



Universiteit Utrecht

IDENTIFYING THROUGH LANGUAGE



AN EXPLORATIVE RESEARCH ON IDENTITY SWITCHING IN DUTCH- ENGLISH COMPOUND BILINGUALS

Master thesis Intercultural Communication

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Date: 01-08-19

Word count: 9768

"A different language is a different vision of life."

- Federico Fellini, Italian film director

Preface

This research holds a personal aspect, coming from a Dutch-English upbringing myself. Not only have I learnt more about myself and my identity, it was heart-warming to learn about the various other stories. The literature offered on this particular combination of languages had proven to be limited, so I hope this thesis can offer new insights in the field of bilingualism by stressing the existing idea that bilingualism can lead to acquiring multiple identities.

I combined the writing of this thesis with an internship in Australia, which occasionally resulted in stressful moments. A few people have been crucial in their support and the formation of this research, so I would like to take a moment to thank them. First and foremost my parents, for raising me with two languages and therefore granting me the gift of bilingualism. Their perseverance has influenced me more than they could have ever imagined and sparked my interest in the study of bilingualism. Secondly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Roos Beerkens, for the countless Skype calls, the endless positivity and the great feedback throughout the last six months. Thirdly, many thanks to all my friends and family who helped me spread my survey and motivated me to push on when stress was taking its toll. Finally, I cannot stress enough how thankful I am to the eight participants for wanting to Skype or call me to help me further with my research. The conversations we had made me realise how enjoyable research can actually be.

I hope this research kindles the same enthusiasm in you as it has in me.

Summary

This research explores the possibilities of identity switching within compound Dutch-English bilinguals and the extent to which they feel part of different cultures. In order to do so, a mixed method approach is implemented including a survey with 143 respondents and semi-structured interviews with eight interviewees. The survey is executed to find compound bilinguals for the interviews and offer more detailed information on the group as a whole who identify as bilinguals. The eight participants are found through the survey and are all compound bilinguals, having learnt two or more languages from birth until the age of four, as a direct result of their environment. The respondents have American, Australian, British and South-African backgrounds, alongside Dutch. The results from the survey show that although no significant difference can be found, compound bilinguals filling in the survey feel more of a cultural identity switch than people with other forms of bilingualism. The results from the interviews show that language and culture are deeply connected as the norms and values passed on by parents and the environment of a language greatly influence their perception of their usage of a language (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). The participants do not necessarily feel part of either culture, yet discover they have taken on components of both cultures and construct a third unique identity. With this in mind, they tend to switch identity and language depending on the context (Dervin, 2012). This context for example relies on topics of conversation, emotional repertoire, family relations, language opportunities and surroundings (Sapir, 1985; Zhu, 2013). These answers are underlined in the results from the survey, which offer various different answers as to when and why a participant identifies more with one language than the other.

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2. Introduction

2.1 Motivation

People have always moved to different countries, albeit for different reasons. Some have seen socio-economic changes which have offered them the opportunity to travel and migrate abroad. For others these changes have led them to flee their home as they are no longer safe. These developments vary over time, but migration has always occurred. Migration to a new country with a different language often results in the ability to speak a second language connected to the new country. This can also impact the family setting. Within an intercultural family, children are exposed to multiple cultures and possibly languages, which could lead to a bilingual upbringing from home or school. Besides the ability to speak more than one language, multiple other aspects play a role. Language is strongly connected to culture and identity, meaning that having two languages would imply multiple identities that exist simultaneously within an individual (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). In this thesis I will explore this idea further and focus on bilingual Dutch-English speakers.

2.2 Literature review

In order to understand the analysis of this research it is important to clarify key concepts, such as bilingualism, identity and culture. Once these definitions have been illustrated it is possible to delve deeper into the theoretical framework of identity switching in bilingual individuals.

