

Oral Nativeness Acquisition in English as a Second Language Environments: A Case Study of Planned Bilingualism

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Abstract

From the current available research, it is evident that further evidence is needed to understand Second Language Acquisition (SLA) processes under planned bilingualism approaches in English as a Second Language (ESL) environments. This study employs an explanatory single case strategy to investigate the oral proficiency and SLA experiences of a native-like English speaker brought up by second language (L2) English-speaking parents in a Spanish-speaking country. The main participants were Victoria, a 27-year-old, and her father Rafael who chose a planned bilingualism approach for her daughter's upbringing in Colombia. Data collection instruments included 51 questionnaires and 2 individual semi-structured interviews. The findings suggest that the concepts of English nativeness and language ownership ought to be based on categorisations of language expertise or proficiency rather than on other categorisations such as country of origin, nationality or the number of languages people speak. Impersonal L2 input sources such as films seem important in a learner's SLA process. Parents' involvement with the target language and interest in its culture are also important in a learner's successful SLA process in ESL environments.

Keywords: ESL, native English speaker, oral proficiency, planned bilingualism, SLA.

The best approach for multilingual language acquisition is probably the “one parent, one language” policy (OPOL). Each parent speaks his or her native language exclusively with the child, which leads to advanced competence in each of the languages. [...] There are successful examples, however, of parents using an LX [i.e. any language] in which they were not necessarily native-like, and yet their child acquired that language to a native standard. (Dewaele, 2015, p. 6)

The purpose of this study is to explore the latter idea, in which second language (L2) oral nativeness is achieved through exposure via L2-speaking parents in environments where the target language is not spoken. This study investigates the oral proficiency and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) processes of a 27-year-old female (henceforth referred to as Victoria), born, raised and educated in Colombia, who has acquired L2 native-like oral proficiency via a planned bilingualism upbringing chosen by her L2 English-speaking father. In this study, Spanish is Victoria's first language (L1), whereas English is her L2. Such investigation was sparked by my own interest in people's SLA experiences in general, but mainly by the peculiarity of Victoria's case. This study will hopefully help parents, language teachers, researchers and practitioners in English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts understand better the processes involved in SLA, so they can make informed decisions in relation to language input, exposure and instruction needed to aid L2 oral proficiency.

Literature Review

Language Acquisition

In the field of L1 acquisition, the most revisited argument regarding the origin of human language acquisition is that of nature versus nurture (see Bates, 2003 for a detailed neuro-linguistic discussion). Nurture refers to the behaviourist view where language is acquired through habit-formation, repeated exposure from the surrounding environment, imitation and reinforcement provided by other speakers (Skinner, 1957), while nature refers to the innatist view of language where humans are said to be genetically pre-programmed from birth to acquire language through parameters underlined by a Universal Grammar (UG) which stores abstract knowledge of how languages work (Chomsky, 1959). In the latter view, repetition of input cannot account for our capacity to learn a language from the limited available input from parents, and our ability to generate new language through the application of grammatical rules (Mitchell, Myles & Marsden, 2013). For instance, it is commonly known that small L1 English children produce utterances such as 'goed' or 'putted' when they are trying to learn to speak.

Building on UG's theory but applied to SLA, Krashen and Terrel's Natural Approach (1983) has also been influential. Although heavily criticized for its vagueness and lack of applicability to empirical testing and research (Spada & Lightbown, 2010), this theory is based on the assumption that an "L2 can be learned intuitively in the same way L1 is learned through plenty of exposure to comprehensible input before production takes place" (Velasco, 2016, p. 19).

Within the field of psychology, cognitive-developmental views see language as the representation of knowledge acquired through physical contact with one's surroundings and manipulation of objects in our immediate environment (Piaget, 1970; Piaget & Inhelder, 1966). Related views, however, seem to place more emphasis on the development of language as a result of social interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978), the predictability of learning stages in relation to cognitive processes (Pienemann, 1998), and the automatization of intentional learning through practice (DeKeyser, 2003). In some psychological SLA theories, language acquisition is based on input-related factors such as frequency, salience, redundancy and contextual relation, but also on cognitive processes

such as association, prediction, abstraction of patterns, and interaction, all of which make up a more general learning system humans resort to when trying to acquire any skill (Ellis, 2003; 2006).

In general, interaction seems to be crucial in L1 and L2 acquisition. Lightbown and Spada (2006) make reference to a case study of a child, born to deaf parents, who seemed to display issues with ungrammatical structures as a result of lack of input and interaction. He showed improvements once he started to have conversational contact with an adult on a regular basis. His younger brother did not seem to go through this delay as he already had plenty of interaction and a conversational partner in his older brother. As they put it:

The fact that he had failed to acquire language normally prior to this experience suggests that impersonal sources of language such as television or radio alone are not sufficient. One-to-one interaction gives the child access to language that is adjusted to his or her level of comprehension [...] Television, for obvious reasons, does not provide such interaction. Even in children's programmes, where simpler language is used and topics are relevant to younger viewers, no immediate adjustment is made for the needs of an individual child. Once children have acquired some language, however, television can be a source of language and cultural information. (pp. 22-23)

Other ground-breaking studies have also emphasised the importance of social interaction in L2 learning. For instance, employing an experimental research strategy, and both behavioural and non-invasive neuroscience language processing examining methods, Kuhl, Tsao, and Liu, (2003) tested the L2 phonetic learning capabilities of an experimental group of 9-month-old American infants who had been exposed to 12 face-to-face Mandarin sessions delivered by native speakers over a period of 4-5 weeks. The experimental group was contrasted with three other groups: a group of infants who had been exposed to the same L2 material only via standard television or audio tape; a controlled group that had only been exposed to English sessions (i.e. the subjects' L1), at the same rate and over the same period of time; and a similar group of infants who had been listening to Mandarin for 10 months in Taiwan, an environment where the L2 was spoken. Results of this study showed that infants in the experimental group managed to learn the statistical structure of phonemes in an L2 given first-time live-interaction exposure at 9 months of age. These infants' performance on the Mandarin contrast was similar to that of those infants in Taiwan, and their learning was durable as per similar results from tests carried out at a later stage. The infants who were exposed to the same L2 material via impersonal sources such as television or audiotapes showed no signs of learning, similar to the group of infants who had not been exposed to the L2.

