

Bilingualism, Multilingualism, Heritage  
speakers, Second Language Learners,  
Classroom learners

Braunschweig, Germany

May 7, 2019

# Social Contexts of Language Learning and Language Use

A Spanish woman  
got married  
to a British man.  
Their child is  
growing up in  
England.

A professor from China is  
invited to come to America  
to give a talk in English.

A child moved to Germany  
from Armenia with her family.  
She is studying at school in  
Germany.

Can you make a  
linguistic portrait  
of the people in  
the examples?

A Turkish couple  
moved to Germany  
They are raising their  
children here.

A skilled worker from  
Ukraine comes to work in  
Germany. He is sharing an  
apartment with a friend  
and does contraction jobs.

A German-  
speaking child  
lives and studies  
in Germany

A Russian student got  
accepted to a German  
University and comes to  
study in Germany.

# Language Learning: Starting Period

from birth

A German-speaking child lives and studies in Germany

A Spanish woman got married to a British man. Their child is growing up in England.

at the age of teen

A German-speaking child lives and studies in Germany

A Russian student got accepted to a German University and comes to study in Germany.

A professor from China is invited to come to America to give a talk in English.

in childhood

A Russian student got accepted to a German University and comes to study in Germany.

A Turkish couple moved to Germany. They are raising their children here.

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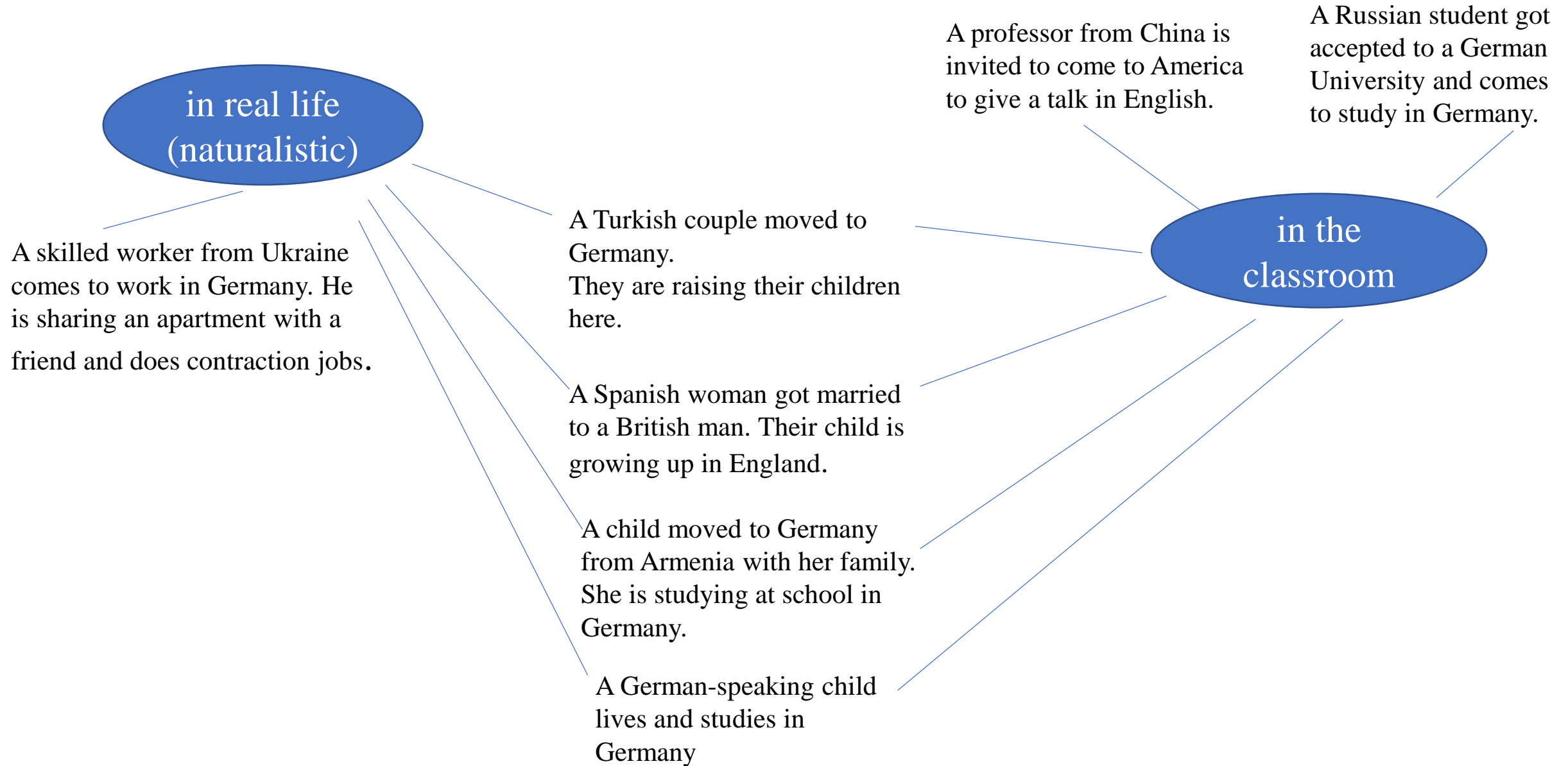
A child moved to Germany from Armenia with her family. She is studying at school in Germany.

