Habits of Household Lingualism

June 2004 — Volume 8, Number 1

Habits of Household Lingualism

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This essay contrasts two approaches to household bilingual education with respect to the notion of identity. The notion of lingualism is presented. Lingualism emphasizes the continuum between monolinguals and bilinguals through a non-quantifying understanding of language (including speech, writing, gestures, and language potential). Kouritzin's (2000) account of raising bilingual children defines identity in terms of one's first or native language. Mastery of grammatical and cultural standards is assured by the native experience of language, which itself presents a barrier to authentic L2 acquisition. Identity-bound languages are mutually conflictual and minority languages need barriers to survive. Harding's and Riley's (1986) study of bilingual families subordinates the notion of identity to that of linguistic identification. It views languages in a relationship of cross-fertilization. From this comparison, and in dialogue with works by Baker, Grosjean, Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, the essay argues for a multilingual approach to multilingualism that does not reproduce monolingual ideology.

Introduction

1. One can use a single language multilingually.

2. One can use several languages monolingually.

In what follows, I wish to make the above assertions comprehensible. My aim is to define an approach to multilingual education, and to multilingualism generally, that avoids "monolingual assumptions." To achieve this aim, I propose to analyze the guiding assumptions of two distinct publications within the expanding field of research on household bilingual education. [1] Specifically, I explore "A Mother's Tongue," a TESOL educator's account of fostering Japanese as a household L1 while raising her children in English-speaking Canada (Kouritzin, 2000) and the handbook of research and case studies of European-based multilingual households entitled *The bilingual family: A handbook for parents* (Harding & Riley, 1986). I am not concerned with engaging these texts at the level of empirical data. My ambition is not to summarize and nudge forward recent empirical models of household bilingual education, but rather to identify their pre-empirical assumptions and question whether these assumptions are multilingual in spirit. Other texts could have helped me to achieve the same end, but the particular force of Kouritzin's study, as well as the distinct manner in which it relates to the work of Harding and Riley, allow me to address widely recurrent assumptions. A particularly attentive reading of Kouritzin's text is called for by the fact that, while certain of its linguistic assumptions are symptomatic, it is marked by an originality which it would be irresponsible of me to pass over.

To define such an approach to multilingualism requires that I examine the related notion of monolingualism. For this, I consult, in a manner both appreciative and critical, the respective writings of François Grosjean, a well-known theoretician of bilingualism, and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, who is known for combating monolingual hegemony and what, on the model of "racism," she calls "linguicism." Furthermore, I invoke philosophical reflections on monolingualism (Derrida, 1996). With the aid of these writings, I hope to offer something more than "criticism" in a pejorative or restrictive sense of the word. Accordingly, my essay concludes by articulating conditions for multilingualism within a broad context of language politics. [-1-]

As for the assumptions which I take as a point of focus in my readings, they concern, among others, the following questions:

1. How should one conceive of the relations between household languages?
2. What is the importance of modeling grammatical language in bilingual households?
3. How should one define the community of L1 and L2 language users?
4. How should one describe the relations between monolingualism, bilingualism, and multilingualism?

Clearly, these are not merely practical, family-exclusive questions, nor questions for which test-oriented, empirically-based responses would be sufficient. In one way or another, they involve ideologies of language, which is to say, something other than language itself. As Blackledge (2002) has written, "Ideologies of language are . . . not about language alone . . . but are always socially situated and tied to questions of identity and power in societies" (p. 68). To be able to bring these larger questions into view, I first explain my terminology and formalize the general contrast that my readings develop. This formalization is shaped by the notion of *lingualism*. In a simple, preliminary definition, "lingualism," a word curiously absent in English although discernable as a common root to such words as "bilingualism" and "multilingualism," indicates language–history, production, and potential–as a non-countable process or set of habits that can be extended beyond one's "native" or early linguistic habits to include "other" languages, including languages whose status or representation in a given society is deemed minor. To show the importance of this notion, I first contrast anecdotes related by Kouritzin, on the one hand, and Harding and Riley on the other.

A Drama of Identity

I begin with an observation made by Kouritzin (2000): "When my daughter, learning from Japanese cartoons and playmates, calls me *Mama* or *ka-chan* instead of *Mommy*, I feel very far removed from her, as if my identity has been erased" (p. 314). This observation speaks to Kouritzin's general affective relation to Japanese and English as well as her view of the relation between household languages. It also raises an apparently singular question: can one measure the affective distance between "Mommy" and "Mama"(" ")? For Kouritzin, it is as if the connotations of each word were felt to be so different as to bring about a change in denotation. If, in the one case, the mother hears "mother" , she feels recognized as her child's mother; if, in the other, she hears a short "a" twice [mama], she feels that her identity is stolen from her. She is alienated from her own offspring. In reaching, as it were, for two short vowels, the child seemingly wipes away the image of her mother and in its place puts the image of an "other," where this may simply imply the mother's absence. To question how and why such a scene occurs, one needs to keep in mind that the mother is largely responsible for it. This is so because, in an effort to preserve her husband's minority heritage language, she speaks with her children only in Japanese, a language with which, in different ways and for different reasons, she is not comfortable. In addition to underscoring the both willed and regretted dimension of the scene, I note that repercussions for the moral and ethical development of the child also appear to be at stake. The presumed source of the word "Mama"–Japanese cartoons and playmates–is itself suspect and felt to be a menace not only to the mother's core values, and thus her identity, but also to the moral and ethical development of the child. Kouritzin makes this implication clear elsewhere in her article when she writes that, "I am not particularly comfortable with scatological references, racially oriented jokes, slapstick, or physical humor, all of which seem to appear more frequently on Japanese children's programs than on those in English" (p. 317). One can presume from this assessment that the child's playmates, who also are exposed to Japanese programs, are themselves viewed as bearers of identity-threatening, moral contamination.

Given the menacing consequences that the author links to her child's speaking in Japanese, should one understand Kouritzin's recounting this incident as a complaint? Since it is presented in the context of a self-described "argument for the importance of continued use of the familial heritage language" (p. 311), this scene, and the context in which it is recounted, call for explanation. I will thus explore the reasons for a choice that leads to what the author apparently feels is a repetitive effacement of her identity and a corruptive influence on her children. [-2-]

A Touch of Code-Switching

I now turn to an account given by the language educators Harding and Riley (1986) of another parent-child encounter. My intention is not to find two perfectly similar or analogous incidents. These two accounts differ significantly; they appear in different types of texts, and many variables in each case remain unknown. What interests me is one significant point of similarity and the different types of interpretations the respective authors put forward. In the present context, Harding and Riley discuss different uses of code-switching. Baker and Jones (1998), who discuss many functions of code-switching, say that it is the "subtle and purposeful way in which bilinguals switch between their two languages" (p. 37). Harding and Riley note that, "Far from being a problem, code-switching comes naturally to a child brought up by people addressing him in two different languages, whether it is in a one-parent / one-language type of family or in a home-language / outside-language environment" (p. 119). In one particular account, Harding and Riley illustrate how code-switching can be used, among other things, as a gesture of intimate persuasion.

> *Children are also extremely skilful in using switching as a marker of "solidarity" with the person they are talking to, that is, using the change of language to reinforce the "closeness" of the relationship. Leopold gives the example of his daughter Hildegard, who at the age of 5 years 4 months considerably intensified the emotional content of what she was saying to coax her father into staying with her when she was in bed with chickenpox. She said: "*Papa, wenn du das Licht ausmachst, *then I'll be so lonely." ("Daddy, if you put out the light . . . "). (1986, p. 59)*

This anecdote draws attention, as does the previous, to the parent's affective relationship to a particular language–in this case, to German; however, the interpretation of the scene is entirely positive. The use of a language with which the child perhaps links her father more than her mother is viewed as a self-developed strategy of effective persuasion that is common to bilingual children. In both cases, the *identification* of the parent with one particular language is at issue; but whereas in the first anecdote, code-switching is apparently suppressed, and the parent feels alienated from her child, in this second scene, it is viewed less in terms of identity threat or loss and more as a rhetorical appeal to a relative preference for one language (and only relative since, precisely, both languages are used). No conflict of identity emerges from the mixing of languages, neither for the parent nor for the child.

Consequently, it seems that two very different approaches to multilingual education are marked in these respective accounts. The contrast in the approaches does not follow from models of family language planning whose differences with respect to one another would be superficial. Rather, it seems that the respective authors must at the outset have widely different understandings of household multilingual education, if not simply of language. Thus, to explore this contrast further, at a level deeper than that of anecdote swapping, I will first explain the terminology I use and the reasons for my proposing it.