These results have led some researchers to believe that social aspects of interaction gate the computational and mind mapping mechanisms underlying language learning in humans (Kuhl, 2007). This may also explain why autistic children showcase parallel deficits in social cognition and language (Kuhl, 2010).

In general, language acquisition during childhood entails complex processes and undertakings, but ultimately most children acquire high levels of oral proficiency when

exposed to language under normal circumstances (see Candland, 1993; Curtiss, 1977 for unusual cases of language deprivation during childhood).

Oral Proficiency and Nativeness

The 'native vs. non-native' dichotomy has been losing momentum in a world where more people are using English to communicate with each other in the "expanding circle" (Kachru, 1992, p. 356). Heated debates have questioned the concepts of English nativeness and ownership, and recent perspectives now refer to the spread of English in the expanding circle as English as a Lingua Franca and English as an International Language (Jenkins, 2006; McKay, 2002; Seidlhofer, 2001).

This dichotomy has also been criticised in terms of unfounded concepts of superiority (Holliday, 2005) and power relations (Brutt-Griffler, 2002) which tend to undermine so called non-native speakers. Instead, it is suggested that concepts of nativeness and non-nativeness are replaced by categorisation of English speakers according to their expertise (Rampton, 1990) or proficiency (Graddol, 2006), as opposed to their country of origin or the number of languages they speak. In this study, based on Modiano's model (1999), proficiency is taken as someone who speaks a variety of English in an international context with features that are comprehensible and common to all native and non-native varieties. Due to reasons of succinctness, the adopted definition of proficiency in the study only accounts for oral language skills. Writing skills, for instance, have not been taken into account.

The majority of L2 learners tend to come short of linguistic and phonological features when compared to proficient speakers born, raised and educated in the L1 environment. Many of these shortcomings have been attributed to fossilization of errors (Han & Selinker, 2005) and ultimate L2 attainment (Birdsong, 2006), that is, when SLA reaches a plateau regardless of the amount, quality and quantity of language input from the learning environment.

L2 Learning Environments

The environment in which a person learns or acquires a language can be seen from different angles. L1 acquisition involves a child brought up speaking one language only during his/her early years, whereas L2 acquisition entails a child's ability to learn or acquire another language once her L1 has been established (Ortega, 2009). Krashen (1982) makes a distinction between L2 learning (or conscious language processing), and L2 acquisition (or unconscious language intake). In other views, a dichotomy is made between societal and family bilingualism, where the sociolinguistic environment and available support for L2 plays an important role in fostering language development (Lanza, 2007). This may include cases of children growing up in bilingual societies, children attending bilingual school programmes, and children of immigrants. Other categorisations of language exposure may include simultaneous and sequential bilingualism, linked to degrees of status of both languages (Genesee, Paradis, & Crago, 2004). The former refers to children with dual language experiences beginning at birth or before the age of three, while the latter refers to exposure to a specific language before another one.

Other authors, however, make a distinction between planned and unplanned bilingualism. The former is when parents make conscious decisions regarding what language to speak to their children “even if one of the languages spoken may not be native to either parent” (Hua & Wei, 2005, p. 165), whereas the latter relates to what language a person has to operate with according to surrounding environmental factors. In conclusion, “bilingualism and SLA can overlap in the early years, making it at times difficult to draw the boundaries between the two fields.” (Ortega, 2009, p. 4).

Successful Cases of L2 Oral Proficiency

Some studies have found evidence that foreign-sounding accents tend to develop when the L2 is learned or acquired later in life due to physical and neuromuscular programming demands (Scovel, 1988; 2000). In SLA, the Critical Period Hypothesis states that a child has a window until the age of right before puberty, or perhaps a little earlier, to master a language without a foreign accent (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Other views suggest that foreign accents develop once the L1 has been stabilized by age five to seven, not because we lose our ability to produce phonemes, but because our L1 acts as a phonological filter (Flege, 1999).

However, there has been evidence of successful late L2 learners who have achieved high proficiency standards regarding phonology and morphosyntax (see Bongaerts, 1999; Ioup, Boustagoui, Tigi & Moselle, 1994; Moyer, 1999). A common occurrence for these learners has been strong levels of high-quality L2 input through instruction, and high levels of motivation to sound like native speakers. Other studies have demonstrated that the intensity and quality of L2 exposure are key factors in fostering L2 oral proficiency in contexts where English is only learned through formal instruction (Garcia Mayo & Garcia Lecumberri, 2003; Munoz, 2006).

Within the One-Parent-One-Language (OPOL) approach to raising bilingual children (Olmedo, 2005), parental attitudes, L2 status, quantity of L2 input, and quality of child-parent communication also seem to be crucial in fostering SLA (Logan-Terry, 2008). Studies involving L2 oral proficiency through planned bilingualism have been documented. For example, King (2008) reports on a case study of three children growing up in Louisiana, the US, born to an American father fluent but non-native in French, and a French-native mother also fluent in English. French was the language of communication in the family. Children went through a phase of French rejection, but their parents overcame these issues through patience, perseverance and frequent immersion vacations and visits to Quebec. In this case at least one of the parents had the target language as L1.

Although not formally researched, some cases of planned bilingualism via L2-speaking parents in ESL environments have also been reported. For instance, Rosenback (2014) reports on a case of a 6-year old girl growing up in Iran who appears to be fluent in American English due to her Farsi-speaking mother’s persistence to bring up her daughter bilingual. The daughter’s English language skills appear to have developed through mother-child interaction (i.e. playing games, singing songs and reading), plenty of L2 exposure from cartoons on TV, and interaction with other bilingual children in the L2 environment. Similarly, there is a case of an Australian father who appears to have brought up his children bilingual through exposure to L2 German (Saunders, 1988). Also, a

Californian couple report to have raised their daughter bilingual through exposure to L2 Spanish, in the form of babysitters, playgroups, music, books, TV shows and formal instruction (Soultravelers3, 2016).

