DUAL-LINGUALISM:
PASSIVE BILINGUALISM IN ACTION

P. C. Lincoln
(University of Auckland)

The term *dual-lingualism* describes a particular type of
bilingualism in which people speak different languages to each
other. In this paper, that behaviour is characterized quite
explicitly and then contrasted with other sorts of bilingualism.
There are many parameters in the study of bilingualism. The
conversation, which is the immediate datum of language use, and
the individual, who may be an active or a passive bilingual, are
the basic parameters explored and clarified in this essay.
Three basic kinds of conversations involving bilingual individ-
uals - dual-lingual, monolingual, and code-switching - are
catalogued.[1]

Definition

Dual-lingualism is the pattern of language use such that in con-
versations between two speakers of two different languages each
consistently speaks one language in response to utterances in
the other language. More formally, using notation adopted from
Sankoff (1969), we can say:

> Given a speaks and understands language A
>   and b speaks and understands language B,
>
> when a and b converse, a speaking only A and
> b speaking only B, the conversation is dual-
>   lingual.

We can also say that a and b are participating in dual-
lingualism.

We do not need to observe such a conversation for very long
before we can safely infer that a understands language B and b
understands language A. Alternatively, we could say that a is
passively bilingual in B and b is passively bilingual in A.

Wurm and Laycock (1961:136) observe that passive bilingual-
ism, the acquired understanding of a language outside one's home

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community, is very widespread in the New Guinea area. In their discussion of testing intelligibility, these authors do not explain why one becomes a passive bilingual, but dual-lingual conversation puts such acquired knowledge to use (see Laycock 1979).

Two Cases in the Solomons

My first awareness of dual-lingualism came from a discussion with Dr E. Todd when we met during fieldwork in the Solomons in 1973. Within weeks I became aware of a dual-lingual marriage in the Banoni village where I was living. I later coined the term *dual-lingualism* to describe these two cases in the Solomons. In this paper I have restricted discussion to examples that involve obviously distinct languages. On the other hand, I have tried to define dual-lingualism with sufficient generality and explicitness so that the term and the logic behind it could be applied to patterns of language use that involve closely related languages or even minimally different dialects.

(1) *Banoni-Siwai dual-lingualism.* The most striking examples of dual-lingualism involve people of the same generation in close social contact speaking languages as radically different as Banoni and Siwai. Banoni is Austronesian; Siwai is Papuan, i.e., non-Austronesian. In Banoni SOV word order (with both subject and object preceding the verb) is avoided (see Lincoln 1976a); in Siwai SOV word order is preferred (see Lynch 1977:153). On the other hand, the Banoni (about 1,000 of them) and the Siwai (about 8,000 of them) live in adjoining areas, in fact in overlapping areas: there has been some intermarriage over several generations at least. In one particular case, a Siwai man married a Banoni woman. They have lived some twenty years in her village with him speaking Siwai and her speaking Banoni. I did not actually observe their private conversations (I was never with them when they were alone). Also they, like other couples in the village, mostly kept their distance from each other in public.

(2) *Nggae-Savosavo dual-lingualism.* A similarly dramatic case of dual-lingualism was more directly observed by Dr E. Todd during her fieldwork in the Solomon Islands. During her stay on Savo Island, she observed a Savosavo speaking man and his Nggae speaking wife conversing dual-lingually. Dr Todd's report is most interesting because she did observe their private conversations:

> ... I have heard the couple chatting animatedly at
> a normal conversational speed, each in their own
> language, not for my benefit since I was inside a

house and they were sitting outside my window
(Todd, pers. comm., 1975).

This case is a close parallel to the Banoni-Siwai case. Nggae is an Austronesian language of nearby northeast Guadalcanal that is distantly related to Banoni. Savosavo is a Papuan language that appears to be distantly related to Siwai (see Todd 1975).