Lingualism

By "lingualism," I wish first to indicate linguistic practices in their broadest terms, including all attitudes, gestures, signs, and cultural activities related to language use, including as well linguistic heritages and the potential for language learning. This term allows me to take some distance from the term "bilingualism" and thereby to promote a less quantifying understanding of language. The word "language" is commonly summoned to count and quantify languages, and the "-ism" form of "lingualism" is meant to discourage this tendency. Since "lingualism" refers to language as an endless process in which one participates; it diminishes the idea of language as a countable noun, as a thing which one can wholly possess or embody. Thus, lingualism can be defined largely in the functional way that Grosjean (1985) defines bilingualism (only, without his emphasis on counting), which is to say, as "the regular use of two (or more) languages" (p. 468). [-3-]Harding and Riley (1986) say of Weinreich's (1953) similarly functional definition of bilingualism that it begs the question of what is meant by the *use* of a language but that it also has "the advantage of leaving room for maneuver, of not excluding those kinds of bilingualism which are not 'perfect'" (1986, p. 32). Hamers and Blanc (1983) point out that the notion of use in this functional definition implies no more than a minimal competence (p. 26).

The broadness of these definitions signals a shift from a habit of thinking that is monolingual to one that is multilingual. The difference in accent I propose comes in part from the relaxed and relatively indeterminate quality of the absence of habitual prefixes: neither "bi-" nor "mono-." This is significant because in certain ideologically monolingual nations such as the United States, "bilingual" can connote marginality or deviance (Blackledge, 2002, p. 84; Shannon, 1999, p. 183; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1989, p. 468). Moreover, the

notion of "lingualism" is not only functional; it also includes linguistic inheritance and a universal *potential* of language use; that is, not so much what language *is* (in observable practices), but what it may become, both for an individual language user and more generally. This potential is, in many persons and with particular frequency in certain nations, constrained to the impoverished condition of language known as "monolingualism" (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1989, p. 469).

Monolingualism is a condition of multilingualism *manqué*. Nonetheless, even this definition, as any definition that uses numerical prefixes or shorthand of the type "L1″ and "L2," encourages the false impression that language is a countable entity that one can wholly possess or embody. Concerning this potential, Baker (2000b) says of children in particular that they are "*born ready to become bilinguals* and multilinguals. Too many are restricted to becoming monolinguals . . . we deny many children the chance to develop bilingually and multilingually" (p. 26). The broad definition of lingualism allows for this insight to be radicalized not merely by extending its implications to adults (cf. Singleton & Lengyel, 1995) but by reflecting on what is implied in there being a "chance" of developing one's lingualism, which is to say, a chance, as well, of not developing it. The word "habits," as employed in my title, has the same, deliberately relaxed quality, since it brings the capacity for language learning out of the purportedly monopolistic "developmental stage" and language in general out of its religio-metaphysical captivity in the "heart" or the "soul" of language users. In short, it encourages one to think of language in less stage-bound or essentialist terms. Consequently, as I understand these words, habits of lingualism cannot be deduced from innate or rational structures (as in Chomskyan linguistics or Cartesian metaphysics) or accounted for in terms of visceral or congenital mastery (in accordance with the uncritically evoked notion of "native speaker").

Identity Lingualism and Household Lingualism

On the basis of the notion of lingualism, I identify two antithetical conceptions of language–*identity lingualism* and *household lingualism*–that, on my hypothesis, rather than simply derive from objectively gathered empirical data, serve to shape the respective approaches to, among other things, household bilingual education. Kouritzin (2000) operates largely on assumptions of what I call identity lingualism, while Harding and Riley (1986) employ those of household lingualism. On the former, mastery of grammatical and cultural standards is acquired through the native experience of a language, which itself is an obstacle to the native acquisition of an L2. Identity-bound languages are mutually conflictual and minority languages need barriers to assure their survival. For household lingualism, by contrast, the notion of *identity* is maintained but subordinated to that of linguistic *identification*: the possibility of loving languages not learned first or in accordance with monolingual standards. I will now develop this contrast further by presenting a "strong version" of each type of lingualism.

The assumptions that, along with their corresponding practices I group together with the term "identity lingualism," include the following: language is experienced either natively or nonnatively; a language is a whole; a single, whole, natively-experienced language constitutes my identity wholly, and thus nonnative words addressed to me threaten or erase my identity; and when languages, which are fully embodied by those who speak them natively, come into contact with one another, they necessarily collide and attempt to annihilate or suppress one another. According to the assumptions of identity lingualism, languages are self-contained and mutually exclusive entities; especially at an early developmental stage, languages can co-exist only in conflict; native languages fully translate pre-linguistic emotions; native speakers exhibit powers that no nonnative speaker can ever match; and the mastery of standardized linguistic forms is a primary goal in language use and instruction (since it best substantiates one's native command of a language). [-4-]

In contrast to these assumptions, the household lingualism that I explore in the following pages holds that, though they may each bear a single name (such as "English" or "Japanese," for example), languages are not, in fact, single, self-identical entities but, rather, disparate groupings of tendencies and practices that necessarily remain open to revision, renewal, and cross-fertilization with tendencies and practices that are in some cases grouped together by other names (such as "Japanese" or "English," for example), but from which, in practical terms, they remain largely distinct and, in many ways, irreducible to one another (as they are to themselves); there are common habits of linguistic co-existence that are not based on antagonism but, rather, on code-switching, cross-referencing and inter-lingual word play; language does not translate pre-linguistic emotions so much as it offers different sets of emotional markers or tactics that in many cases are untranslatable; so-called nonnative speakers are not at an insurmountable disadvantage in all matters with respect to so-called native speakers; and creativity and affective investment are more important values in language learning and instruction than are verbal or written standardization and mastery.

In contrast to the model of an "embodied language" found in identity lingualism, household lingualism holds that it is the household–the interaction of language users, wherever and however it occurs–that provides the loose contours in which language is used, in which lingualism takes place. Thus, the term "household" leaves a full range of meaning to the word "use," and, so, for my purposes, distinctions such as that between passive bilingualism and active bilingualism are immaterial. Moreover, a household, in its conventional sense, may

consist of as few as two persons without there being any significant adjustment required in the principles of household language planning (from that of households in which there are, for example, two parents of different sexes and languages and one or more children) (Baker, 2000b, p. 13). In the broader sense of the word that I propose here, a household is present wherever principles of household lingualism are engaged. The household, including its various heritages, contexts, and potential, all belong to the study of bilingualism, and "bilingualism" is only one manner among others of qualifying lingualism.[2]

"Hothouse" Protectionism

Having sketched this broad contrast in sets of assumptions, I will now analyze Kouritzin's (2000) contribution as an example of identity lingualism while setting it against the work of Harding and Riley (1986). The importance of exploring the relation of these two texts comes from the fact that whereas Kouritzin claims to have steadfastly applied in her household one of five types of bilingual family as described on page 47 of Harding and Riley's *The bilingual family: A handbook for parents*, the household lingualism exemplified by Harding and Riley appears resolutely opposed to the major premise of Kouritzin's "hothouse" family language planning, which is that years of exclusiveness are necessary for the minority L1 to survive in the face of the inevitable influence of the majority L2. Despite this contrast, Kouritzin's study and the handbook of Harding and Riley should not be taken as pure models of the strong versions I sketch above of the two types of assumptions about household multilingual education, and therefore the distinction between these types needs to be tempered with readings that respond to the nuances of the authors' respective illustrations and claims. As my reading of Kouritzin's account tries to show, monolingual ideology can be found where one might least expect it: in bilingual family planning. As for Harding and Riley, I propose a terminology that, in corresponding to certain implications of their own views, is, I feel, best suited to the adventure of multilingualism.

Underscoring from the outset the apparently decisive role of linguistic research in her family life, Kouritzin remarks that,

> *influenced by research on language maintenance/language loss and bilingual education . . . , my husband and I decided to delay our children's exposure to English as long as possible by using Japanese at home . . . . Deeply committed to maintaining the Japanese language in our family, we have therefore chosen to adopt "hothouse" conditions for early bilingualism in order to maximize the Japanese language input, even though it imposes difficulties on me [footnote in original on word "hothouse" to express gratefulness to anonymous* TESOL Quarterly *reviewer for this description of Kouritzin's home language environment]. We plan to speak Japanese exclusively until our children begin school, that is, to act as one of the five types of bilingual family described by Harding and Riley. (2000, p. 312) [-5-]*

This strategy of switching languages at a specific period in the children's lives, which has been frowned upon elsewhere (De Houwer, 1999b, p. 4), is neither practiced nor recommended by Harding and Riley (1986). More generally, I note that, rather than present arguments in favor of bilingual education and heritage language maintenance, Kouritzin limits herself to referencing such arguments in others' research; consequently, her contribution is less "an argument for the importance of continued use of the familial heritage language" (p. 311) than a personal record of the painful consequences of trying to foster a minority L1 in the particular way that she does. Nonetheless, those interested in fostering a bilingual household cannot fail to admire the commitment with which the author applies and tests her family language planning. Throughout her written account, Kouritzin underscores the difficulties and even the suffering that she imposes on herself for the sake of her children's full adoption of Japanese. The decision to exclude English wholly until her children enter school leads Kouritzin to report experiencing feelings of guilt, fear, embarrassment, insufficiency, and humiliation. One wonders, however, if such a degree of exclusion is necessary, considering that the author admits both to a lack of fluency in many aspects of Japanese and–more decisively, I think–to a dislike of many aspects of the language. One wonders, precisely, if Kouritzin's negative attitude towards Japanese, no matter how virtuous or arduous her efforts to maintain it as the one household language until her children enter school, is not likely to produce what her family language planning is designed to prevent. Be that as it may, one must not lose sight of the guiding assumption of the "hothouse": self-imposed exclusiveness is necessary because input from the majority language will inevitably result in the children's resolutely preferring English to Japanese.