The scope and nature of these few cases of planned bilingualism allow room for more studies on this topic. Further evidence is needed to understand the processes involved in SLA in ESL environments, particularly in contexts that have not been formally researched such as the case of native-like English speakers brought up in Spanish-speaking countries. Due to the peculiarity of Victoria's case, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. To what extent is Victoria's oral English proficiency native?
2. How did Victoria acquire her level of oral proficiency in an ESL environment?
3. How did Victoria's L2 English-speaking father influence her SLA process?

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed an explanatory single case study strategy (Yin, 2009), in which a contemporary real-life phenomenon is investigated in depth without separating it from its immediate context. This strategy was chosen bearing in mind factors such as the uniqueness of the issue under investigation, the type of inquiry, and the lack of viability and suitability of other research strategies (Denscombe, 2010), but also because it allows individual researchers to explore an issue in some depth in a relatively short period of time (Bell, 2010).

Context, Unit of Analysis and Participants

This study took place in a private English language centre in Bogota, Colombia. The main participant and unit of analysis was Victoria, a 27-year old female who was employed as an hourly-paid English teacher at this English language centre. She was born to Colombian parents in Bogota, where she was also raised and educated. Through planned bilingualism, her father started to expose her to English from even before birth. She did not attend primary or secondary bilingual schools. As a child, she received about four hours of English instruction per week under non-communicative approaches as part of her primary and secondary studies. As a 14-year-old, she had received formal instruction under communicative approaches at B2 level (i.e. independent user according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages) for about two to three months in the same private English language centre where she was working. As an adult, she completed an undergraduate course in Film Studies at a Colombian university. Her hobbies included watching films and photography.

Since the focus of the study was purely on Victoria's spoken ability and not on other language skills, I felt that international English examinations such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) would not suit the purpose of determining her oral nativeness. Therefore, Victoria's level of spoken English was measured against other four female participants

chosen from a pool of ten available participants at the language centre who had agreed to take part in the study. They were deliberately chosen because they all had various proficiency levels of spoken English, from A2 to C2+ (i.e. from basic to proficient user according to CEFR), as per standardised placement tests carried out with students and minimal professional requirements for teachers. Victoria and these four females were asked to make a short recording of a description of a preferred hobby or free-time activity, a task adapted from part 2 of the IELTS speaking module. Table 1 shows a brief profile of these females.

Table 1. Profile summary of female participants, including Victoria.

Speaker No.	Age	English Acquisition	Role in Teaching Centre
1	28	Born to Colombian parents. Moved to London, England aged 14 where settled and completed latter part of education in English	ESL Teacher
2	23	Born, raised and educated in Colombia. Formal English instruction in Colombia since age 11	ESL Student
3 (Victoria)	27	Born, raised and educated in Colombia. Planned bilingualism from L2 English-speaking father since childhood	ESL Teacher
4	29	Born, raised and educated in London, England	ESL Teacher
5	26	Born, raised and educated in Colombia. Formal English instruction in Colombia since age 8	ESL Student

Other participants included a sample of 51 judges taken from a research population of available L1 English speakers who were either temporarily visiting or permanently living in Bogota at the time of the study. About 80 judges had initially been invited to take part in the study, but not all of them had agreed to participate. Their task was to listen to the recordings done by the five females taking part in the study and assess their overall level of oral proficiency and nativeness against a 5-point Likert scale.

Due to ethical issues, and in order to avoid bias, these judges were not related to the English language centre where the research took place and Victoria worked as a teacher. The initial size and characteristics of the population of judges was unknown. Therefore, the sampling technique employed was a non-probability sampling technique called purposive sampling, where the sample is purposively selected on the basis of its relevance

to the issue being investigated and its privileged knowledge about the topic to ensure that a wide cross-section of people is included in the sample (Denscombe, 2010). In other words, it was deemed appropriate to choose L1 English speakers for this task because judges with lower linguistic abilities might have not been able to make a sound judgment of the females' speaking skills.

The exploratory sample was made up of 25 males and 26 females between the ages of 18 and 69. They all had English as L1. 22 judges spoke American English, 19 British English, 5 Canadian English, 4 Australian English, and 1 South African English.

The sample size of 51 judges was determined using a cumulative approach. That is, "one in which the researcher continues to add to the size of the sample until a point is reached where there is sufficient information and where no benefit is derived from adding any more to the sample." (Denscombe, 2010, p. 40).

Another key participant in the study was Rafael (pseudonym), Victoria's father. He was born in Colombia and was 72 years old at the time of the study. He was retired, but did English translations mostly for auditors, although he was not a qualified translator. Before retiring, his main job had been in manufacturing and trading of balsa wood model airplane kits, which he sold in Colombia and abroad. He was raised and educated in Colombia and spoke L1 Spanish and L2 English. As a child, he attended kindergarten and primary school in a bilingual school in Bogota. He completed his first two years of secondary education in a Spanish school where instruction was imparted solely in Spanish, and then finished his last four years of secondary education in a bilingual school. He learned English mainly through instruction and humbly considered himself to have an intermediate level of English.

All the participants signed and dated consent forms before taking part in the study. They were made aware of data protection and ethical issues involved in research.

Data Collection Instruments

Based on Denzin's (1970) triangulation principle, data collection instruments included face-to-face questionnaires with the 51 judges who assessed the five females' oral English proficiency and nativeness, and individual semi-structured interviews carried out with Victoria and Rafael.

The questionnaire given to the 51 judges (see [Appendix A](#)) aimed to assess the overall level of oral proficiency and nativeness of Victoria and the other four females, based on recordings of the five participants describing a favourite hobby or free time activity. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part asked the judges to listen to each speaker and classify them into three main categories according to their own experience of what native English speakers born, raised and educated in English-speaking countries usually sound like. These three categories included 1) Native English speaker, 2) Non-native English speaker, and 3) Don't know or Cannot tell. The second part asked the judges to listen to each speaker again and rate their overall English proficiency against a 5-point Likert scale, based on factors such as fluency, pronunciation, use of vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy. The five points in the scale included these categories: 5) very high proficiency, 4) high proficiency, 3) intermediate proficiency, 2) low proficiency, and 1) very low proficiency.

