

Abstract

Major theories and controversies in the realm of bilingualism including definition, simultaneous vs. successive acquisition, unitary vs. differentiated language system hypothesis, and the effects of bilingualism on children were discussed. The Cantonese and English vocabulary development of young bilinguals in Hong Kong were investigated. Of special interest is the special bilingual situation this group of bilinguals was in. Results suggested significant differences of the receptive vocabulary development of both languages between Cantonese/English bilinguals and Cantonese monolinguals. Additional issues pertaining to bilingual studies were discussed.