First of all, it is not clear if the principle of exclusiveness is respected. Kouritzin's family would appear to shield itself from the English language, but on this crucial point, the description of the "hothouse" is inconsistent. Despite the exclusiveness it calls for and that, on Kouritzin's account, is maintained, Kouritzin notes at one point that her daughter overhears English "as much as 50% of the time" (p. 313). If as much as 50% of what the child hears is English, and if the hothouse is therefore no longer a hothouse, is refusing the child, say, 5% more exposure to the majority L2, so that–to take up Kouritzin's examples–her mother may express love to her in a way that is unusual in Japanese or assure herself that her child understands warnings of imminent danger, as decisive in maintaining the minority L1 as

Kouritzin makes it seem?

Whatever the actual presence of English, the principle of exclusiveness stems in part from the assumption that, at least in an early stage of language development, languages are by nature mutually disruptive; and a majority language, highly disruptive. This assumption is evidenced in the author's statement that, "familial language shift to the majority language is a major, if not the major, contributor to children's later loss of their heritage language with its attendant social, emotional, educational, and political consequences" (p. 313). In this modest assertion–that a collective shift away from a language leads to its loss–I would question the insinuation that such shifts are necessarily irrevocable. Why can there not be many shifts between languages, made throughout a single day, or within single conversations? Why cannot children, as Harding and Riley (1986) report that they often do, "have bilingualism as a mother tongue" (p. 144)? Does the presence of a majority community of L2 speakers necessarily disrupt multilingual habits (code-switching, borrowing, etc.)? As we have seen, Harding and Riley emphasize the advantages of children's using two languages and, in particular, the harmless and habit-like aspect of code-switching. For Harding and Riley–and, in this, their view is hardly unique–there is no reason why there cannot be L1s that develop separately *and* together,[3] even in cases where parents exhibit varying aptitudes in the respective languages, and even if some degree of preference for one language is inevitable. It is important to keep in mind that, with respect to the concern over the proper "balance" of languages, perfect bilingualism, just as and for largely the same reasons, perfect mastery of a "single" language, is, rigorously speaking, unattainable (Harding and Riley, 1986, p. 22; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1989, pp. 467-468).

Whether it is respected or not, the principle of exclusiveness finds its contrary in household lingualism. While the 'hothouse' allows only one nonnative species to grow and treats the presence of another, widely flourishing native species as a threatening disease to the nonnative species within, household lingualism flourishes in an environment in which cross-fertilization is encouraged and different species are nourished separately and together in the absence of perfectionism and protectionism. This is not to deny that no exclusions, collisions, preferences, or non-standard contaminations will at times emerge between the species of the household (which will naturally compete for resources, not the least of which is time), nor that, especially in many situations of in-migration, a greater effort is required to cultivate the minority species; it is to suggest that more fruitful conditions for multilingualism can be created if this one type of family language planning is not embraced in such a way, which is to say, uncompromisingly, with self-inflicted suffering, reluctance, and a more or less explicit rejection of the minority language that one strives to maintain. It is to keep the factor of intrinsic motivation at the forefront of household language planning and to regard the attainment of grammatical standards, whether in writing or speech, as a subordinate goal. [-6-]

For Kouritzin, the "counterfeit" (p. 315) nature of her expressions and the "artificiality about [her] love" (p. 314) result not only from her assumption that, as a "nonnative" speaker, she will forever be at a loss to produce emotions in Japanese fully or authentically, but also from her opinion that the Japanese language does not measure up to English in certain respects. For one, Japanese is marked by certain emotional incapacities or absences: "I do not like some of the culture the Japanese language teaches. There are no cultural equivalents for *I love you* or for pet names like *honey bear*, *sweat pea*, or *stud muffin*, and direct translations are strange" (p. 317). Multilingual speakers accustomed to the cross-fertilization of languages often view the lack of strict equivalents as an opportunity for creativity. Even though Kouritzin seems unwilling to exploit her bilingual insight in such a way, her observations are typical of bilinguals who realize that languages do not cover the totality of experience and do not translate universally shared, pre-linguistic emotions but, rather, offer unique and in some cases untranslatable emotional markers or habits. By the same token, Kouritzin's observations, it seems to me, argue *for* bilingualism and for the richness it offers rather than for any purported superiority of English.

It is important to stress here that a commonly identified criterion of successful bilingual family language planning is that parents exhibit a generally positive attitude towards their household languages.[4] This criterion is nowhere attested to in Kouritzin's account (although, as in all other matters, her family's actual experience may look different from Kouritzin's depiction of it, and thus my critique does not apply to Kouritzin's household language situation but, rather, to the assumptions that shape her description of it). Kouritzin's negative view of the language could be perceived by the children, whether or not it is conveyed explicitly, and the children would then have at their disposal a pretext for rejecting the language themselves. On this note, Harding and Riley (1986) state that the "parents' attitudes towards their own language is perhaps more important than the objective situation of that language in the foreign society" (p. 74). This comment is particularly relevant to Kouritzin's hothouse language experiment since a positive attitude is said to have greater sway in fostering identification with a minority language than the presence of a dominant or majority language can have in threatening it.

Standards, Stability, Form

Concerning the importance that Kouritzin places on standards, I note first that Grosjean's (1985) well-known depiction of the monolingual view of bilingualism identifies a likely source of certain of Kouritzin's (2000) preoccupations:

> *According to a strong version of this [monolingual] view, the bilingual has (or should have) two separate and isolable language competencies; these competencies are (or should be) similar to those of the two corresponding monolinguals; therefore, the bilingual is (or should be) two monolinguals in one person. (Grosjean, 1985, p. 468)*

In contrast to this idea of totalizing mastery of two separate languages, Grosjean insists upon the context-specific competencies of bilinguals and concludes that "traditional language tests that put more stress on the *form* of the language than on the speaker's ability to communicate in context are not appropriate [procedures for testing linguistic competence among bilinguals]" (pp. 472-473). In light of Grosjean's argument, one could insist on the context-specific competencies of monolinguals and question whether the stress on form is appropriate even for them. In Kouritzin's case, her approach to family language planning merits skepticism to the degree that it strives foremost for the achievement of standard forms in her and her daughter's language use. In this way, as in others, Kouritzin tries to satisfy a monolingual assumption of language development. Just as Grosjean everywhere valorizes the *distinct* linguistic profiles of bilinguals, Kouritzin strives to ensure "normal monolingual development" in her child. To use an expression dear to Grosjean (1985), it can be said of Kouritzin that she applies a 'monolingual yardstick' to her 'hothouse.' At one point, for example, Kouritzin reports that she feels "inadequate as a parent because [she is] uncertain what the *natural sequence* [italics added] is for learning to speak Japanese" and worries that, "because [she] does not know how children *normally develop Japanese as an L1* [italics added], [she] will miss the markers of nonstandard usage or language delay" (p. 318).

By privileging form over content, linking form to the question of identity, and requiring mastery in all aspects of language, Kouritzin's (2000) family language planning appears aimed at melding two monolingual identities into her children so that neither Kouritzin's nor her husband's "native" identity will be devalued or forgotten. As a consequence, in spirit at least, her bilingual family language planning betrays a monolingual mistrust of multilingualism and nostalgia for monolingual stability (or what is taken to be such). The primary source of this faith in monolingual stability is the assumption that one's identity is formed and preserved by monolingual competencies: the single, native language shapes one's identity and propels it through time. [-7-]

In contrast to the emphasis on form and master of identity-bound and identity-binding languages sought by Kouritzin, Grosjean (1994), in one of his demystifying descriptions of bilinguals, writes that

> *[T]he majority acquired their languages at various times during their lives and are rarely equally fluent in them; many speak one of their languages less well than the other (and often with an accent) and many can only read or write one of the languages they speak. Furthermore, few bilinguals are proficient interpreters and translators. (p. 1656)*

What strikes me about these observations is that, if one takes into account that a language consists of many distinct "languages" (technical jargon, wide variations of region and register, etc.), much of what Grosjean says here about bilinguals so as to lower the monolingual bar with respect to bilinguals' distinct competencies is also true about monolinguals. This is an implication that, in his focus on bilinguals, Grosjean never draws out. Harding and Riley (1986), however, speak eloquently to this point: " . . . in purely linguistic terms anyone who has two different forms of speech is bilingual," and, "in a very real sense, we are *all* bilinguals: each time we choose between two different forms to express the same idea . . . we are doing exactly what the bilingual does when he chooses between his languages" (p. 12, p. 18).