The questionnaire was validated through an initial and secondary trial with a small group of 10 judges of the same characteristics as the exploratory sample of 51 judges. The consistency of answers was checked through the trial. For instance, it was checked that a person classified as a native English speaker would not be rated as someone with low proficiency. Similarly, it was checked that a person classified as a non-native speaker could be rated as someone with any type of proficiency within the scale (e.g. someone with a heavy foreign English accent but whose proficiency regarding fluency, vocabulary and grammar was very high).

The semi-structured interviews were designed and implemented by me, the researcher. The rationale behind the design of these interviews was to deliberately cross-check the information that would be provided by both Victoria and her father Rafael.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The quantitative data gathered from the overall assessment of oral proficiency and nativeness of Victoria and the other four females included the answers to the 51 questionnaires completed by the judges.

As stated earlier, due to the peculiarity of her case, the main focus of this study was on Victoria's oral English nativeness and proficiency via a planned bilingualism upbringing chosen by her L2 English-speaking father. However, Victoria's quantitative data was analysed in conjunction with the other four females because it would be interesting to see how her data would compare to the other participants, in particular speaker number 4 who, for instance, had been born, raised and educated in London, England, and was also an ESL teacher at the same English language centre where Victoria worked.

The nominal data from the first question in the questionnaire was analysed employing the mode as measure of central tendency, because the mode is not affected by outliers or extreme values in a set of data. The ordinal data from the second question in the questionnaire was analysed employing the median as measure of central tendency, because the median is also unaffected by extreme values in a set of data and it is best suited to low numbers of values. The range was used as a measure of data dispersion in both questions.

The qualitative data gathered from the semi-structured interviews carried out with Victoria and Rafael was analysed employing a relational analysis of proximity of concepts (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003), using a constant-comparison method until categories emerged. Initially, after a first and second screening 11 codes emerged from the two interview transcripts. These codes were then grouped into four categories or concepts (see [Appendix B](#)), which are reported in the findings below as subheadings. When consulted, both Victoria and Rafael felt that English was more appropriate than Spanish for their interviews due to the nature of the study.

Findings

As suggested by Yin (2009), research findings in this case study are reported in the shape of a chronological narrative. Being the main focus of this study, the findings presented below mainly relate to Victoria. However, data obtained from the three data collection instruments is compared and contrasted whenever possible. The abbreviations used for interview excerpts are: I=interviewer, V=Victoria, R=Rafael.

Victoria's Oral Proficiency and Nativeness

The median in each speaker's range in question two of the questionnaire showed that speakers 2 and 5 were ranked lower in terms of proficiency at 3 and 3, respectively. Speakers 1 and 4 were ranked higher in terms of proficiency at 5 and 5, respectively. Interestingly, the same results also ranked Victoria amongst those with very high proficiency at 5, despite the fact that she acquired English through planned bilingualism from her L2 English-speaking father in Colombia. Figure 1 summarises this.

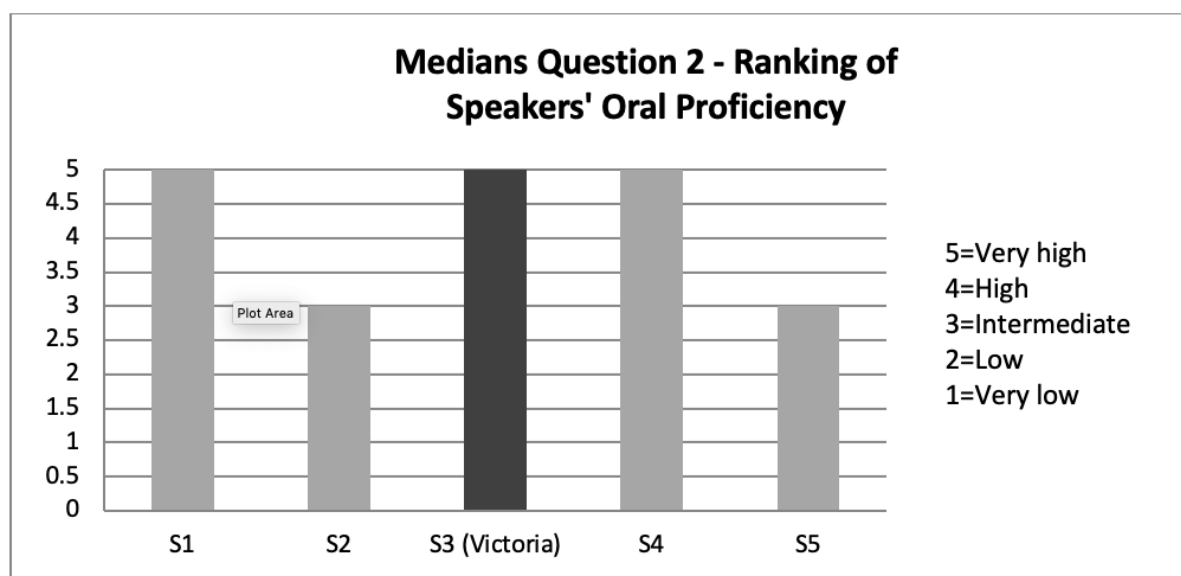


Figure 1. Summary of medians, ranking of speakers' oral proficiency.

Although highly proficient in English, in her interview Victoria explained that the language of communication at home has always been Spanish. This was also confirmed by Rafael in his interview.

I: If I ask you about your daughter, what's the language of communication with your daughter at home?

R: Spanish, actually. It's easier [laughter].

I: Has it always been the same?

R: Yes.

I: For example, during her childhood and adolescence.

R: Yes, yes. Sometimes I spoke to her in English when I was carrying her and she was a little baby [...]. (lines 78-84)

Victoria did not seem to recall any memories of communication in English with her father at home. Therefore, a traditional planned bilingualism upbringing had to be ruled out.