in adulthood

A skilled worker from Ukraine comes to work in Germany. He is sharing an apartment with a friend and does contraction jobs.

A professor from China is invited to come to America to give a talk in English.

# Context of acquisition



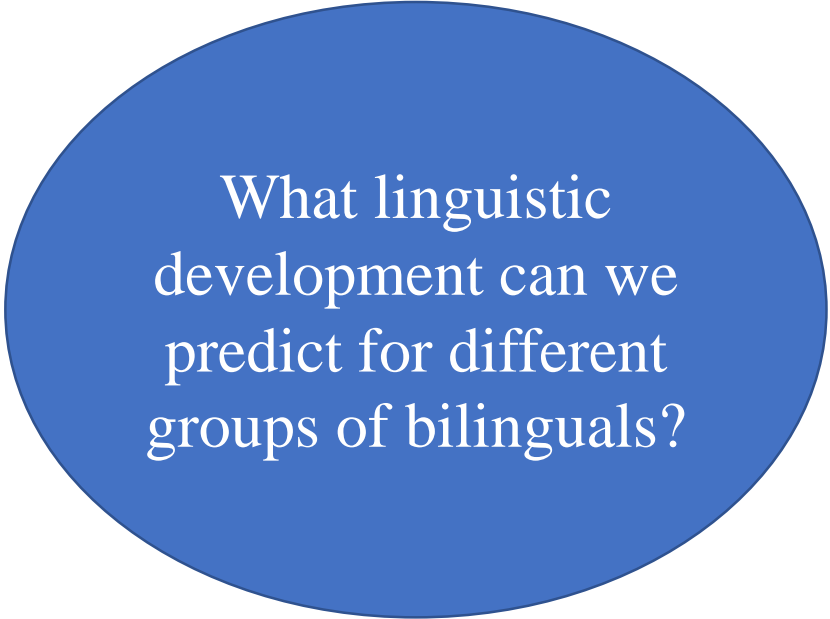
# Types of Bilingualism

- Parallel vs. Sequential
  - parallel = both languages from birth
  - sequential = the second language (L2) starts later than the first language (L1)
- Balanced vs. Non-Balanced
  - balanced = equally comfortable with both languages
  - non-balanced = one language is less proficient
- Early vs. Late
  - early = L2 starts around the age of 4 (Schwartz, 2004; Meisel, 2011)
  - late = L2 starts after the age of 6 (Lenenberg, 1967)
    - after the age of 7-8 (Johnson & Newport, 1989, 1991)
    - after 11-14 (Mayberry & Lock, 2003)

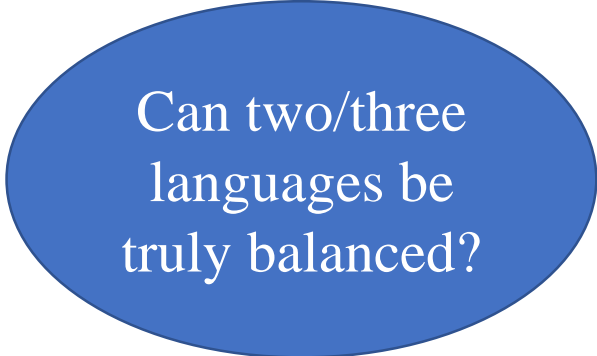
What about  
HERITAGE SPEAKERS?