In my own terms, strictly speaking, all lingualism is multilingualism. Many monolinguals cannot read or write the language they speak, are inarticulate, cannot translate one term or type of expression into another or understand other speakers of "their" "one" "language," etc. Thus, in certain respects, they scarcely earn the titles commonly bestowed upon them ("monolingual" or "native speaker"). Consequently, not only is it true that the bar for bilinguals needs to be lowered, since few of them are what Grosjean (1994) calls "stable"–that is, "*no longer in the process of acquiring* [italics added] a second or third language" (p. 1656)–but, to press the implication further, monolingual stability also needs to be qualified as relative and, in an essential way, unstable, since no language user, "monolingual" or other, ever evades or exhausts the process of language learning. In stating this, I do not imagine that Grosjean means that linguistic stability is anything but "relative." Thus, Grosjean (1985) writes that, according to the holistic view of bilingualism, the bilingual is a "fully competent speaker-hearer; he or she has developed competencies (in the two languages and possibly in a third system that is a combination of the first two) *to the extent required by his or her needs and those of the environment* [italics added]" (p. 471).

When Grosjean (1985) speaks of the bilingual as an "integrated whole" (p. 481)–which expression may falsely conjure the idea of total mastery–he does so to argue that bilinguals do not lack the functional integrity that is commonly attributed to monolinguals. Grosjean means to establish that the bilingual is "a specific speaker-hearer in his or her own right" (p. 467). In light of this argument, I would first point out that, despite its functional character, the description of language users as "integrated wholes" or as "wholly competent language users" (p. 471), be they "monolingual" or multilingual, can still give way to the presumption that somewhere in the world thrive creatures who know entire languages, embody, wholly constitute or are wholly constituted by those languages; and who know how to teach the languages by virtue of birthright, parentage, or regional or political affiliation.[5] The same is as true for the term "monolingual" as it is for "bilingual." Each may re-invite the fantasy of an individual who has wholly mastered one or two discrete language systems. I would thus ask, with respect to Grosjean's argument, whether granting that a bilingual is a specific speaker-hearer in his own right prevents one from seeing this "own right" as resting upon either a distinction of degree or upon one of a relatively *qualitative* difference (such as an increased awareness of the fact that words are separable from the things to which they refer, which awareness is available to every speaker-hearer), rather than one of essence or kind. This question is relevant since it is dubious to presume that any speaker-hearer is wholly "stable."

Given that our needs and those of our environment constantly change, our functional "wholeness" is never entirely whole. Even if it were possible to master shifting needs in advance, the question would become this: Could one wholly master or stabilize a language and still be thought to speak or use that language stably? The very idea of linguistic mastery implies a static state of language competence from which necessary elements of lingualism are missing, not the least of which are standard-violating creativity, fruitful error, and grammatical corruption or multilingual "contamination." [-8-] Such destabilizing elements are not mere accidents that, with sufficient attention or study, one could suppress. Rather, they adhere to language necessarily as one of its irreducible possibilities. They are implicated in the very possibility of speaking or writing or thinking in "a" language. What is assumed to be a countable language is for that reason never given or rendered present in self-assured contours such that it could be called "one." It could be said therefore that language is fragmentary (if only one could remove from the idea of a fragment the implication that there exists a whole). In a sense–to borrow a word typically used to disparage bilinguals whose bilingualism is judged to be incomplete–lingualism is always *semilingualism*. This is so whether it is the lingualism of a multilingual or of a relatively impoverished or self-deluding "monolingual." Likewise, there certainly are "standards" in language, but only ever relatively stable standards, including written standards (whose relative stability with respect to so-called "spoken standards" does nothing to assure their stability in principle). Standards we can identify, but "standard English," where this implies a self-enclosed, wholly stable entity, impervious to change, and thoroughly mastered by certain of its users, is merely the phantasm of certain habitual ways of speaking.

Having thus drawn out certain implications of Grosjean's argument, I note that, for Kouritzin (2000), standardization and translatability, which preoccupations derive from faith in monolingual stability, are deemed indispensable goals. Kouritzin's inability to attain them in all aspects of Japanese is a source of aggravated frustration. Her anxious quest for them extends even to cute penmanship: "I do not know the cultural equivalents of dotting *i*s with hearts or flowers, adding curlicues to *f*s or *g*s, or ending a signature with a flourish, so my penmanship was not cute enough to label my daughter's clothes" (p. 319). Because she links the mastery of standard, conventional and/or grammatical language forms both to parental authority and affection, her at times nonstandard and not wholly fluent grasp of Japanese seems to her to put to question her identity and effectiveness as the mother of her children. Viewing herself primarily as a nonnative speaker, she believes she offers a model from which her children must at times be shielded. As Kouritzin remarks, "we want to ensure that our children do not reproduce my non-standard linguistic choices in that language" (p. 313). This sort of apologetic recognition of non-standard language use is typical of bilinguals who measure themselves with a monolingual yardstick; that is, who measure themselves against the fanciful ideal of wholly accomplished and infallible "native speakers." Many bilinguals refuse to call themselves bilinguals if they do not feel equally and fully competent in the languages they use (Grosjean, 1992, p. 54). As for Harding and Riley (1986), they say of this situation that:

> *[The] problem is that people do not judge bilinguals by the standards they use to judge monolinguals: they judge them with reference to an impossible ideal, the "native-speaker" who supposedly speaks* all *possible varieties of his language, who can,* linguistically speaking, *do everything in all domains and on all topics in his language. (p. 33)*

It is significant, in light of these statements, that Kouritzin (2000) never describes herself as a bilingual and would seem to require of herself that, to be bilingual, she would have to betray no English accent when speaking Japanese, employ impeccably standard Japanese grammar, perform Japanese lullabies, and so on. In short, Kouritzin judges her functional literacy in Japanese always by invidious comparison with her greater familiarity with English; she would thus seem to require of herself that she be, as Grosjean often says, "two monolinguals in one." The same would be required of the children, who, it is felt, must become fully competent in all formal aspects of

both Japanese and English. In a section of her article entitled, “The Language of Discipline,” Kouritzin spells out the emotional consequences of her not wholly standard use of Japanese by writing that:

> *[She could not] put the words together as cleverly as she [a Japanese mother whom she observed scolding a child] did. Nor could I manage to fuse discipline with love merely by using intonations, gestures, or expressions that, though natural for her, are counterfeit for me. An incompetent Japanese mother, I either ignore discipline problems altogether or attempt disciplinary explanations that perplex my children and frustrate me. I cannot find the perfect word or phrase that will enable me to sound authoritative without sounding shrewish. I watch my husband discipline the children, or I watch our baby-sitter, my mother-in-law, my sister-in-law, strangers, explain things to my children, and I feel both thankful for their proficiency and angry that they have usurped my role. All my life I have wanted to replicate with my children the close relationship I have with my mother, but now it is easier for my children to have that closeness with Japanese-speaking strangers than with me. A thousand times I have threatened my husband that I am going to start speaking English to the children tomorrow, but I focus on their bilingual futures and never do. (2000, p. 315) [-9-]*

It is difficult to read these reflections of a committed educator without feeling admiration for her self-sacrifice. The question arises, though, whether, as it assumed in these comments, children necessarily understand and share the view that non-standard speech leads to a loss of emotional closeness and parental authority. It seems that if, on the one hand, a child has already recognized a standard to the degree that she can distinguish between a stranger’s mastery of the standard and a mother’s insufficient mastery of the same, then the educator’s primary motivation–to foster fluency in the minority heritage language–would have been achieved in one valuable respect. The child would have identified the standard usage and thus distinguished it from non-standard usage. If the child has only a passive ability to distinguish between standard and non-standard forms, the mother’s non-standard usage does not necessarily have to be viewed as an obstacle either to the child’s developing an active grasp of the distinctions between standard and non-standard forms or to the mother’s maintaining emotional closeness with her child. If, on the other hand, the child has not already learned to recognize a specific standard as such and has not also adopted the idea that a lack of standard usage diminishes parental authority and affection, then there is no reason to think that the appearance of non-standard language in the mother’s speech would lead to the devastating consequences of alienation and a loss of discipline. In short, the parent’s anxiety in this case appears to be based upon a fallacy concerning children’s perceptions of the parent’s use of language. Harding and Riley (1986) frequently draw attention to such a fallacy. As they remark while discussing the age at which children become aware that they are bilingual,

> *[T]he child's notion of “a language” simply does not coincide with the adult concept. In strictly sociolinguistic terms, the child's refusal to accept watertight compartments for her languages is often a far more accurate and realistic version of the facts than the adult's categories. (p. 55)*

In addition to sharing Harding and Riley’s view that the–typically monolingual and adult–quantification or compartmentalization of languages is misleading, I would argue that the same fallacy of the child-of-adult-notions holds true for the compartmentalization of language into standard and non-standard forms, if not simply into forms, as opposed to contents. The preoccupation with form and accompanying disparagement of content is, as Grosjean argues convincingly, typical of the monolingual view of language. Kouritzin (2000) gives a stark illustration of this preoccupation when she says of herself and her daughter that:

> *I cannot with confidence offer her a corrected sentence to model. Instead, I explain what she is trying to say and let my husband or another native Japanese speaker negotiate the grammar with her. When no one is around to help us, we focus on meaning and disregard form. (p. 316)*