I: And, did he keep doing the same thing [i.e. speaking English] throughout your childhood or just as a baby?

V: No, he didn't. I don't know why though, he could have. But I guess when I started talking, he just switched to Spanish [laughter], so... no.

*I: So that'd be by the age of 3... 4... when you started going to like nursery school?
 V: No, probably before that... 2... I guess, because I don't remember him speaking to me in English. (lines 30-34)*

Expectedly, in question one of the questionnaire, the mode value in each speaker's range showed that speakers 2 and 5 were categorised as 2=Non-native English Speaker, while speaker 4 as 1=Native English Speaker. Interestingly, the mode in Victoria's case also categorised her in the latter class. For unknown reasons, although ranked as highly proficient according to the results from question two, speaker 1 was also categorised as 2=Non-native English Speaker. Since the main focus of this study was on Victoria, these results were deemed tangential. Figure 2 summarises this.

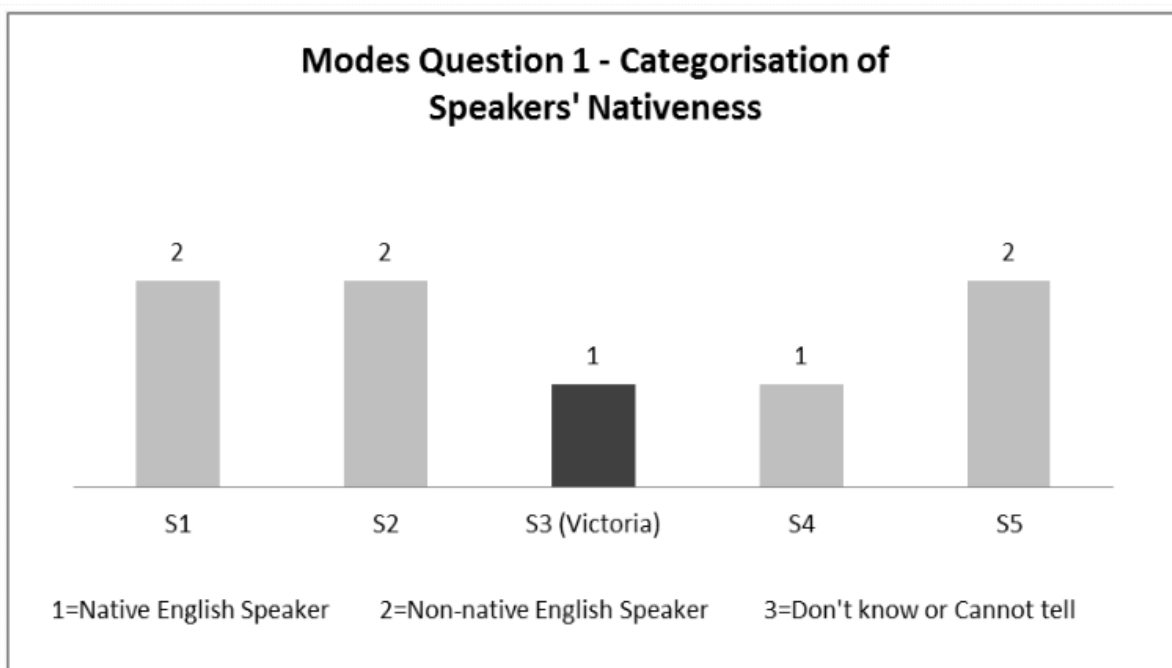


Figure 2. Summary of Modes, Categorisation of Speakers' Nativeness.

Although Victoria was categorised as being a native speaker of English by the judges, and she considers herself to be bilingual now, it has not always been the case. Her first realisation of her own level of oral English proficiency occurred when she was a teenager. Regarding her current oral English proficiency, Victoria said she believes she has acquired a British English variety, based on what other people have told her.

Family

Victoria's oral English proficiency has been a family legacy for at least two generations. Rafael's own family had plenty of exposure to English abroad. Apart from Victoria's grandmother, Rafael's family's English level seemed to be very good.

R: So, my father used to speak excellent English. My mother not at all. My brother excellent English, he... he erm... as a matter of fact, he studied a part of his high school

in the [name of school] in Canterbury.

I: OK. That's Canterbury, England.

R: Yes. So, he also had an excellent English. I think it's a family tradition.

(lines 52-56)

When asked to assess his own English, Rafael said he had an intermediate level. However, Victoria felt he was proficient. His level of English has been a combination of his secondary school studies, which entailed an element of bilingualism, and his hobbies and interests which have always involved L2 exposure and usage.

L2 Input Factors

Victoria could not recall when she was first exposed to English. English has always been present in her life due to her father's job and interest in movies.

I: What's your first memory of being exposed to English? Like, how old were you... things like that?

V: I can't really remember. It's something that's always been in my life, really. Uhm... I remember when I was at school, when I was very little, like English class, but it was nothing, it was like learning some basic vocabulary, but at home English was just... it was always there like through films. Uhm... my dad's a translator so I kind of always had that at home.

I: OK, so I'd say... as a child, your dad used to sort of talk to you in English like... give us a percentage... like all the time or at weekends, or...

V: No, no, just when I was a baby, because I can't remember a time when we spoke in English. Like, we've never really spoken in English. It was him just talking to me when I was a newborn baby, basically. (lines 19-29)

Victoria's English language input came mainly from two sources, that is, exposure to L2-English through direct speech as a small baby, and exposure to L1 English through movies that Rafael simultaneously translated into Spanish for her as a child.

R: And I always... I have always liked very much movies and the art of cinema, very much. So I start to show [Victoria] movies that I considered are very good, and... and good for her age and everything, for example, 2001 Space Odyssey, Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines, and several other movies that I'm not gonna mention here because it could take all day. And of course there wasn't any Spanish at all. So being her five, six, seven, she started to receive English language, and I was translating what was being said in the movie or spoken in the movie.

