if nothing stands in the way. These archetypes already implicitly contain the meaning and translate a series of nervous changes into the collective representations (Jung, 1953, 1969a, 1970a, 1970b; Levy-Bruhl, 1980). And as anything external to oneself is preceded by a psychic image, the archetype finds its expression through the author’s projection, while the child repeats something that he could not yet have

experienced in his own life (Jung, 1954, 2008).

Admitting that the idea of one language grew autonomously and did not arise by means of a deeper reflection of the author, it appears to belong to an intuitive apprehension, which takes possession of the mind and compels it to look at things differently, reshaping one's perception and understanding. As the mother-archetype experienced by a child's preconscious psyche is the primordial image of Magna Mater projected onto his only known mother (Jung, 1954), the image of one language, projected by the mother onto her own child, finds its embodiment through his language effected by sensation of being accent-free: conspicuously alluring and effortless, the magic of his tongue bewilders the mind. And although the author's mind does discern the two monolingual tongues, at the same time, the absence of the accent defies that perception. Thus, while talking about the actual child, we are being confronted with a symbolic manifestation as such a perception reflects the psychic process that captivates attention only because it resonates with this particular expression and reciprocates it in the author's mind.

Alienation from the motherland forces the mind to regress into introversion and resuscitate the collective memory (Jung, 2008), thereby, the idea of one language that was already potentially present in the mother's psyche remained unnoticed until the personal projection of it arose. Appearing as a reversion to the primitive mentality, the motif of a mythic child, symbolic of infantile and undifferentiated mind and the original perception (Jung, 1916), necessitated re-experiencing the conditions of the childhood to come to terms with the self, and therefore Russian was instinctively spoken to the child from birth. This is why Oxford's tongue appeared endowed with a numinous and fascinating effect—forced from within and evoking a strong emotional response, it was the archetype realizing itself through the projection of the primordial image of unity onto the child connoting some novelty for the consciousness of the mother (Jung, 1969a, 1970c). Since only rethinking one's attitude can change the world, recognizing the meaning and significance of this symbol became the main guarantee and measure of the value of this personal experience.

2.5. A Foreign Accent—The Incentive into the Unknown Self

The paradox is that the author's unconscious itself instigated the conscious suppression of the instinct, creating the internal conflict: alienation from the motherland threatens with a loss of one's mother tongue identity, which when forced into the background, re-appears as the accent, unceasingly shadowing the newly assumed language. A beginner bilingual is not concerned with the importance of the accent, his feat is to speak the language at all: the initial memorization bound by contiguity to the meanings of the mother tongue has one's bilingual skill weak at first, along with which, suppression of the mother tongue creates a great discomfort. Upon gaining fluency, a bilingual starts to resemble the native speakers portraying changes in vocal and gestural features; yet, besides this likeness, a growing alienation perceived by one's fellow countrymen elucidates: "You are just

like them!” A fluent bilingual, immersed in the new language, soon begins to realize a growing inadequacy heightened by the accent, which brings along an infatuation to speak accent-free—a fantastic idea, which seems to be raised to the level of an absolute. But the pure, unconditioned sensations are the prerogative of the earliest days of life—they are impossible for adults with memories of acquired associations (James, 1950b), and mastering the second language tends to be conceptual, objective, and directed outwards as it lacks the original “feeling of the tongue.” Therefore, the shadow of the mother tongue in the consciousness of the new language is ineradicable: training to achieve fluency undoubtedly brings one closer, but never allows achieving effortless command of language, and as the author’s experience shows, the accent persists even after nearly 25 years spent in a complete cultural submersion as its loss, in essence, would amount to the loss of one’s instinctive roots. Identifying with the others in one’s imagination and going with the flow of the surrounding life, the bilingual inevitably assumes the new mentality and, at this stage, may not remember which language was just spoken, as well as vigilance of the code switching diminishes. Yet, no matter how fluent, the inferiority of the non-native language leaves the mind with gaps in understanding by the deprived word-guided thinking, which prompts to guessing. But this is not guessing in the conventional meaning of the word as one’s psychic adaptation continuing throughout life still demands the language—and many immigrants, unable to withstand the pressure, remain isolated in the native-speaking community or return to the homeland.