Other known Nggae-Savosavo marriages were also dual-lingual. A partial checking of the community did not uncover any Nggae spouses speaking Savosavo nor any Savosavo spouses speaking Nggae. My less extensive check of the Banoni village did not reveal any more dual-lingual marriages. Younger couples would be able to communicate in Tok Pisin, but this lingua franca was rarely used by Banoni women born before World War II. The Banoni men all seemed to be quite fluent in Tok Pisin and one or more of the local Papuan languages - Siwai, Baitsi, or Nagovisi. (One Banoni woman married to a Nagovisi man had lived for some time in his village, and this extroverted woman may be fluent in his language.) From what little is known about language use among these people, it seems that Banoni men tend to be multilingual, while the Banoni women tend to speak only Banoni even if married to non-Banoni. This raises the obvious question of why the in-marrying men do not learn Banoni. In the case of the Siwai man in the dual-lingual marriage, I was told that he did not want to lose his language. This answer is of course unsatisfying in light of the presence of so many people in the village competent to converse in Siwai. Part of the real answer lies in the disparity in the number of speakers: Siwai outnumber Banoni by about 8 to 1, with obvious implications. The Siwai and Nagovisi are said to find Banoni too hard to learn. This claimed difficulty for an Austronesian language is quite unusual for New Guinea, where the Papuan languages are notoriously difficult (Wurm, pers. comm.).

Types of Conversations

Even these limited descriptions of language use among the Banoni and the Savosavo are sufficient to show the usefulness of dual-lingualism as a descriptive term. It is now appropriate to consider how dual-lingualism fits into a more general framework. The approach taken here is to consider what kinds of conversations are possible given two speakers and two languages.

The cells in Table I are labelled within the taxonomy: dual-lingual, monolingual, and code-switching conversations. We can discuss these conversational types in terms of the demands put on the speaker, either passive bilingualism, i.e., the acquired understanding of another language, or active bilingualism, i.e., the acquired speaking ability in another language, which implies understanding of that language.

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Table I

Possible types of conversation between two speakers, a and b, involving two languages, A and B

	a speaks A [aA]	*a* speaks B [aB]	*a* speaks A & B [a A&B]
b speaks B [bB]	DUAL-LINGUAL (pure)	MONOLINGUAL in B	CODE-SWITCHING (solo)
b speaks A [bA]	MONOLINGUAL in A	DUAL-LINGUAL (reverse)	CODE-SWITCHING (solo)
b speaks A&B [b A&B]	CODE-SWITCHING (solo) ·	CODE-SWITCHING (solo)	CODE-SWITCHING (dual)

From the point of view of learning to speak a second language, the easiest type of bilingual conversation is *pure dual-lingualism*, with each speaking his or her own language, i.e., both are passive bilinguals (aA, bB of Table I). In pure dual-lingualism, each participant is speaking the language that he or she grew up speaking. If both speakers are active bilinguals, it would be quite possible for them to converse with each consistently speaking his or her second language (aB, bA of Table I). This pattern is the mirror image of pure dual-lingualism and therefore called *reverse dual-lingualism*. The novelist James Michener may be given credit for advocating pure dual-lingualism over reverse dual-lingualism in the following passage in *Hawaii*:

> Therefore whenever Malama asked him a question in broken English, he replied in worse Hawaiian, and the lesson staggered on. For example when he inveighed against eating dog the conversation went like this.
>
> "Dog good kaukau. You no like for what?" Malama asked.
> "Poki pilau, pilau," Abner explained contemptuously.
> "Pig every time sleep mud. You s'pose dog he make like that?"
> "Kela mea, kela mea eat pua'a. Pua'a good. Poki bad."

> If each had used his own natural tongue, conversation
> would have been simple, for each now understood the
> other's spoken language. (Michener 1960:286)

The simplest type of monolingual conversation is the ordinary use of language between people who grew up speaking the same language. Both of these people could be monolingual (not portrayed in Table I). If one of the speakers grew up speaking another language and is an active bilingual, the conversation could still be monolingual but more complex from the point of view of the language learning efforts of the participants (aA, bA and aB,bB of Table I). The obvious advantage of being an active bilingual is that it is possible to converse monolingually with people from the second language group who only know one language. In order to converse dual-lingually, both participants must have learned a second language to some extent.