2.2.1 Bilingualism

Bilingualism carries multiple definitions, ranging from specific to extensive. Bloomfield defined bilingualism very strictly in 1933, by stating that one can only be described as bilingual when speaking two languages to the extent that others in the respective speech communities would perceive it as native (Bloomfield 1933 in Lörcher, 2012, p. 4). Since then, scholars have defined bilingualism in several different ways, as Bloomberg's definition would be so specific, it could barely exist in reality

(2012). Others have defined bilingualism by stating one is bilingual when capable of “producing complete meaningful utterances in the other language” (Lörscher, 2012, p. 4). As this research investigates the appearance of possible identity switching when language switching takes place, a certain level of fluency would be a prerequisite. This brings me back to the former definition, which also raises questions. An individual speaker of a certain speech community cannot serve as a representative for this community to decide whether or not someone sounds ‘native’, as individual opinions cannot guarantee a shared opinion amongst the wider public. To define the applied definition for this research further, Bloomberg’s idea of bilingualism will be enforced, but to answer the question regarding ‘native’ abilities, the focus will be shifted to different forms of bilingualism. When using the term bilingualism, I also include multilingualism, the ability to speak more than two languages, as is done by most scholars in the field (Pavlenko, 2006).

Bilingualism can be divided into three branches, namely compound, coordinate and subordinate bilingualism, as seen in figure 1 below (Heredia & Cieślicka, 2014). Compound bilingualism entails the existence of two different lexical items or verbal labels, but the underlying meaning would be coherent across both languages in one’s mind (2014). The signified is a single concept, whilst the signifier leads to two options. Compound bilinguals are often raised with two languages from home at a very young age, as both languages are learnt in the same context (2014). Meanwhile, coordinate bilingualism describes the capability of comprehending two languages independently. This is seen as the ‘pure’ form of bilingualism as both the lexical and conceptual levels are separate in either languages (2014). The second language is learnt in a different cultural context than the first language, so these bilinguals often pick up a second language at school or within the community, when their first language has already established in their heads (2014). The final interpretation of bilingualism is subordinate, where a first language forms the foundation for the learning of a second language. The second language is merely a translation of the first language. Subordinate bilinguals often learnt their second language at a later stage in life (2014).

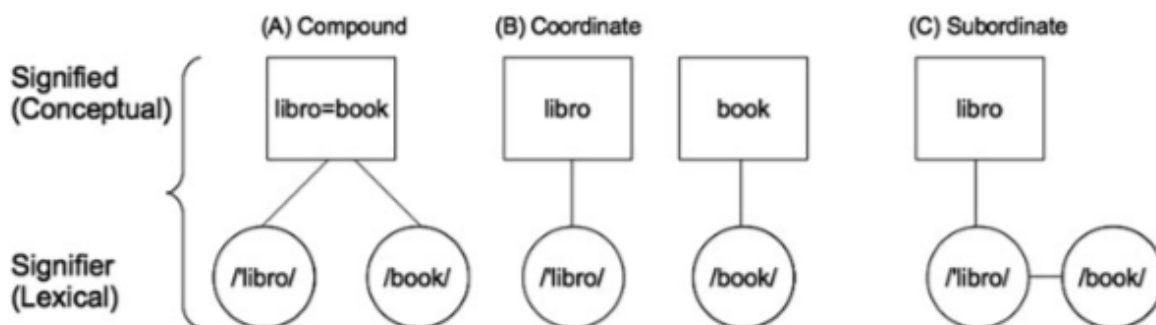


Figure 1: Three bilingual storage representations. Adapted from Woutersen et al. 1994. Copyright 1994 by Cambridge University Press (Heredia & Cieslicka, 2014, p. 13).

