

Code-switched Greeting by Bilingual Saudi-American Subject: A Case Study

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Abstract:

This paper investigates the myth of children's monolingual brain by conducting a case study of a two-year-old Saudi-American girl, who is in the two-word stage of vocalization, by focusing on a certain speech act, viz., "greeting" and demonstrating how it is heavily code-switched into Arabic/English language(s) with regard to the context of the speech and the greeter/receiver of the greeting identity. The subject has been raised in an English-speaking country milieu (United States of America), while she has been used to speaking Arabic at home. In this regard, the paper highlights the aim of the encoded usage of code-switching utterances in term of addressing the monolingual brain hypothesis. This qualitative study is based on open observations of two continues months of a toddler as the participant of this study aiming at exploring whether children's greeting differ from those of adults and whether this greeting differs between two languages with regard to monolingual brain hypotheses. So far, the study concluded that greeting has never been mixed upon context, though utterances are code-switched. Moreover, the greeting process is comprehended and acquired within the language context as a pragmatic speech act regarding greeter's identity, context, and gender. Findings of this study significantly support the cognitive approach in term of greeting via using a high frequent greeting word among the American culture. As would cognitive linguists suggest, greeting speech act response varies regarding how greeters of each community greet the subject, but not how they greet each other's in a community. Therefore, surprisingly the two-year-old subject perceptually recognizes the fact of receiving two different languages regardless to the monolingual hypothesis.

Keywords: Bilingual, case study, code-switched greeting, monolingual brain hypothesis

Cite as: Basabrin, A. (2019). Code-switched Greeting by Bilingual Saudi-American Subject: A Case Study. *Arab World English Journal*, 10 (1) 335 - 346
DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no1.28>