It would seem that, for children, focusing on meaning would hardly constitute a downgrade in the use of language. Be that as it may, not only does the ability to negotiate form or grammar for oneself or for others not emanate naturally from so-called native speakers, there are both practical and principled reasons for thinking that the absence of “native speakers” may actually be beneficial. Since focusing excessively on form is often cited in the literature of language instruction as a potential obstacle to promoting language acquisition, it would seem that the presence of native speakers who bring Kouritzin and her daughter to focus on form could just as easily hinder a

healthy language environment. Absent concern for the "natives," non-standard uses of language would not need to be singled out as evidence of parental or emotional failings. The feared damage of non-standard language being left uncorrected could be overcome precisely by stressing meaning and resourcefulness and by thinking of oneself as modeling positive attitudes rather than native forms. Written and spoken "standards" are for obvious reasons important to use and, at times, to discuss, but children do most of their learning not by being corrected by an authority or by having points of grammar explained to them, but rather through motivation and exposure to a wide range of meanings and social activities (cf. Harding & Riley, 1986). More significantly, since the "form" of which Kouritzin speaks in this passage implies not only grammatical forms but the supposedly natural and transparent grasp of a language that "native speakers" are assumed to embody or possess, I note that "native speakers" are made "native" by the language that is imputed to them as "one" and often in accordance with national, socio-economic, "racial," and congenital or ontological criteria (none of which categories is, strictly speaking, linguistic and none of which is more stable than the unstable concept of "identity"). In contrast to this common configuration, in which the presence of "native speakers" is thought to guarantee the application of the standards or forms that they embody, the notion of lingualism sees each speaker-hearer as being compelled to produce language anew, and thus at risk not only of error, but of unforeseen and unpredictable linguistic experience, and perhaps even of a transformative encounter (that transforms both language and language users). [-10-]

Identity and Identification

The expression "mother tongue" is often evoked in complicity with the idea of a form-embodying "native speaker." "Native speakers," moreover, are presumed to have their identity defined by the language they speak, especially when they speak only "one." In contrast to one's linguistic *identity*, which, on Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson's account, is shaped partly by the language or languages one has learned first and about which one has little choice, by linguistic *identification* I understand "internal identification," as opposed to "the language(s) one is identified as a native speaker of by others" (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1989, p. 453). Thus, identification is linked to desire, which is to say, it is an active and interminable process rather than a stable acquisition. In light of this distinction, Kouritzin's identity lingualism restricts the sense of the expression "mother tongue" to that of identity in this narrow and dogmatic sense and thus excludes or marginalizes the role of identification. It thus grants itself not only "a" language, but a language that is presumed to be irreplaceably instinctive, authentic, intimate, natural, and fully translatable and communicable. In lines that betray this restriction, Kouritzin (2000) writes that,

> *More than anything, I have learned the meaning of* mother tongue. *English is the language of my heart, the one in which I can easily express love for my children; in which I know instinctively how to coo to a baby; in which I can sing lullabies, tell stories, recite nursery rhymes, talk baby talk. In Japanese, there is an artificiality about my love; I cannot express it naturally or easily. The emotions I feel do not translate well into the Japanese language, and those which I have seen expressed by Japanese mothers do not seem sufficiently intimate when I mouth them. (p. 314)*

> *When I read stories to my children in Japanese, worrying so much about reading correctly that until the 10th read-through I sound terrible even to myself . . . . (pp. 319-320)*

This passage seems to betray a lack of imaginative or emotional investment with respect to Japanese. However, the fact that Kouritzin deems herself capable of judging what is or is not "sufficiently intimate," or what "sounds terrible," in Japanese suggests that she is not as far as she portrays herself as being from understanding and thus being able to embrace the language's emotional markers and habits. Be that as it may, the passage does raise questions. What could deny an educated, motivated, open-minded speaker of Japanese the ability to recite a nursery rhyme "easily" or "with sufficient intimacy"? How does one guarantee or measure the intimacy of speech acts? Is it by an accent-free pronunciation? It is relevant to these questions that saying "Mama" to one's mother is one linguistic habit and, as we have seen, Kouritzin (2000) is willing to suspend her possible identification with the impossible-not-to-understand "Mama." Thus, her failure to identify with the Japanese language is marked even as she only listens "passively," that is, when no performance on her part is called for. Consequently, Kouritzin's dramatization of her insufficient language performance obscures the more significant fact of her refusal to identify even passively with the language. The refusal apparently stems from the belief that her "identity" has already been firmly established elsewhere, specifically, in certain racial and economic categories. "I am educated and White, and I consider myself solidly middle class by virtue of my upbringing and my education" (p. 321). This declaration of identity appears bolstered both by the capital "W" in "White" and the adverb "solidly." Another way to grant one's identity such solidity, as I have suggested, is to endow oneself with a "mother tongue," a notion that certainly does not exist in all languages nor emerge "spontaneously" outside of certain idioms or without

respect to a determinate language. Kouritzin endows herself with a "mother tongue" without accounting for the fact that the expression "mother tongue," whose meaning Kouritzin portrays herself as having stumbled upon spontaneously while struggling to use Japanese, has been criticized on a number of accounts (Baker & Jones, 1998; Couillaud, et al., 1988; Romaine, 1995; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1989). Kouritzin uses the expression a second time in her article to a similar effect as in the passage cited above:

> *When I compare my situation with that of non-English-speaking parents, I realize that, even though I have internalized the monitoring of my children's language development as part of my role (why else would such terms as* motherese *or* mother tongue *exist?), I can rely on my husband. (p. 318) [-11-]*

This observation recalls the fact that "mother tongue" unjustly minimizes the role of fathers in their children's language development. This is one reason why the members of the Linguistic Minorities Project call it "particularly unfortunate" (Couillaud, et al., 1988, p. 245). The most compelling treatment of the various senses given to the expression "mother tongue" is that of Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1989). They propose that, of the four criteria used to define it, namely, origin, competence, function and identification, the "combination of definitions by origin and identification shows the highest degree of linguistic rights awareness" (p. 455). As they argue, if defined solely in terms of function, as when Turkish in-migrants are said to have Dutch as their mother tongue they use the throughout the day, the term can contribute to oppressive policies designed to minimize the importance of languages with which in-migrants identify and that they have spoken from their earliest days. In this light, it is not surprising that Kouritzin, who understands "mother tongue" strictly in terms of origin (i.e., a language learned first), denies herself the possibility of identifying with Japanese. Moreover, her hope appears to be that she can prevent English from becoming a mother tongue to her children in the sense of a language with which they identify–too strongly–by insisting that the children know Japanese as a mother tongue in the sense of a language that they will have learned first (and, for a time, exclusively). Thus, in a gesture that tacitly stigmatizes the language, she assumes that imposing Japanese upon the children as a mother tongue by origin will override their likely failure to identify with it (since it has a minority status in Canada). Of course, mother tongues by origin do not always remain mother tongues by identification and to assure that the children acquire a language as a mother tongue by identification requires something other than the "hothouse" exclusion of a majority language. Nonetheless, lacking a positive word for Japanese, Kouritzin discusses no compelling strategies for fostering in her children positive identifications with the language and seems, instead, to rely on her husband's "native" identity to foster the hothouse.

Concerning the definition of "mother tongue" in terms of origin alone, it is understandable that, citing work by Singleton (1963), Harding and Riley (1986) mark their skepticism concerning the vulgarly championed "critical period hypothesis." Harding and Riley state that "age, in itself, is not particularly relevant to success in language learning, whereas motivation and opportunity are" (p. 63). With this accent on the factors of motivation and opportunity, Harding and Riley do not rely upon a monolithic, purely developmental or instinctual notion of language or language learning. Indeed, they argue that, of motivation and opportunity (both of which factors they deem to be more significant than intellectual capacity or "language aptitude"), motivation is more important (pp. 63-64). They view a positive attitude towards a language as being the most important factor in determining one's success in learning it. A positive attitude trumps even such "instinctual" aspects of language use as one's spoken accent.

> *If it is a fact that adolescent and adult bilinguals do usually retain a foreign accent, it looks very much as if the reasons have nothing do with the neurological development and organization of the brain, but rather that it results from their need (conscious or unconscious) to show that they are "different," to proclaim and protect their individual and social identity. (Those monolinguals who hang on to traces of their original accent years after they have moved away from the town or district in question are doing exactly the same thing.) (Harding & Riley, 1986, p. 63.)*

Kouritzin provides several reasons for her wanting to proclaim and protect her individual and social identity as a fully competent, "native" monolingual; as the native speaker of a language whose values and lessons she likes. Thus, it seems that Kouritzin's case is similar to the cases Harding and Riley allude to: her failure to identify with the Japanese language may well come from her desire to "preserve" her English-language identity. This would be another sense in which Kouritzin seems to be lodging a complaint: at an implicit level, she appears to reject the stereotypical arrangement of her family language planning in which the husband requires that the wife adopt his language, and not vice versa. Admittedly, this conflict between her "identity" and that of her husband is programmed to be only provisional. Harding and Riley (1986) address this issue of deliberately engineered *successive* bilingual education by noting that,

> *The same [counterproductive result] can even apply to cases where the parents decide to introduce the second language only after one has already been well established, in order to avoid the presumed dangers of the simultaneous acquisition of languages . . . Even if there were some linguistic justification for such a measure (and we do not believe this to be the case) the strain placed on family relationships is the opposite of the result which bilingualism aimed at in the first place. (p. 75) [-12-]*

To this observation I would add that not only, as Samimy (2001, p. 324) has noted, do parents who speak more than one language serve as valuable models of multilingualism, they also create the opportunity to foster among their children a critical attitude toward aspects of each language spoken. Furthermore, they enrich the linguistic environment of the household, a condition which Harding and Riley (1986), as many others, deem essential: "Above all *talk* to your child, and this applies to both father and mother; provide him with the richest linguistic environment possible (songs, playgroup, books, television, holidays, visitors, games) in *both* languages" (p. 80). It is significant, in this regard, that household lingualism stresses that parents who accept the role of being a learner, and not only that of an authoritative model or master, can encourage children to develop a productive, give-and-take view of language practices. Children can accept that, at times, one parent learns from another parent, or from a child, and that no diminution of parental authority or affection results from this commerce in language habits. One parent's learning from another can illustrate cooperativeness between individuals who remain open to the necessarily inexhaustible process of language learning. Having a multilingual perspective on language entails such cooperativeness and understanding, and this holds as well for "single language" households.