2.2.2 Identity and Culture

According to Bucholtz and Hall, identity and language are closely related (2004). Identity is formed within social grouping, as individuals seek sameness or differences. Languages are seen as a good example for the formation of identities, as speaking a specific set of languages can connect or distance individuals from certain groups. Language constitutes as a main connection that people experience within a group (2004). The social group in which an individual forms an identity can be a culture. Sapir states that language is culture and language is communication, which cannot be seen separately (1985). According to Sapir, speaking a specific language implies being a member of a connected culture (1985). Every language is distinct from any other language but is also always internally complete (1985). One should always be able to express themselves fully in any given language, albeit in a different form depending on the language, as various languages have other manners of expressing their words and feelings. This stresses the idea that one can mean the same thing but voice it differently in another language.

For this research the focus will lie on compound bilingualism, as these speakers have often experienced two languages from the youngest age. The formation of one's identity starts at a young age, leading to more opportunities to develop multiple identities. In addition, children also learn norms and values from their parents, which result from cultural backgrounds. According to Dervin, people adapt their cultural identity when they come into contact with other individuals (2012). Instead of

speaking of culture, he offers the concept of culturality, as we constantly shape our identity based on our surroundings (2012). When parents raise their children, their cultural identity will be passed on to them. The child's identity is not solely based on the languages they speak, but also on norms and values which are related to these languages and cultures (2012). Ramírez-Esparza, Gosling, Benet-Martínez, Potter and Pennebaker state that these values and attributions within bilingual individuals change when questioned about them in different languages (2006). Compound bilinguals not only adapt their identity based on their surroundings, they have a clear distinction between the two sets of norms and values attached to their languages. According to Chen and Bond, an individual speaking in a second language will often adapt to the cultural expectations, values and norms of speakers within this language (2010). The definition of identity upheld in this research is based on Dervin's thoughts that identity is fluid and adaptable during interaction with other people (2012).

2.2.3 Identity switching

The idea that language switching results in identity switching is not new, but the appreciation of it has altered over the years. The understanding that multiple languages would lead to conflicting personalities dominated the first half of the 20th century, and back in 1977, Adler warned the public that bilingualism would lead to schizophrenia (Pavlenko, 2006). However, today's society seems to embrace the ability to navigate between several languages (2006). It is important to note that switching identities is not solely reserved for bilinguals. Monolinguals are also capable of switching identities, although in a different form (Pavlenko, 2006). As mentioned earlier, people often adapt their manners, attitudes and language depending on different contexts and conversations, regardless of the amount of languages they speak (Dervin, 2012). Pavlenko, however, believes this change in identity is stronger in bilinguals, as it can influence the experiences of the speaker in a specific context, but is also noticeable to others around them (2006).

As former cases have focused on other language combinations, this case can expand to a different language combination and seek to answer questions such as the ability for individuals to be aware of their identity switching (Costa, Hernández, Costa-Faidella & Sebastián-Gallés, 2009; Fishman, 1965; Pavlenko, 2006; Prior & MacWhinney, 2010; Ramírez-Esparza et al., 2006). Kuiper (2016) has written a master's thesis on personality switching between Dutch-Spanish bilinguals. Her interpretation of personality is closely related to my interpretation of identity, as they rely heavily on Dervin's concept of culturality (2012). Different scholars will uphold their own definitions on personality and identity, which can overlap with others' interpretations. However, I choose the concept of identity as it is more commonly used by the referenced literature. According to Zhu, who speaks of personalities, "personal identities refer to personality, attitudes and character which are relatively stable and unique" (Zhu, 2013, p. 202). Personalities become especially apparent when in contact with other individuals, whereas identities are shaped inherently within an individual (Zhu, 2013). Personality would describe personal attributes, such as being more polite in one language or the other. This research aims to fathom more than personality traits, by also diving into which culture and group an individual identifies with whilst speaking a certain language.