# The Main Factors to Define the Type of Bilingualism

- Where?
  - in the country of the language (a skilled worker)
  - in a foreign country (a foreign student / an invited professor)
- How is the L2 learnt?
  - naturalistic learning (a skilled worker)
  - classroom learning (a foreign-language student)
- How much time has the L2 been learnt?
  - length of exposure (an Armenian child)
  - intensity of exposure (a skilled worker vs. a child of the Turkish parents)
- The role of the L2 in life?
  - dominance (an Armenian child vs. a child from Turkey vs. a skilled worker)



What linguistic development can we predict for different groups of bilinguals?



Can two/three languages be truly balanced?

# What is similar and what is different about the two children?

A German-speaking child lives and studies in Germany

- study in German
- speak German for the most part of the day

A Turkish couple moved to Germany  
They are raising their children here.

Heritage speaker of Turkish

speaks German at home

L2 language learner

What if both children learn English at school?

speaks Turkish at home

L3 language learner

# What linguistic behavior can we expect in English?

A German-speaking child lives and studies in Germany

There is a fully developed system of the L1

L2-English will be influenced by German

A Turkish couple moved to Germany  
They are raising their children here.

There is a complex system the L1 (Turkish) + L2 (German)

English will be influenced by German and Turkish;  
or by Turkish only  
or by German only



# English at School: 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade (Hopp 2019)

*Example:*

English: Now the girl plays the game.

German: Now **plays** the girl the game.

Turkish: Now the girl the game **plays**.

*Two groups of children:*

Group 1: German-speaking children

Group 2: Heritage speakers of Turkish (+ German)

*Both groups were learning English from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade*

*Tasks:*

Task 1: repeat the sentences after the teacher (*3<sup>rd</sup> grade*)

Task 2: tell the story in the pictures (*4<sup>th</sup> grade*)

*The experiment looked for the non-English word orders in the sentences*

# Results and Implications of the Study by Hopp (2019)

*Example:*

English: Now the girl plays the game.

German: Now **plays** the girl the game.

~~Turkish: Now the girl the game **plays**.~~

There was no influence of Turkish on English!

Native speakers and Heritage speakers of German are learning English in the same way!

**Why?**

- German and English are more similar than Turkish and English = the brain uses German as the baseline for a new language
- German is a dominant language in the group of Turkish - German children = Turkish is not activated enough to influence English

Bilinguals are not identical to two monolinguals in one

# Languages in the Human Brain Influence Each Other

## Why would a teacher care?

- Learning a new language does not turn off previously learnt languages = the brain works harder with many languages:
  - retrieving a word in the L1 activates all the lexicon in the L1 + L2 (Marian & Spivey 2003; Marian, Spivey & Hirsch 2003, among others).

### *Example:*

Please, look at the **maker**

(*marka* (Rus) = stamp)

at the **mosque**

(*mozg* (Rus) = brain)



# Languages in the Human Brain Influence Each Other

## Why would a teacher care?

- Experience with several languages improves cognitive control (Kroll and Bialystok 2013)

*Example:*

Name the color of the font

BLUE

RED

GREEN

BLUE

- To develop cognitive skills language is not crucial. Learning to drive can give similar results (Carreiras, plenary lecture at XVI International Symposium of Psycholinguistics)

**Even though Language is not the only factor that facilitates cognitive development, it is useful to learn a new language!!!**

# Take home message:

- Learning a new language influences the general cognitive development
- All languages in the human brain stay active all the time
- Language acquisition goes in stages
- All the languages co-influence each other in the process of learning and usage
- People, who speak languages can be:
  - monolinguals
  - simultaneous or sequential bilinguals
  - balanced or non-balanced bilinguals
  - heritage speakers
  - child L2/L3 learners
  - adult L2/L3 learners
  - native or non-native speakers

*Thank  
you*