Language Models

In identity lingualism, the search for linguistic purity applies equally to spaces and language users. For this reason, it is significant that, while requiring models of pure communication, Kouritzin (2000) finds herself surrounded by imperfect, insidious models. English-speaking playmates are suspect for the fact that they speak the dominant language; Japanese-speaking playmates are so because they speak a language whose "lessons" the author does not like; the author is a poor model for speaking Japanese "artificially"; and even her husband, a "native speaker," must "embrace guilt when he is unable to explain the etymology of a word or a point of grammar" (p. 311).

As for household lingualism, it sees the lack of models of linguistic purity as a necessary condition of language use and not as an incidental circumstance that one could ward off by sealing oneself and one's family in a "hothouse." Rather than rely on models of "native," "natural," "pure," "masterful," "blueprint carrying," or "instinctually competent" language users, household lingualism takes account of the imperfection and incompleteness of language and of everyone's relation to it.[6] Such incompleteness is inscribed in the name "lingualism."

Lingualism resists the quantification of language and the monolingual exaggeration of "native" mastery. For the same reason, household lingualism cannot pretend to set itself up as a model that would guarantee the successful bilingual engineering of one's children. Household lingualism leaves its doors open to the essential risk that children may adopt a resolute preference for one language over another. By accepting this risk, however, it is more likely that one can foster minority L1 development in a way that respects its empirical character (and does not merely seek to satisfy a pre-empirical assumption). Rather than promoting the development of one language by resolutely excluding another, household lingualism accepts that every speaker is a partial speaker; that there is not a single "heart" that defines and restricts linguistic capacities or appetites; that languages have unique strategies and markers for emotions that anyone can adapt to and reproduce–or create–however untranslatable certain of these strategies remain; that code-switching, borrowing, general verbal exposure, creativity, and motivation are more important features of linguistic development than is the goal of attaining standards or the reliance on monolingual models and attitudes. To the models of "nativeness" and grammatical perfection on which identity lingualism depends, household lingualism prefers an abundance of enthusiastic or inspiring language users whose "identity" would be hard to characterize in any detail or with fast criteria. Moreover, household lingualism does not rely on such models in a determination to succeed at all costs and leaves open the possibility of relative failure. This is so because young language users may develop identifications that have nothing to do with a parent's language engineering. [-13-]

What Community?

From its first appearance (Bloomfield, 1914; 1933), the notion of "native speaker" has always been defined with respect to a specific linguistic community. In the final section of my essay, I will suggest an approach to linguistic communities that, I believe, avoids monoculturalist assumptions. Before I can do that, however, the idea of linguistic communities needs to be clarified. The question of community is of particular importance for Kouritzin (2000) because the fear of the majority-language community's influence on the

maintenance and development of the minority language motivates her to create "hothouse" conditions for her family. The hothouse aims specifically to counteract the overwhelming presence of English (and the potential political significance of this strategy would be hard to exaggerate, given the global dominance of the language). Among the many potential problems relating to the imbalance of respective majority and minority-language communities, Kouritzin observes that the parent who has not entirely mastered a given language may serve as a corrupting influence which is all the worse when there is no large community to serve as a corrective to the parent's unwitting aberrations. In explaining her and her husband's motivations for adopting their particular model of family language planning, she adds that,

> *We were also influenced by the experiences of many Japanese families, friends who, because they lack a large, vibrant Japanese-language speaking community, reported struggling to maintain the heritage language at home after their children began playing with English-speaking children (see also Saunders, 1988). Even though Japanese was the only language both parents spoke well, these families found that their children became dominant in English and never learned to read and write Japanese. (p. 312)*

Kouritzin's response to these reports is to "isolate [her] children from their English-speaking peers" (p. 319). Consequently, she writes, "My lonely daughter is starved for child companions" (p. 320).

I first note that George Saunders, to whose work Kouritzin here refers parenthetically, can hardly be enlisted as support for Kouritzin's judgment concerning the insidious influence of playmates who speak a dominant language. I say this because, in discussing accounts of children who, influenced by the dominant language of the community, show reluctance to speak the minority language of their parents, Saunders (1984) insists that this problem can be overcome if the parents "are persistent, yet show understanding and good humor" (p. 140), and adds that with

> *some children, for instance, to insist that they never resort to the dominant language of the community could cause frustration and resentment and have an adverse effect on their willingness to speak the other [i.e., minority] language. Instead, a child should be given every encouragement to speak the language and should be helped when his linguistic knowledge is not adequate to express his thoughts (1984, p. 141).*

Neither can the precise work of Saunders that Kouritzin refers to be passed off as support for isolationism, since Saunders here presents strategies for negotiating language in the presence of monolingual playmates that, among other strategies, helped him to foster German in his Australian-raised bilingual children. Saunders (1988) concludes his discussion of playmates in this way:

> *There are many documented cases of children who have friends in the majority language group but who continue to speak a minority language within the family until adulthood and beyond (e.g. Elwert, 1959; Haugen, 1972; Lowie, 1945; Schmidt-Mackey, 1977).*
>
> *We ourselves have been warned by various bilingual people, whose own children are monolingual, that their [our?] children would stop speaking German at various states in their development: firstly when they started kindergarten, then when they begin primary school, then when they went to high school. So far this has not eventuated, and it is doubtful if it ever will, since the speaking of German is so firmly entrenched and does not interfere with the children's functioning perfectly adequately in a predominantly English-speaking environment. (pp. 112-113)*

Moreover, Baker (2000b), in a work to which Kouritzin (2001) refers in her reply to Samimy (2001), makes a particularly salient remark on this topic:

> *One issue . . . is whether children should be kept away from neighbors so that they do not develop superior performance in*

> *one language rather than another. The answer is that one language does not usually develop at the cost of another. Languages do not develop like a balance: the more one side rises, the lower the other descends.* Languages grow interdependently *and with no long-term cost to each other. Therefore, it is sensible and natural that children should have language practice with people around them who matter, and who are important in a local network of relationships. To stop a child talking to neighbors for fear of language pollution is taking language engineering to an unreasonable conclusion. (p. 20) [-14-]*

More significant still is the fact that the lesson Kouritzin draws concerning the potentially decisive role of playmates disproves many of the assumptions of her own identity lingualism. Identity lingualism strives to preserve the presumed purity of the formative years in which a single language is thought to enter into and monopolize one's "heart," forever there to reign as unassailable guarantor of the "language blueprint." However, the arrival of playmates who swiftly win over the "heart" of young language users, rather than confirm the insidious sway of the majority language, illustrates, I think, the expansiveness and adventurism of speakers whose "hearts" appear, as it were, many-chambered. Thus, rather than risk stigmatizing the minority heritage language as being both embodied and watched over by authority figures preoccupied with form and standards, household lingualism would emphasize the compatibility of languages and even–this is not an obstacle to the same–certain irreducible differences between them. [7] In this way, it would diminish the possibility that the languages be viewed as belonging to an inside and an outside world, respectively, as if each were crouched antagonistically on one side of a clearly defined threshold, with each staking its own survival on the children's disaffection for the other. Since household lingualism recognizes what Grosjean (1985) calls the context-specific nature of linguistic competencies, it would treat playtime as a valuable linguistic encounter. Many such encounters are lost to hothouse children who are slated for "bilingual futures" (Kouritzin, 2000, p. 315) but not a bilingual present.

In contrast to the isolationist approach to community, the community of supportive minority-language speakers recognized by household lingualism is not peopled by "native" speakers, but by language users who, wherever they reside and whatever their linguistic heritages, are capable of motivating children and furthering their interest and pleasure in language. One wonders how large and how "vibrant" a community of minority-language speakers would need to be before it could be presumed to provide a sufficient counter-force to the weight of the majority language as embodied in English-speaking playmates. I would underscore that books, videos, and other sources of diverse linguistic models are also means by which children interact with a large community; and in this respect Kouritzin poses a legitimate question: "What do parents do when for lack of resources they do not have access to children's books or videos in the heritage language?" (p. 319). Nonetheless, on recommendations with which Kouritzin is presumably familiar (since she cites the work in which they appear), many friendly Japanese families could, at whatever distance, stimulate the children's use of Japanese by communicating with the children in various ways (Harding & Riley, 1986, pp. 74-76, 147-148). Furthermore, any lack of a large community of speakers could be counterbalanced by establishing a richness of language experiences (Baker, 2000b, pp. 15-16).

