

【Book Review】

**The Bilingual Mind: Thinking,
Feeling and Speaking in Two Languages.**

**Rafael Art. Javier. New York:
Springer Verlag, 2007. xiv+150 pp.**

Joseph W. LUCKETT

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The purpose of this book is to provide its readers with an understanding of bilingualism and how it affects society. The readership it seeks to inform is primarily composed of educators, medical professionals, and mental health professionals, among others. The book begins with an overview of the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the United States and concludes with a chapter outlining policy recommendations for dealing with the challenges bilingualism poses for society, particularly in schools.

This work begins in Chapter 1 by establishing the bilingual situation in the United States with detailed descriptions of the varieties of linguistic communities. Javier notes that immigration and minority languages have met with negative reactions and observes how bilingual groups are demanding better understanding of cultural and linguistic needs than in the past, when assimilation was assumed to be the expected norm. He believes that the close interaction between bilingualism and cognitive and psychological processes necessitates a better understanding of and support for bilingual individuals. In the next 4 chapters, Javier describes what he

sees as important and unique aspects of the bilingual mind.

Chapter 2 asks the question, "Is there a bilingual mind?" In claiming that words have an organizing power that guides cognitive processes, Javier seems to be demonstrating acceptance of linguistic determinism. Later, he disagrees with Chomsky regarding linguistic development, particularly innateness and the independence of language from other cognitive processes. Chapter 3 examines different types of bilingual development in a discussion of the compound-coordinate controversy and concludes that the type of bilingualism will influence how individuals organize experience. Much of the support for this discussion comes from studies conducted in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Chapter 4 introduces codeswitching. Most of the emphasis is placed on factors that influence codeswitching, including both structural and affective factors. Again, however, most of the research that is introduced comes from the 1960s and 70s. The latter half of this chapter focuses on the role of stress on codeswitching, including research involving electric shocks. Chapter 5 looks at bilingualism and memory and

notes that memories may be stored according to the language in which they were experienced, but that the proficiency and nature of the individual's bilingualism will also be influential.

In the final four chapters, the book shifts from descriptions of various aspects of the bilingual mind to issues of more specific concern to educators, medical professionals, and mental health professionals when dealing with individuals with limited English proficiency. Chapter 6 discusses the use of interpreters in medical institutions and the need for well-trained interpreters. Aside from noting that untrained bilinguals do not necessarily make adequate interpreters, there is little discussion of individual bilingualism. Chapter 7 discusses the problems and difficulties for mental health professionals in evaluating bilingual individuals. However, the potential communication difficulties here spring not from bilingualism but from patients who have limited communicative ability in English. Similarly, Chapter 8 discusses problems that may arise in treating mental health patients who have limited English proficiency. Finally, as noted above, Chapter 9 introduces policy recommendations for educating linguistic minority students in the United States.

While we might expect that a book on the bilingual mind would focus exclusively on bilingualism in the individual, this work branches into adjunct areas of concern to educators, medical professionals, and mental health professionals. It is focused almost exclusively on the immigrant or minority-language speaker with limited English proficiency, and is limited to the

American socio-political context. While this book would serve as an enlightening introduction to some of the issues that concern minority language speakers for professionals and educators, it falls short as a psycholinguistic analysis of the bilingual mind, with its greatest weaknesses being a reliance on outdated sources and theories and a disregard for more recent developments in psycholinguistic research into bilingualism.