I: Into Spanish.

R: Yes, into Spanish. Because I had the practice, I can do that. (lines 123-130)

Rafael also exposed Victoria to L2 through cartoons, although to a lesser extent compared to movies. In his opinion, cartoons have less language content compared to movies.

I: Can I ask you about those movies? Why did you choose to show her movies instead of cartoons, because it would have been more natural to... [interruption]

R: Also cartoons.

I: Cartoons as well?

R: Yes, yes. But I don't have many. I like the old cartoons. My favourite movie of all of them is called Fantasia. Have you heard of it?

I: Yes, by Disney.

R: Yes, His Masterpiece. I received the laser disc, she was one year old when I got the laser disc and I started playing it, although there's very little language there, there's classical music. So then, of course movies according to her age. She is very fond of James Bond, and her first James Bond movie she saw when she was nine, it's called Her Majesty Secret Service and she always remembers that. Ask her one of these days [laughter]. (lines 153-165)

Interestingly, contrary to what her father said in his interview, Victoria could not recall watching cartoons as a child. From what she seemed to remember, films for adults were her main source of L2 exposure.

I: OK, and did you use to watch cartoons in... in...?

V: Nope, not cartoons. Films for adults, like boring dramas and comedies...

I: Like... Casablanca and things like that?

V: Exactly [chuckles]! Things that a child would normally find boring [laughter]. (lines 48-51)

Victoria indicated some awareness of how exposure to English through audio-visuals had a direct impact on her own unconscious L2 acquisition process over time.

I: Did you get exposed to English through films?

V: Films and music, all the time. Uhm... I didn't have... we just had TV in Spanish and I didn't watch a lot of TV, so I mostly just watched films, the films that my dad had. And back then, without DVDs or Internet or anything like that, it was just in English because they weren't dubbed. So, I didn't understand a thing, obviously, it was all gibberish to me. But, I don't know... I think through time I kind of absorbed it and it stuck [chuckles]. (lines 42-47)

Rafael also seemed to have an explanation for Victoria's SLA process. He emphasised the importance of learning an L2 by associating visuals found in movies and listening input. He even recognised the pedagogical aspect of specific movies such as 'My Fair Lady'.

I: So basically, input, a lot of input from movies and... [interruption]

R: Yes, you don't know how important that is, because she listens I translate and she takes the scene of whatever is happening at the moment.

I: And would you repeat the movies for her? Or would it be a new movie every time?

R: Not necessarily. Sometimes, her favourite movie, I don't know if you know which one is it, My Fair Lady.

I: No idea. No.

R: That's... of course you've seen it.

I: Yes, I have. I have seen it.

R: Thank God.

I: OK.

R: And that's an English teaching movie.

I: That's right, that's right. Yeah.

R: The phonetics of Professor Higgins, and she knows the whole script... she knows it by heart. I gave her the book and she... ask her any, any scene from the movie, she'll tell you, she knows it by heart [interruption]

I: [echoes "She knows it by heart"].

R: It's amazing. (lines 166-183)

He also mentioned that he believes factors such as talent and intrinsic motivation are also important when learning an L2. In order to achieve SLA success, Rafael said he recommends other parents an early start when teaching children an L2.

R: Start as soon as they conceive. That's the most important thing. I don't know if you know a question that was asked to the author of My Fair Lady. Do you know who's the author of my Fair Lady?

I: I can't remember now. No.

R: It's George Bernard Shaw.

I: OK.

R: A lady... he was visiting a lady who had just had his [her] boy and she asked him: "Mr Shaw, when should I start to educate my boy?" And he answered: "You've just lost nine months". "You have wasted nine months". That answers your question. (lines 242-250)

Rafael mentioned that he believes learning an L2 is like learning any other skill, and repetition and persistence are key in someone's SLA process.

R: The sooner you start... because it's much easier. If you are my age or even forty, it's not easy to learn another language. There are several reasons that I'm not gonna mention now, but that's the truth. It's like trying to learn to play the piano. Most musicians [untranscribable] at both classical and popular have started three, four, five years old. It's the only way. There's no other way.

I: OK, so start early.

R: Yes, and insist, insist, insist every day, because the brain is like a sponge. Our brain is like a rock. A baby's brain is like a sponge, then it's easy for them to learn.

I: OK, and input... in terms of input [interruption]

R: Oh yes, as much as possible. Now with technology, you have all the end that you want. (lines 252-263)

Although highly proficient as an adult, Victoria lacked opportunities to practise her oral English language skills during her adolescence. It was only in her adulthood that she managed to gain some speaking practice.

I: So you never had a chance to practise sort of formally?

V: Nope, apart from English lessons at school, which were not very good [chuckles]. Erm... no.

I: Did you ever attend a... like a... summer... summer school like in... I don't know... Canada or the USA?

V: No. Actually, I wanted to but in the end I never did it.

I: OK, let's talk about your adulthood. What kind of English language exposure have

you had during your adulthood?

V: Well, not much until I started working at [name of language centre in Bogota, Colombia] about four years ago. So when I started, I started as an invigilator working for exams, the Exams Department, and so I had a little bit of exposure then, but it was just, it was mostly me talking during the exam sessions. So it wasn't like I had someone to practise with.

I: OK.

V: Then, I started working with the teaching centre, from Customer Service, and I guess then I like I became friends with some people from the teaching centre, and then, like we spoke in English. And I guess that was when I really started having some real speaking practice [laughter]. (lines 72-86)

L2 Attitudes

Victoria reported that she has always had a positive attitude towards English and language learning in general, and she does not hold a grudge against her father for choosing a planned bilingualism approach for her upbringing.

I: Have you ever had any negative feelings towards English as a language?

V: No, never.

I: I don't know, for example, as a child, did you ever have that feeling of 'oh, why is my dad making me listen to this music...' or 'why is my dad making me do this in English'?

V: No, no never. It was always something very natural. So just... yeah... no, I really liked it actually. I remember... I love languages, not just English, so I remember when I was a kid having a list of ten languages that I wanted to learn [laughter]. (lines 93-99)

I: So, how do you feel about it now? About that decision?

