A Dynamic Model of Multilingualism
Table of contents

- Introduction

- Multilingualism and DMM

- A Dynamic Model of Multilingualism (DMM)

- Limitations, Conclusions & Outlook
Introduction

- Majority of the population is multilingual

- DMM provides a new model and new concepts

- DMM is a psycholinguistic model
  - Treats language change on an individual level
  - Sees speaker as an intricate psycholinguistic system
Multilingualism and DMM

- Multilingualism: the command and/or use of two or more languages by an individual speaker
  - Most common form: bilingualism

- DMM provides a link between bilingualism and SLA

- Multilingual proficiency: describes individual multilingualism
DMM - Reasons for a Dynamic View

- Languages are in a permanent motion -> dynamic

- The reason for language change lies within the communicative needs of a speaker to which he/she adjusts to

- DMM is a learner-oriented model
DMM - Goals of DMM

- Serve as a link between SLA and MR research
  - Learner systems and stable multilingualism systems as variants of multilingualism
- LA research should also deal with variants of multilingualism
- To reduce the monolingual bias of multilingual research
- Provide scientific research for factors involved in the development of multilingualism
DMM - Variables and constants

- Factors = constants
  - Cognitive capacity
  - Language aptitude

- Demonstrate the basic form of multilingualism

- Variables (affect the language development & loss)
  - Self-esteem
  - Language anxiety
  - motivation
DMM - Characteristics of a dynamic multilingual system

- non-linearity
- reversibility
- stability
- interdependence
- change of quality
- complexity
Language acquisition (LA) is a non-linear process

LA curve is similar to a sine curve under perfect circumstances

Language development is a dynamic process

Language systems are interdependent
DMM - Gradual language loss

- Can influence both L1 in an L2 environment and vice versa

- „forgetting“ is seen as a gradual process where information decreases

- Old information is not accessible because it’s covered by new information
  - Cognitive interference theory

- Language loss - language attrition

- Perceived modes of language loss will follow a phase of avoiding language use
DMM - Language maintenance

- Closely linked to the use of a language
- Language maintenance effort (LME)
  - Language use factor
  - Linguistic hypothesis factor/corroboration factor

- Absence of LM will lead to a deterioration of the LS

- LME needs constant language work & use in order to maintain a language system

- Language attrition is more likely to happen to less communicative oriented learners

- LME is a function of a language use factor and a language awareness factor
DMM - How factors relate in DMM

- Communicative needs lead to a change in one's communicative competence

- LME relates to communicative needs
  - Contains the perceived needs

- Social status and sociolinguistic parameters of the community
DMM - Effective communicative needs

- Set by repeatedly occurring communicative needs

- Determined by:
  - Number of communicative exchanges
  - Duration of the exchange
  - Intensity of the exchange
DMM - Perceived communicative needs (PCN)

- Several factors influence and determine PCN in either a positive or a negative way
  - Environment
  - Life style
  - Social status
  - Aims
  - Perceived social need

- Positive influences lead to a higher general language effort (GLE)

- Negative influence leads to a decrease of GLE
DMM - personal or psychological factors affecting multilingual proficiency

- Factors can be divided into
  - Motivational factors
  - Perceptual factors
  - Anxiety

- Determine the way in which language systems develop
Individual factors

- (multi)language aptitude / metalinguistic abilities (MLA)

- Language acquisition progress (LAP)

- Motivation (MOT)

- Perceived language competence (PC)

- Self-esteem (EST) or self-confidence

- Anxiety (ANX)

Either accelerating or a retarding effect on the language development
Limitations, Conclusions & Outlook - Theoretical Limitations of DMM

• Theories from DMM are models whose empirical claims are rather weak
  • Provide a helpful model with the intention of enabling us to think about multilingualism in a much more coherent and cogent way

• Humans are complex biological systems, therefore should be analysed on the basis of:
  • Chaos theory
  • Systems theory
  • Complexity theory
Limitations, Conclusions & Outlook - Applications of DMM

- Can increase the understanding of language acquisition
- Can act as a connector between language education and linguistics
- Aims to offer a psycholinguistic base for applied research
- Argues that the three language skills (part of the multilingual factor [M-factor]) should receive much more attention in language education
- More focus on strategies for language learning and metacognitive knowledge on skills
- More focus on LME
Thank you for your attention!