Implicitly, Kouritzin (2000) draws a connection between the lack of a large, vibrant, flesh-and-blood Japanese-speaking community and children's inability to read and write Japanese. It is relevant to this connection that, to a reader of her article who, in contrasting her more relaxed approach to fostering Japanese-and-English bilingualism with her own daughter in America, comments that her daughter "will quite possibly never achieve native-like proficiency in Japanese, particularly in reading and writing" (Samimy, 2001, p. 324), Kouritzin (2001) responds by writing that "this is a possibility that my husband and I rejected" (pp. 327-328). What is not clear in this response is why "hothouse" conditions are assumed to offer a solution so dependable that it allows the parents to reject the very *possibility* that a child may not develop native-like proficiency in reading and writing. Hothouse conditions do not by themselves ensure that a child will become proficient in these skills. One could thus ask: How many members of what vibrant community does it take to teach a child how to read and write? I see no reason why "many friendly Japanese families" or even "one member" would necessarily be a mistaken reply to this question. Kouritzin's insinuation that the sole influence of English-speaking playmates caused certain children not to be able to read and write Japanese is not credible and fear of the "exterior" community's influence need not follow.

Concluding Remarks: From the Hothouse to the Household

The line of questioning I have followed tracks monolingual preoccupations with standards and the instinctual mastery of a language. Kouritzin's (2000) text illustrates that, even when bilingual language family language planning is supported theoretically, educationally, and financially, it may still be shaped by thoroughly monolingual attitudes. The prevalence of these attitudes in other contexts can be illustrated easily. To stay within the context of Japanese-English language relations, consider, for instance, that the many university language departments whose job postings seek "native speakers"–a very common occurrence in Japan today–operate on assumptions of identity lingualism and thereby, no doubt unwittingly, set serious limits to their effectiveness as venues of language instruction since before

their “nonnative” students they place an insurmountable barrier to future employment within their own walls. [-15-] However, since these postings are typically for dead-end, contract positions, the “native/nonnative” distinction is exploited in such cases to identify self-recognized “native speakers” so as to sign them on while simultaneously excluding them from long-term employment.

Another example is the fanaticism with which English is generally marketed and consumed in Japan today and with which “native speakers” are sought out like so many shamans of linguistic empowerment. In Japan, “nativeness” is advertised by private language schools with posters showing beaming white faces. On a Tokyo advertisement for an English-language school, I have seen the photographed face of a white, French-Canadian pop singer. In such a case, which is not as exceptional in its principle as it may seem, “race” alone announces “nativeness” to prospective consumers of the English language. Even Japanese-language schools abroad, whether or not they are supported by the Japanese government, tend to exclude “nonnative” speakers or speakers whose citizenship, racial characteristics, or parents’ citizenship presumably prevent them from learning, taking an interest in, or enjoying legitimate access to the Japanese language. Such schools, which in most cases are the only option for Japanese living abroad who seek instruction for their children in Japanese, are linguistic hothouses filled with self-styled “native” instructors and young speakers targeted for a “nativeness” that is thought to stir within them like a seed. At least, such a thought is propagated as a convenient alibi for establishing a school’s budget on facile–though rigorously indefensible–criteria of exclusion.

In the face of omnipresent identity lingualism, household lingualism drops “identity criteria” and in their place negotiates ever-evolving language, language that always relates to a heritage anew. In this way, the adventure of household lingualism is by nature profligate and liberal. It does not stop to count itself and does not greatly exert itself in protecting against others. It frequently and joyfully oversteps or effaces borders and does not seek models among the conservative and impoverished world of monolingualism. Household lingualism not only drops the monolingual yardstick (whose requirements are, rigorously speaking, impossible to satisfy, even for monolinguals); it also gives up the hope of steadfastly applying any single “model” of language instruction as an assurance of success. Moreover, it avoids stigmatizing language. To return to the context of family language planning, in household lingualism, inevitable short-term adjustments and sacrifices are downplayed. As Harding and Riley (1986) recommend:

> [P]lay it down. *For most bilingual children and their parents, as we have seen, their linguistic situation is just part of their life. It is a part which can be useful, fun and interesting, but it is still something which they share with the majority of the world's population . . . and therefore neither a cause for concern nor anything to shout about. (p.80)*
>
> *The less fuss made about your child being bilingual, the better. (p. 140)*

Embracing a relaxed attitude on principle does not mean that household lingualism makes what Yamamoto (2002) describes as the common assumption that “children born and raised in families in which the parents have different native languages will spontaneously and naturally grow to be active bilinguals in the parental native languages” (p. 545). Household lingualism calls for a relaxed rigor that finds necessary both the sort of political awareness and commitment relating to issues of multilingualism that is exhibited brilliantly by Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson *and* familiarity with the practical literature of handbooks, case studies, and rules of thumb. Harding and Riley’s (1986) handbook offers an eminent example of such relaxed rigor. They never lose sight of the point of view of children for whom bilingualism “is quite literally fun and games” (p. 2) and for whom, I would add, motivations such as the perpetuation of a parent’s identity, or the attempt to give voice to the emotional experience of linguistic minorities, can only be, in the context of the family household, the sort of motivations that Tokuhama-Espinoza (2001) calls “external negative” (pp. 34-35), or that Lambert (discussed in Beardsmore, 1982, p. 85) opposes to motivational goals based on the positive identification with a language or community. [-16-]

When language learning is undertaken voluntarily or as part of household language planning, whatever practical advice one chooses to follow, certain assumptions and certain ways of speaking about language are more in the spirit of multilingualism than others. Those who give credence to monolingual models and to notions of “native speakers” or “linguistic efficiency,” and who everywhere erect linguistic fences, reproduce the ideology that, in the language of the state, seeks “national unity” through monolingualism and exclusionary declarations of “official languages.” Blackledge (2002) critiques this ideology with respect to Great Britain and speaks of language ideologies as tacitly pressing the question of “who is ‘in’ and who is ‘out’” (p. 72). In a similar vein, Singh (1998) remarks that, “enumerating or recording one’s ‘mother tongue’ is often used as a political instrument to achieve other kinds of social control” (p. 18). At the level of the individual, posing the question, “*How many* languages do you speak?” is one way in which monoglots, however understandable or harmless their intentions, take refuge in a space of politically empowered “nativeness” from which they stigmatize the

heritage, practice, and potential of lingualism. To such critiques, I would add that the monolingually idealized nation is peopled by speakers whose very monolingualism is idealized. Their access to language, when compared to that of multilinguals, is presumed to be normal and thus more direct, immediate, instinctual, standard, rule-bearing, uncompromised, intimate, stable, etc. Not surprisingly, the linguistic impoverishment, if not self-delusion, of monolinguals often supports and is supported by conservative political and economic power (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1989, p. 465, p. 469).

In critiquing this sort of ideology by discussing a particular approach to family language planning, I do not aspire to see certain words banished from the English language. It will always be a question of the assumptions that inform a given definition within a given context. Even "native speaker" has received a functional definition (Paikeday, 1985) that is compatible with household lingualism–but in such a case, "functional speaker" would be a happy replacement for it. Nor has my point been to doom to failure, on wholly practical grounds, one model of family language planning as recounted or practiced by a specific educator. Thus, I have analyzed the "hothouse" approach at the level of its assumptions about language and language learning and have not criticized its goal of bilingual education nor judged the likelihood of its "success."

The particular language and imagery of Kouritzin's (2000) identity lingualism have allowed me to discuss assumptions that are steadfast and widespread, perhaps even to the point of being impossible to put to rest (including in my own discourse). Indeed, rather than stand out as obtuse or idiosyncratic–if it were either, it would not merit the attention I have given it–Kouritzin's account allows me to broach here the difficult question of whether the desire for possessing a language, or a "mother tongue," where this means enjoying access to a language of pure communicability–one that brings forth, in perfect economy, the rhythms and content of a speaker's "heart"–is not so pervasive as to constitute an ever-reemerging jealousy or desire for linguistic "identity," which is to say, homogeneity or wholeness. Derrida (1996) reflects at length on such a possibility and its implications. One sense of his notion of the *monolingualism of the other* posits a colonial impulse that would relate to language as a pre-empirical, autonomous, sovereign law. The necessary but always impartial appropriation of this law (which itself remains heteronomous) is exhibited, most clearly, in "the power of naming, of imposing, and of legitimating words [*appellations*]" (p. 68). Languages are identified by their distinct manner of exercising this power. It is understandable, in this light, that, as Derrida notes, in practice, "[e]very culture institutes itself through the unilateral imposition of some 'politics' of language" (p. 68). On this account, we can speculate that the desire for a pure, self-enclosed language–a "mono-language"–inhabits the very movement of speech, such that, in speaking, one always says, implicitly, "let there be *a* language," "there is *a* language," "there is a *stable* language," or, "let this one language be *mine*" (and thus, implicitly, "there is no *other* language," "there is no other *of* language," etc.). Contrasting with this desire, which is not the same as one's conscious will or desire, but a desire immanent to language, the claim that all lingualism is multilingualism returns us to the idea of the insatiable colonial desire of language: "since there is no natural property of language, language gives way to appropriative mania [*de la rage appropriatrice*], to jealousy without appropriation" (Derrida, 1996, p.46).