If both participants in the conversation are active bilinguals, they can engage in either type of dual-lingual conversation, or monolingually in either language A or language B; i.e., the first four cells of Table I. If an active bilingual uses both languages in the same conversation, this behaviour is called *code-switching*. If only one speaker switches languages, we could call this *solo code-switching*. The other speaker could be a passive bilingual. If both speakers switch languages, we could speak of a *dual code-switching* conversation. The complexities of shifting back and forth between languages are beyond the scope of this paper (see Pfaff 1979 for discussion of Spanish-English code-switching). This behaviour is introduced to complete the taxonomy of conversations and to show a natural extension of the prefix *dual-* in the sense of *dual-lingualism*.

Further Justification for the Term *Dual-Lingualism*

The term *dual-lingualism* will be justified in two ways: firstly by showing that terms previously applied to this behaviour are not precise enough; secondly by showing that other terms in the study of bilingualism actually refer to other behaviours.

Dual-lingual conversations are quite common. In American immigrant contexts, dual-lingualism often occurs across generations. Haugen (1953:235) calls it a "bilingual situation ... with parents speaking N[orwegian] and the children answering in E[nglish]." Clearly, "bilingual situation" is too general to specify dual-lingualism among the several possible types of bilingual conversations.

Karttunen (1977:175) creatively describes a similar situation: "The home would become *generational bilingual*, the parents

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speaking Finnish ...," but her term is too specific to characterize the Melanesian cases between husband and wife, i.e., the same generation.

Hockett (1958:327) discusses the normal intercourse between educated Danes and Norwegians as involving *semi bilingualism*, but what he is defining is actually a synonym of passive bilingualism. (Hockett (1958:340) envisages the possibility of a German-French dual-lingual conversation but does not coin a term for it.)

Diebold (1961) discusses bilingualism in Mexico. In particular, some of the Huave Indians he had classified as monolinguals in fact could on an average produce recognizable Spanish equivalents for 35% of the Swadesh list, even though they did not produce sentences in Spanish. These observations caused him to revise his scale of active bilingualism to include *incipient bilingual* above monolingual but below subordinate bilingual and coordinate bilingual. Perhaps we could also describe these individuals as very cooperative passive bilinguals.

In characterizing a group of Indo-Aryan speakers in contact with Dravidian speakers, Nadkarni (1975) says that bilingualism in the Konkani community is both *extensive* (all Konkani speakers learn Kannada) and *intensive* (Konkani speakers used Kannada every day for a wide range of purposes). Nadkarni's useful distinctions apply to communities rather than to conversations. We can see this most clearly by recharacterising bilingualism in the Banoni community in these terms: Banoni bilingualism is not extensive - most men but not all women are active bilinguals. Banoni bilingualism is intensive among Banoni men who interact quite frequently with men and sometimes with women of other language groups, but among Banoni women dual-lingualism greatly reduces the intensity of bilingualism. In passing, it is interesting to note that Nadkarni suggests that the combined extensive and intensive bilingualism in the Konkani community has led to considerable dravidianization of the Konkani language. In direct contrast, the Banoni language has successfully resisted papuanization quite possibly because dual-lingualism has buffered the community from extensive and intensive active bilingualism (see Lincoln 1976b).

So far we have considered only two languages. There is an interesting case from the New Guinea Highlands involving three languages. Salisbury (1962:2) reports a *"trilingual"* conversation. But until more trilingual conversations are reported, it seems unnecessary to coin new terminology such as was necessary to characterize the quite different kinds of bilingual conversations.

Relevant Parameters of Bilingualism

Perhaps the most useful perspective in clarifying the many terms used in studies of bilingualism is to consider three possible objects of description: the individual, the conversation, and the community.

In this paper, we consider the individual as either an active bilingual, who speaks two (or more) languages, or a passive bilingual, who understands but does not speak two (or more) languages; the conversation as dual-lingual (pure or reverse), monolingual (involving monolinguals or at least one active bilingual individual), or code-switching (solo or dual); and the community as to the extent which it is made up of active bilinguals and as to the intensity with which both languages are used.

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NOTE