V: I feel great [chuckles]. It's... it's a huge part of my life, and I'd most definitely have a very different life, I'm not saying better or worse, just very different, if I hadn't had that. (lines 104-110)

Rafael also reported to have a positive attitude towards English and great interest in the culture attached to the language.

I'm very fond of the United Kingdom, very much. So I have several pictures and I have lots of history of the UK. I love the monarchy. I have a DVD set called 'A History of Britain' by Simon Schama. I enjoy and I like very much everything related to the United Kingdom. It's my... it's like my second fatherland, even more than the United States, which I also love very much. (lines 85-89)

He exposed Victoria to his own experiences with the L2 culture and made sure that she got the best out of his cultural awareness of England.

I: But when she was little, did she ever reject like anything to do with England? Oh... my dad... [interruption]

R: No, no, not at all. And I always spoke about England, about Monarchy, about English culture, about everything, and showed her my pictures when I went to England several times because also one of my other hobbies is photography. So I showed her all the pictures, spoke... teach her about brief history of the UK, the nice things that you

can find there, like for example the longest monarchy in existence with the same family ever since William the Conqueror took conquest in 1066, October 14th.

I: So you clearly know your stuff about the UK, yeah? [laughter].

R: Yes, I because I do love the country very much. (lines 218-227)

Other than being interested in the target language culture, towards the end of his interview, Rafael also added that he believes being able to speak English is crucial in one's ability to communicate worldwide. He reported a close association between the ability to speak English and a feeling of high status and success in life. He said he believes Victoria will pass her L2 knowledge to future generations in the family. Indeed, Victoria confirmed this when asked whether or not she would also opt for a planned bilingualism type of upbringing if she ever had children of her own.

Discussion

Research Question 1

Based on the judges' assessment, it can be said that Victoria's oral proficiency is native to a large extent. Despite the fact that she was born, raised and educated in an ESL environment, she has managed to acquire oral English proficiency equal to that of L1 English speakers (e.g. speaker number 4). Her case gives some strong evidence to support ideologies that question the concepts of English nativeness and non-nativeness (Jenkins, 2006; McKay, 2002). Her case supports claims that English native speakers are losing ownership of their own language (Seidlhofer, 2001), and English speakers should indeed be described according to their expertise (Rampton 1990) or proficiency (Graddol, 2006). Perhaps, in the future we may even start talking about a type of Colombian English vernacular in Kachru's (1992) "expanding circle" (p. 356), where the meaning of the word 'native' will have adopted new roles.

Research Question 2

In terms of her SLA process, it is unknown if Victoria's case resembles more Skinner's (1957) behaviourist perspective of human language acquisition or Chomsky's (1959) innatist one. However, her case seems to partly contradict Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis, in which acquisition only occurs when language users are exposed to contextualised and comprehensible input slightly beyond their level of competence (i.e. 'i+1'). In other words, the input Victoria got during childhood through exposure to English films was beyond her level of comprehension and above her competence level. Hence her feeling of disorientation when she says: "it was all gibberish to me" (line 46). On the other hand, her affective filter was high. That is, although the input chosen by her father was not the most appropriate for her age, Victoria was highly motivated and her emotional state was predisposed for language intake. Perhaps, her SLA readiness may have been the direct result of being able to bond with her father through watching films together on a regular basis, and may have had nothing to do with the linguistic aspect of it.

Victoria's case is very much in line with Krashen and Terrel's (1983) Natural Approach, because for most of her childhood and adolescence, she did not get a real chance to put into practice all the language she had been acquiring through movies and songs. She only

started practising her speaking skills when she started working with L1-English speakers at the teaching centre where she currently works.

Victoria's SLA processes appear to be associated with input-related factors such as frequency and contextual relation, and also with cognitive processes such as abstraction of patterns from L2 input (Ellis, 2003; 2006). Perhaps, if she had not been exposed to L2 as frequently as she was, she may have not been able to abstract structures from the input and reach her current level of oral nativeness and proficiency. It was through simultaneous Spanish translations of English films that Victoria started to relate to L2 input and absorbed the structures and phonological features that she now uses as an adult in her speech.

Victoria's case somehow contradicts research studies which have found that impersonal sources of language do not yield as much language development as interpersonal linguistic input during childhood (Kuhl, 2007; Kuhl et al., 2003; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). This is because even though the main language of communication between Victoria and her father at home has always been Spanish and her acquisition process had limited L2 child-parent interaction for the majority of her upbringing, she still acquired a native-like oral English proficiency through sources of language such as films, songs and very limited L2 instruction imparted at school. Perhaps, an important variable in Victoria's case was the sustained input from impersonal language sources she had over a much longer period of time.

Research Question 3

Victoria's L2 English-speaking father directly influenced her SLA process in many ways. Her high level of L2 oral proficiency was directly influenced by her father's attitude towards the target language, how he regards English in terms of its status, and the amount and quality of input he gave Victoria during her childhood. These findings are similar to those in Logan-Terry's (2008) study.

Victoria's case sits well within a planned bilingualism paradigm (Hua & Wei, 2005). However, it slightly differs from King's (2008) study where at least one of the parents had the target language as L1. The main language of communication at home in Victoria's case has always been Spanish and it was her father who made a conscious decision to keep speaking their L1 at home, and to expose her to impersonal sources of L2 from an early age in order to boost her SLA process. Also, Victoria has always had a positive attitude towards English and she first travelled to the UK as an adult.

On the other hand, Victoria's case highlights patterns that appear to be consistent with other cases of planned bilingualism in ESL contexts, including parents' commitment and persistency when bringing up bilingual children (Rosenback, 2014), parents' interest in the target language and its culture (Saunders, 1988), L2 input derived from impersonal language sources (Soultravelers3, 2016), and language support through formal instruction (Garcia Mayo & Garcia Lecumberri, 2003; Munoz, 2006).