From this perspective, the difficult question that Kouritzin's article allows me to raise is whether the mother tongue (as origin) is in some sense, and for the most part unavowedly, every speaker's "target language." If this is so, then the "mother tongue" or "native speakership" would be the "target language of language," even before and without respect to either determinate languages and their respective idioms or specific programs or policies that employ such notions as a principle of social exclusion or cultural imperialism. Identity lingualism could not therefore simply be overcome by one's arguing in favor of household lingualism. Rather, the two contrasting set of assumptions would persist, indissociably. The former would still call for the sort of critique that I have elaborated, and always in accordance with specific contexts, but it would not thereby be swept away or overcome. Lingualism, as a pre-empirical law, would have to be accounted for as an impossible but indefatigable ideal. An ideal, moreover, that may be thought of as a beneficial pole of reference. As such, it could be seen to make possible both the monolingual assumption or desire that marks identity lingualism *and* the functional workings of household lingualism. Both participate in lingualism, but differently. The one responds to the insatiable desire to coincide with a language and see one's identity both limited and protected by this coincidence. As impossible as this is, for all the reasons I have stated, it is perhaps this desire that motivates the perfection of language, which impossible project is not devoid of fruitful or critical capacities. To treat identity lingualism as a necessary pole of reference would be to prevent the "spirit of multilingualism," whose definition I have taken as my aim, from becoming its own dogmatic (and hopelessly relativistic) principle. For the same reason, to call the monolingual impulse "indefatigable" would not be to sink into an attitude of defeatism or cynicism. It would, rather, call for one to work strategically, taking account of each different context, to divert lingualism from the hothouse and into the household (in the larger sense I give this word). [-17-]

North America is largely one sprawling "hothouse" in which monolingual ideology spreads like a virus through institutions of media and education, a fact to which Kouritzin (2000) is admirably sensitive. In such a context, the critique of monolingual ideology should appeal to the needs of both dominant and minority language communities. Writings meant to legitimate bilingualism on theoretical grounds or to protect multilingual or minority-language communities from monoculturalism by declaring universal linguistic rights overlook the fact that

the real or imagined monolingual majorities of certain ideologically monolingual nations are themselves deprived of their own right to cultivate and identify positively with habits of lingualism. In monolingually ideological nations such as the United States, especially, until multilingualism, bilingualism, and monolingualism are seen as belonging to a continuum in which monolingualism constitutes a state of relative barrenness, if not self-delusion, bilingualism and multilingualism will continue to be treated as derived or accidental conditions. They will be seen, in accordance with popular theories of bilingualism, as either a distraction for the materially advantaged (as in the expression "elitist bilingualism") or a lamentable imposition on the nomads of the world (called "folk bilingualism"). According to this distinction (Grosjean, 1982; Harding & Riley, 1986; Tosi, 1982), *elitist* bilingualism is cultivated voluntarily for its social, practical, and cultural value, while *folk* bilingualism is learned out of necessity, as in situations of forced migration or exile. Although it undoubtedly has practical value for linguists, this distinction is easily blurred by the complexity of motivations in certain experiences of multilingualism since, as Kouritzin's account attests, the line between voluntary and involuntary language learning is not always easy to draw. More to the point, in both cases, bilingualism and multilingualism are treated as if they were deviations from a natural state. To counter this assumption, the counting of language and the restriction of the sense of "mother tongue" to an identity-monopolizing language learned first must give way to the recognition of lingualism as an inescapable heritage, a universal potential, and an endless process in which identification can always revaluate identity, and appetites modulate and augment origins.

As for the minority-language communities such as those of Japanese speakers living in English-speaking Canada, they can make themselves truly vibrant not by constructing language hothouses for themselves and their children but by holding instructional and social events and language classes that allow Canadians at risk of contracting monolingualism to act as productive participants in Japanese culture and language. In this way, their household, which is defined neither by a house, nor by familial relations, the possession of a passport, or "racial" characteristics, could be valorized and find its place within a larger community. A community of minority-language speakers could spread its household lingualism, and willing members of the community of monoglots could be ushered out of their own linguistic victimization. Of course, this would require new motivation on the part of power-invested, self-satisfied monoglots. It would, moreover, run the risk of language loss among members of the minority-language community. Nonetheless, this is where, within the vast and powerful hegemony of English monolingualism, the difficulty of the equation resides and why a certain adamant resistance is called for. However fraught with opposition or difficulty such efforts would be, they would establish conditions for household lingualism and thus constitute a truly multilingual approach to multilingualism.

Acknowledgement

For their helpful comments, the author would like to thank Professor Margaret Adamek of Indiana University, Professor Annick De Houwer of Antwerp University, Akiko Takagi of the University of Exeter, and an anonymous reader from TESL-EJ. [-18-]

Notes

[1] The practical, social, cultural and economic value of a child's using more than a single language has never been seriously questioned, and recent research uncovering the cognitive benefits of bilingualism has debunked long-standing prejudicial notions (Baker & Jones, 1998; Bialystok, 1991, 1997; Oller & Eilers, 2002; Saunders, 1988). In addition, practical guides and field research on bilingual households are now plentiful (Arnberg, 1987; Baker, 2000b; Beardsmore, 1982; Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 1999; De Houwer, 1999a; Hamers & Blanc, 1983; Lanza,
1997; Okita, 2002; Saunders, 1984, 1988).

[2] In its most expansive sense, which exceeds the reach of the present essay, the study of lingualism would be diachronic and, rather than focus narrowly on the linguistic profile or identity of individuals, track the development or retreat of lingualism across communities. Hakuta (1986) has written to the same effect that the "study of bilingualism should include not only the study of the bilingual person but also the circumstances surrounding the creation of bilingualism and its maintenance or attrition" (p. 4).

[3] I slightly modulate Grosjean's (1985) locution for indicating the relation of household languages, namely, "together or separate," to emphasize the inclusiveness of systems that operate distinctly from one another.

[4] Baker and Jones (1998) summarize "five pieces of advice to avoid or minimize potential problems of identity conflict and alienation" as

discussed by Beardsmore (1982). Of these, I note the following three, none of which is evidenced by Kouritzin: "1. Parental attitudes need to be positive to both languages and both cultures. 2. Monolingual language and cultural norms/values should not be applied to measure or evaluate bilingual and bicultural matters. 3. Bilingual teachers should become appropriate role models for their particular languages and cultures. They should have positive attitudes to both languages and cultures, providing a positive and harmonious view of biculturalism, and not imparting negative and conflicting views" (adapted from Baker and Jones, 1998, p. 26).

[5] Grosjean (1984) remarks the following: "Bilinguisme n'équivaut pas à maîtrise (équivalente ou non) de deux langues mais plutôt à l'utilisation de deux langues, utilisation qui est elle-même contrôlée par une série de facteurs psycho-sociolinguistiques tels que le bilingue lui-même, les personnes qu'il fréquente, les situations d'interaction" (p. 115) [Bilingualism does not necessarily imply the mastery (equivalent or not) of two languages, but rather the use of two languages, a use which is itself controlled by a series of psycholinguistic factors such as the bilingual himself, the persons he meets, the situations in which he interacts with them]. What Grosjean states here with respect to "two" languages holds true for the use of language by monolinguals with respect to "one," and for the same reasons. The differences he marks between bilinguals and monolinguals, however deserving of respect, are differences only of degree. Neither the monolingual nor the bilingual wholly masters language, be it a "single" language or several.

[6] Aellen's and Lambert's (1969, paraphrased in Baker and Jones, 1998) study of children's perceived identity in mixed languages marriages, in which the authors stress the importance of teaching harmony between cultures and languages as a means to motivate young language users, shares the outlook of household lingualism, as does Colin Baker's (2000a, 2000b) work, generally. Beardsmore (1982, pp. 82-86) summarizes research that emphasizes the importance of exhibiting positive attitudes towards the household languages, as do Hamers and Blanc (1983, chap. 8), who argue for the importance of such attitudes in fostering multiculturalism.

[7] This includes, obviously, both so-called native and nonnative speakers. In a contribution to the *TESL-EJ* Forum in which its author argues compellingly that "the native-nonnative paradigm and its implicational exclusiveness of ownership is . . . at best . . . linguistic elitism and at worst . . . an instrument of linguistic imperialism," P. B. Nayar (1994) underscores the hypothetical nature of the concept: "The Native-Nonnative Model was born and lives on the philosophical assumption that there is an animal that can be called native speaker for any and all of the living languages of the world" (p. 4, p. 1). Nayar subsequently exposes the tenuous nature of this hypothesis by pointing out that the only reliable criterion of the supposedly self-legitimating and all-powerful capacity to speak a language "natively" is monolingualism, a condition that in many ways constitutes a deprivation of linguistic experience. [-19-]

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