Kuiper concluded in her work among other things that the participants did not recognise personality switching as such, but related their different attitudes in the languages to cultural factors (2016). She discovered that some participants do not experience a switch of personalities and offered different reasons for this, such as the idea that the concept of one's identity might not be very clear to the participants (2016). According to Pavlenko it is very difficult for bilinguals in a monolingual environment to become aware of differences within their linguistic selves (2006). Kuiper's participants also solely mentioned positive aspects to their bilingualism. However, Pavlenko noticed that individuals can most certainly feel negative emotions towards their second language, as they feel 'fake' when speaking it (2006). Pavlenko has written multiple articles with various methods on this topic and often describes differences regarding emotions that present themselves when speaking different

languages (2008). Various languages have different words for emotions and some languages contain more or less lexicon than others (2008). If words describing emotional states are limited, this affects the ability to feel a certain way. Some cultures and languages also regard the display of emotions differently to others (Pavlenko, 2008). For example, the English language regards the word “envy” in a negative light, whereas the Chinese counterpart is seen more positively, as it entails the admiration of something or someone (Pavlenko, 2008).

According to Zhu, bilinguals switch emotional repertoires when speaking in multiple languages (2013). These emotional repertoires can be related to the cultural identity that adapts when switching languages, as emotions can be voiced differently depending on culture. This idea gives way to linguistic relativity over linguistic determinism, which is related to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Zhu, 2013). Sapir and Whorf offer a hypothesis aiming to explain the relation between language, culture and thought. Although there is no single clear definition, Whorf has described the hypothesis, also named the ‘linguistic relativity principle’, as follows: “users of markedly different grammars are pointed in different evaluations of externally similar acts of observations, and hence are not equivalent as observers, but must arrive at somewhat different views of the world” (Whorf in Carrol, 1956, p. 221). This hypothesis can be divided into a strong and weak version, also referred to as linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity. Linguistic determinism implies that language controls one’s thoughts and culture, whilst linguistic relativity only regards language as being able to influence one’s thoughts and worldviews, which means that switching between languages causes differences in one’s thoughts (Whorf, 1956, in Zhu, 2013). When a language determines thoughts, it “shapes the way you see the world, the way you think about it, the consciousness you have of it” (Agar, 1994, p. 67). By influencing, a language simply points a person into a certain thought pattern, influencing their observations and evaluations (2013). This ties in with Sapir’s thoughts that language connects an individual to a group and therefore a culture (1985). The power of a language is deemed strong, but not inalterable. An example is offered by Zhu, who mentions the work of Kay and Kempton (1984)

on language and colour perceptions. They concluded that language affects the perception of colour, but it does not determine it (2013). One can see a colour differently due to the possibilities and limitations of a language, but different people with various language repertoires will, to a certain extent, see colours in a similar way. Linguistic determinism was never supported by scholars and it was most likely not what Sapir and Whorf had in mind themselves (Zhu, 2013). One of the critiques it has faced is that it implies bilingualism cannot fully exist, as “bi/multilingual speakers can speak two or more languages and sometimes code-switch among languages in ways ‘not dictated by the habits of any one speech community’” (Kramsch, 2004, p. 239). This research therefore assumes the concept of language relativity.

The status that language has also means that not every language combination will lead to the same effects. The culture behind a language influences how people switch their identity, but a language can also have a different place on a hierarchical level (Nortier, 2009). Living in a particular country can influence the perception of another language, but languages can likewise be viewed differently by outsiders. An opinion on a language can also be different depending on the context and change over time. The hierarchical level is not set, it is adaptable. The combination of English and Dutch can also be different to Chinese and English, as the linguistic differences come into play. The Dutch and English language have similarities and differences that could influence the shift between the two.

An example of a linguistic element Dutch and English share is their language family (Moulton, Buccini & Herzog, 2010). Both languages are part of the West Germanic group, which developed around the North Sea, Rhine-Wester and Elbe. The West Germanic group stems from the Germanic languages and splits into two parts. One is called Anglo-Frisian and resulted in English and Frisian, whilst the second splinter is Netherlands-German. Whilst originally from the same Germanic group, both languages evolved and took various directions, resulting in differences, but also similarities. A disparity between the two languages is found in the word order. While English follows the SVO sentence order of Subject Verb Object, Dutch often follows the SOV order, which is Subject Object

Verb (Koster, 1975). Another example is the quantity of articles, as the Dutch language has ‘de’ and ‘het’, where English solely has ‘the’. Zhu also mentions an example of a similarity by stating that “in some languages (e.g. English, German or Dutch), the motion path or the manner of action is ‘bundled up’ with the verb (as out of in the phrase fly out of)” (Zhu, 2013, p. 174).