By means of language, consciousness adapts to the reality of its senses. The mother tongue, liberating one from the unconscious during the first half of life, turns into a hindrance when the misleading influence of speech gains control and conforms one’s individuality to the worldview of the cultural stereotype. Relying on the conventions of speech with the meanings already embodied in the social usage, the internal imagery is merged into what the words signify, rendering one’s perception meaningful in an objective way, one for all and a priori given. With thus imposed extraverted attitude comes a conviction that the language-defined reality is the reality—and what is unnamed, remains unnoticed. Confined to a kaleidoscopic reshuffling of the prescribed character and behavior that gives yet another expression of what has already been, the routine persists, displacing the true reality and driving one farther away from the self; and an aching feeling of longing sets in. But how is one to acquire a novel grasp of things if the decisive determination inflicted by the language-imposed worldview is always searched for from the outside? Language is not merely words, but the meaning and value that one projects into the world since one’s thought, out of all possibilities, chooses its own object; and without any knowledge of a spoken word, a child already has his “language” (James, 1916, 1950a, 1950b; Wright, 1877).

The mother tongue, instinctively securing in its identity and leaving all the rest nameless and therefore nonexistent, is also allegorical of a mother image and life itself, embodying the invisible associations that extend into the unconscious. And

since it is the emotional overtones of the voice by means of which the language is revealed, the deviation from the certainty, like a step into the unknown, is accentuated through a foreign language. Perceiving one's own accent as being always in sight of others, tempting their thoughts and raising controversies, is to fall short of realizing that the accent is the projected self onto those others, persisting and reminding oneself, not the others, that herein lies one's psychic complex anticipating the development. Therefore, abstracted from the entire subject matter, preoccupation with the accent cannot be groundless, and modern bilingualism is as symptomatic of its accent as it is symbolic by the accent-free ideal projected into it.

Viewing accent as an imperfection is to forget that behind it stands the mother tongue by which one was integrated into the world, and its autonomy implies a set direction established and kept alive by the native roots. But this confinement in the unconscious revealed by accent is the incentive to reestablish the continuity with the original sensations of the childhood and bring to light what was deprived by the mother tongue. Cramming of words, comparable to learning a theatrical role, either condemns the new language to remain the same monolingualism, or holds the potential for novelty in one's psychology that received a chance for development via one's bilingual becoming, but otherwise, would have laid dormant. And therefore, the mastery of bilingualism does not lie in realization of speaking accent-free, and the illusion of its attainment cannot suffice as native-like does not equate to native because the power of language lies in its original sense impression creating the world the way a child "sees" it, not the adult.

3. Conclusion: Language against Language as Punctus Contra Punctum¹

As the art of reading is also the art of knowing what to overlook, the art of mastering a foreign language is more than expanding on the versatility of communication.

Living in a state of two mentalities, unceasingly comparing the new with what has already become, presents one with an opposition known as a double worldview (Afanasieva, Zakharchenko, & Mogileva, 2022; Chernova, 2008; Monti-Belkaoui & Belkaoui, 1983; Savchenko & Barseghyan, 2021). Yet, prompted by inarticulate sounds of speech and nonverbal cues of the environment, it is this frustrated state of mind that activates the unconscious imagination as besides one's personal memories, there is memory of the collective psyche reigning in the background from which all consciousness originates (Jung, 1916, 1966). "The thought was and is..." (Jung, 1969a: p. 383), "...thought goes on" (James, 1950a: p. 225): underlying the reality-thinking of modern languages there is the eternal thought-form of humanity. By virtue of its non-intellectuality with a prelogical childlike state of mind, mythology became the repository of the most ancient human wisdom of the

¹From Latin punctus contra punctum means note against note. In music, counterpoint is the relationship between independent melodies (New World Encyclopedia, 2022).

intrinsic and uncontroversial perception of natural facts, inexpressible by cause and effect of the intellect (Blavatsky, 1993; Levy-Bruhl, 1980; Jung, 1953). Thus, springing from the undeveloped areas of one's bilingual-in-becoming psyche, the instinctive, infantile, and unadapted prevails over the mature sense of reason again, reliving the experience of childhood, Like the mind of antiquity that lacked the language-directed thinking and drew its knowledge from the archetypal creativity called myths, fairy tales, and legends (Blavatsky, 1993; Jung, 1916, 1970a), the psychic process of bilingualism comes to light, which, arising in antiquity, was the intuitive knowing inherent in the archaic mentality that could not be a conscious invention.

Bilingualism as we come to understand it, rejuvenating anew in a variety of the linguistic pairs, is the capacity implanted in the depth of the human psyche itself. But it cannot be the plurality as we know it, as one cannot speak two languages at once not causing a discord or interference; it is a commonality of underlying experiences, where one language that was once reasoning of waking mind but long sank into oblivion forgotten, is now misunderstood in recognition of a plurality of foreign tongues. Thus, bilingualism brings to our attention the oldest and the highest form of knowing—intuition—the knowledge of the instinct and that of a child, originating at the point of the unconscious oneness with the milieu when one is being the milieu itself (Bergson, 2002; Jung, 1954, 1970a).