Conclusion

Overall, the findings in this study suggest that a speaker who was not necessarily born, raised and educated in an English-speaking country can possess the same nativeness and oral proficiency displayed by L1 English speakers. Therefore, the concepts of English nativeness, non-nativeness and language ownership ought to be founded on categorisations of language expertise or proficiency instead.

The results also suggest that impersonal L2 input sources such as films seem important in a learner's SLA process. Parents' involvement with the target language and interest in its culture is also important for successful SLA, particularly when bringing up children under a planned bilingualism approach in ESL environments.

In terms of pedagogical implications, Victoria's case suggests that teachers in ESL contexts should provide students with plenty of L2 exposure and input from impersonal language sources. ESL programmes should include tasks around audio-visual materials which can aid students' SLA processes. It is also important to think about ways in which parents, guardians and wider family members can become more interested in the L2 culture, and learn more about the positive role of audio-visual material in a child's SLA process.

Being a case study, the findings here need to be approached with caution because they are particular to the setting in which the research was carried out. As Bell (2010) points out, case studies are criticised because of their inherent limitations around generalizability issues. However, it is hoped that enough information has been provided regarding research procedures in order to make this single case as relatable as possible.

Bearing in mind that there is substantial evidence suggesting that impersonal and digital L2 sources do not yield as much language development in children as input derived from interaction (Kuhl, 2007; Kuhl et al., 2003), future lines of inquiry could look into similar cases of planned bilingualism in other ESL contexts to find out if new results are similar, particularly in those environments where the L1-L2 distance is greater. Similarly, researchers could investigate the pedagogical role and long-term impact of audio-visuals on the SLA process of learners in formal ESL instructional settings.

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About the Author

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Appendix A

Judges' questionnaire

Date: _____ Judge No: _____ Gender: male female
English as First Language: Yes No English Variety Spoken: _____
Age range (tick **✓** one box only): 18-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 70+

Instructions:

You will hear five speakers describing a favourite activity (or hobby) they like doing in their free time.

Listen to each speaker and classify them into the categories 1-3 below. Tick () ONLY ONE box () in each row.

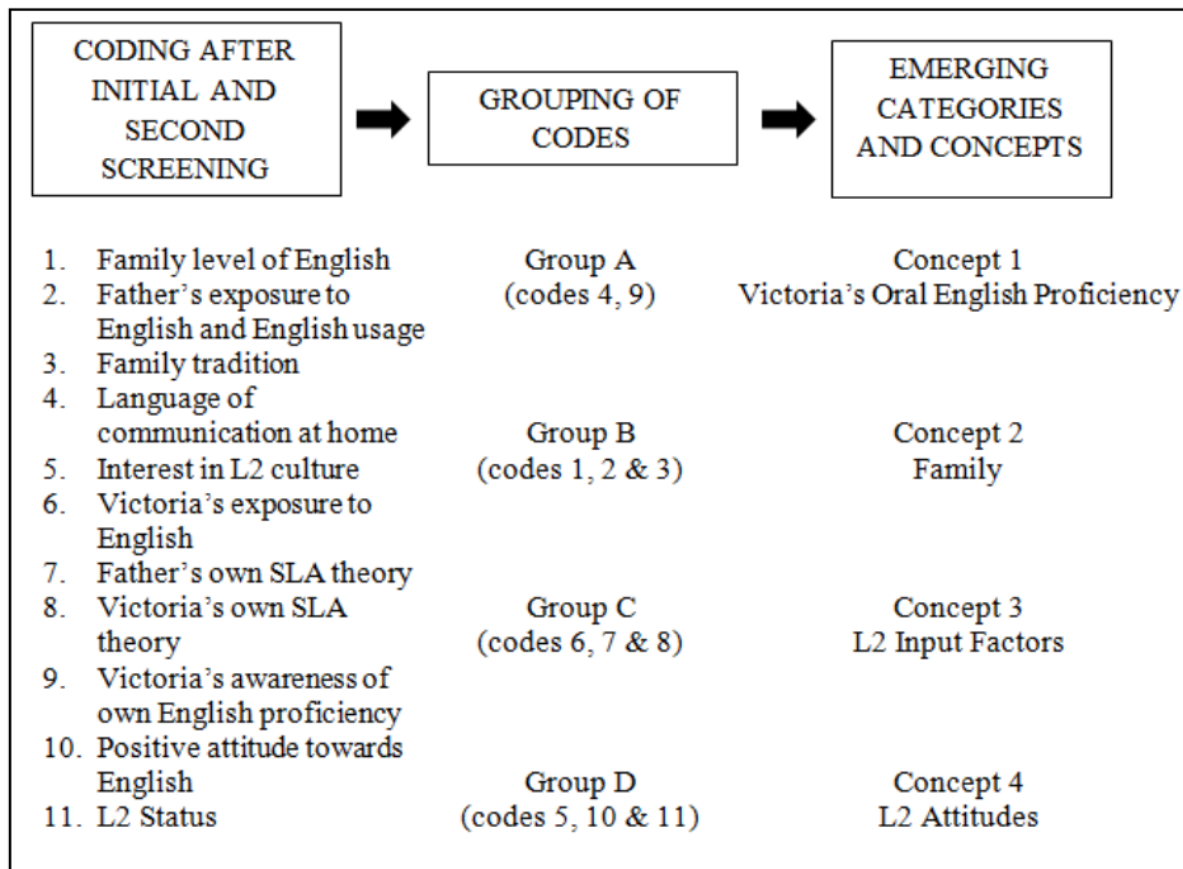
Also, rate their overall oral English proficiency using the Likert scale 5-1 on the right hand side below, based on factors such as fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammatical accuracy. Tick () ONLY ONE box () in each row.

	Native English speaker 1	Non-native English speaker 2	Don't know or Cannot tell 3	VERY HIGH PROFICIENCY 5	HIGH PROFICIENCY 4	INTERMEDIATE PROFICIENCY 3	LOW PROFICIENCY 2	VERY LOW PROFICIENCY 1
Speaker 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaker 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaker 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaker 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaker 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Appendix B

Coding process of interviews during qualitative analysis



[\[Back to article\]](#)

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