The literature review shows how bilingualism, identity and culture can be connected in more ways than one. Bilingualism and culture both affect identity in various manners, meaning context is essential. Different languages, cultures and forms of bilingualism need to be treated individually as no case can be generalised.

2.3 Research question and sub questions

This research on Dutch-English speaking compound bilinguals and their ideas on identity switching and culture has a clear scientific relevance as the current literature concerning Dutch-English language and identity switching is limited. As different language combinations can result in different outcomes, explorative research such as this can assist in supporting the idea of identity switching in existing literature. Kuiper’s (2016) master’s thesis is an example of an explorative research which focuses on the switching of personalities in Dutch-Spanish speakers, but the results may not be generalised to other languages as culture, hierarchy and language families can influence the level of identity switching.

On a societal level, this research can provide insights into the different elements that bilingualism has to offer. Bilingual individuals can often feel like they do not fit into either national cultures as both cultures will make them feel like an outsider. When people are made aware of what bilingualism encompasses in regard to their personality, it could help them to better understand themselves and others. Moreover, further knowledge on the positive effects of bilingualism can offer insights for the education system and language policies.

These notions have led me to the following research question:

To what extent do compound bilingual Dutch-English speakers feel part of different cultures and to what extent do they experience identity switching when shifting between Dutch and English?

The following three sub questions will assist in answering the research question:

1. To what extent do the participants feel connected to the norms and values attached to the languages they speak?
2. To what extent do the participants experience a switch of identities when speaking Dutch or English?
3. To what extent does the perception of a language influence identity switching of the participants?

3. Method

In order to answer the research question, two methods were pertinent, which combined both quantitative and qualitative research. As the quantitative method led up to the qualitative method and offered an opportunity of comparison, we can speak of triangulation. Before diving into this mixed method approach, it is important to clarify the two types of research.

“Quantitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in numerical data which is then analysed primarily by statistical methods” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 24). In order to analyse data collected from quantitative research, statistics were applied. “Qualitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data which is then analysed primarily by non-statistical methods” (Dörnyei, 2007). This type of research is a language-based analysis, thus making use of words over numbers. It is also an iterative process, meaning there is no clear starting point and the work is non-linear. “We move back and forth between data collection, data analysis and data interpretation depending on the emergent results” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 243). This is in contrast with what occurs in quantitative research. This research applied quantitative data from statistics resulting from surveys, whilst the qualitative aspect focused on conducted semi-structured interviews with Dutch-English compound bilinguals.

3.1 Survey

The survey served two purposes. First of all, it offered a vast amount of data on people identifying as bilingual with a multitude of different backgrounds and languages. This data could provide insights into the differences between multiple forms of bilingualism, people’s definition on bilingualism and whether people believe in a cultural identity switch. Besides this, it also resulted in a snowball effect, as data from this survey led to Dutch-English speaking compound bilingual participants for the interviews, based on the information they filled in and their willingness to cooperate. The questions in the research also formed an introduction to the subsequent interviews for eight participants.

3.1.1 Procedure

The survey was set up in Google Docs using a personal university e-mail address. The survey, which can be found in appendix 2, was short and concise. It comprised of thirteen questions requiring an answer, one question which could be answered if desirable and two options to leave an e-mail address in case the participant was interested in the outcome or was open to an interview.