Out of the two geniuses of thought, intuitive reasoning precedes that by the abstract characters of words (Bergson, 2002; James, 1950b; Wright, 1877)—as in monolingual reasoning, it takes observance, sagacity, and memory to focus the attention inward to make thoughts clearer to oneself rather than communicating them to others. Yet, to think bilingually, one has no choice but to withdraw from the reliance on words and to exercise a change in attitude by assuming a disposition directed onto an imaginary and unnamed, that which it “seems like,” beholding a newness in its becoming through one's intuitive grasp when the conscious and the unconscious perceptions merge into a sharpened psychic awareness. Shifted towards the introverted thinking, a bilingual does not reproduce the typology of either language, but unknowingly engages one's excluded capacities of mind, following the course of thinking away from the secured paths.

Like polyphony, the two languages can be spoken at once only when merged in thought in counterpoint. As all art strives towards becoming music (Bely, 1994; Pater, 2009), the richness of the language imagery is dictated by the complexity of its associative texture, and bilingualism acquires meaning only when these languages fuse their symbolism that blurs rigidity of meanings and breaks the boundaries of monolingualism, evoking representations of non-linguistic nature. This, once again, reminds us of the ancient prehistoric language. Like harmonizing opposites, the versatility of language reveals itself through the personality embodying the artistry of thought translated into words. We notice this reciprocity in children, bilingual from birth, who instinctively resort to mixing the letters of the alphabets; but also in the bilingual writers who, interchanging languages, mani-

pulate them as if they were one, creating unforeseen associations and making novel steps in thought (Chernova, 2008; Dagnino, 2015; Mahjabeen, 2022).

The mind, conditioned by the archetypal entities of numbers, perceives them as nature's cyclical repeating patterns of rhythms and symmetries (Jung, 1969b). Endowed with a "bi," the self-expressing deuce of bilingualism presents two languages discerned in their relativity exhibited by dominance of one. Like melody that rises from a rhythm, from rhythm rises unity of the bilingual tongue, and thereby the bilingual mind longs for its crowned freedom from the accent. This way, evoking a sense of wonder, phonetic soundness of Oxford's tongue involuntarily associated with the language that overpowered, in both literal and figurative senses. As an emerging language symbolizes consciousness (Segal, 1999), this continuity arises when an ease of code switching is presented with no hesitation or inner tension, and the third emerges out of the splitting deuce like rhythmic beating of a new life's heart, or one's bilingual tongue. The meaning, thus, lies not in the desired accent-free empiricism and not in judged alienation or native-likeness, but, akin to an emotion of ancient chanted singing, the precursor of both music and speech (Blavatsky, 1993; Helmholtz, 2013), the true experience of bilingualism implies a transformation in recognition of the undiscovered self.

Through a child, the actual child and the mythic image revived, this reflection has taken the author from monolingualism to the acquired bilingualism, and through its ascendancy to the accent-free bilingual tongue it has arrived at symbolism that lies in the unconscious memory of all. Like Magna Mater of one's only mother, Logos rises through one's only mother tongue. But speech is reticent and taciturn when one exhales, and intuition of the silence gains its mastery (Blavatsky, 1993). It draws one towards the harmony, yet not to that of the linguistic systems, but to the unity between the nature of the self that gives impulse to beating of the heart and the human language to cognize this nature. But thousands of foreign tongues classed into a phylogenetic tree are but an ever bifurcating deuce, then, how could one imagine the power behind this multiplicity of forms?

And so one reasons that herein lies the significance of bilingualism—enchanted by the mysticism of foreign sounds in emotional identifying, one's imagination brings to life the unknown exerted by the power from within, which must be felt to make the knowledge of it real. And therefore the world gravitates to the phenomenon that we call bilingualism coming forth as evidence that language is an instinct; yet also, it strives for being art in order to transcend the veil of illusory Maya weaved by the words of one's mother tongue. Reviving psychic image of the forgotten ancient language, the symbol of the infinite, in a bilingual mind two tongues merge in counterpoint and initiate creation that was and is the magic of the words, self-procreating through one's subjective nature in the continual bilingual becoming of the world (Bely, 1994; Blavatsky, 1993; Freud, 2011; Helmholtz, 2013). A bilingual being requires knowing the languages, but the decisive factor is in one's feeling them, and only then does one become the language of one's own world.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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