The survey opened with an introductory message to give the participant more information, but to also stress the matter of confidentiality (Baarda, 2012). It mentioned the interviews again, as I hoped this would encourage more people to leave their contact details. The survey itself started with demographic questions concerning the participants' ages and national background, to offer a general idea of the group of participants. After that, the focus shifted to the language competencies and how these were acquired in order to categorise the three different types of bilinguals (Heredia & Cieślicka, 2014). The questions concerning the nationalities of the parents would lead me to compound bilinguals, but also offered the right combination of possible Dutch and English speaking participants. Asking if they spoke the languages of both their parents assisted in this search. Further questions such as 'from what age did you start speaking multiple languages' and 'what was the reason you started speaking another language' were thereby crucial, as they separated the compound bilinguals.

The question 'Which language do you identify with the most and why?' served two purposes. It first of all probed the participants to place one language in favour of another, which created a hierarchy (Nortier, 2009). Secondly, asking participants why they identified with a language made them think about their languages being connected to their identities (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). A single question focusing on cultural identity tested the participant's thoughts on their languages being connected to specific cultures which can interchange depending on their languages (Sapir, 1985). The final question before offering further comments covered the reasoning for speaking a second language. By discovering in what context and environment one had learnt another language, it would become

clear if the participant had received connected norms and values to this second language (Dervin, 2012).

3.1.2 Participants

In order to acquire respondents for the survey, a personal message was sent via WhatsApp, Facebook and LinkedIn through my personal account, which included a link to the Google Docs survey. This message can be seen in appendix 1 in both Dutch and English, as different receivers required one language or the other. My message was shared on Facebook and LinkedIn by friends and family in order to gain more respondents. To spread my message as far as possible, I joined multiple groups on Facebook, ranging from Dutch and bilingual groups in Australia to language fanatics across the globe. A definition of bilingualism was purposely left out and when people responded to my message requesting more information on a definition, I answered that any form of bilingualism was welcome, depending on their own definition. The reasoning behind this was to see how people interpreted bilingualism themselves and to avoid discouraging people to participate by being too definitive. I specifically mentioned the interviews as I hoped it would raise understanding for my need for participants. The survey was online for two weeks during the 11th of March 2019 until the 25th of March 2019 and resulted in 143 respondents.

3.1.3 Data analysis

With all the responses collected, the survey was taken offline. The data from the Google Docs was transferred to Excel and from there moved into an SPSS file. This research made use of SPSS to create a structured understanding of the participants, but to also carefully analyse their ideas on a cultural identity switch. The focus was specifically on the group who had filled in that they had learnt a second language from the age of 0 to 4, as they would be classified as compound bilinguals. I established the mean, frequency and standard deviation on multiple questions, such as the overall age of the

participants, the age at which the participants started learning another language and their thoughts on a cultural identity switch. These labels were called 'age', 'when second language' and 'cultural identity switch'. The question regarding age was an open question and on cultural identity switching contained a Likert scale from 1 to 7, making it accessible for SPSS to read. Missing values were identified and set aside by coding them '999'.

In order to learn more about the compound bilinguals, the answers to the label 'when second language' were recoded into different variables ranging from 0 to 3 in order for the programme to read them. Afterwards, these answers were recoded into two new groups. Group 0 simply contained the people who had filled in '0 – 4 years old', whilst group 1 consisted of the other three answers. Both groups were then tested on the label 'identity switch', to find out if there was a significant difference on ideas about a possible cultural identity switch between people that had been raised bilingually from birth and bilinguals at a later stage in life. In order to do so, an independent-samples t-test was conducted. Another independent-samples t-test was implemented to find a significant difference between group 0 and group 1 in relation to their language skills, which they rated with the help of a Likert-scale.

Collecting information from group 0 concerning their fluency in their parents' languages, why they learnt a second language, which language they identify with most and why, led to descriptive statistics. By solely selecting the cases in which people belonged to group 0, frequencies and percentages could be collected. The answers to the question 'do you speak the languages of both your parents?' were recoded into different variables, as the answer 'yes, both fluently' was recoded to 0, the answer 'yes, but one better than the other' became 1 and all other answers were recoded into 2. The answers to the question 'what was the reason you started speaking another language?' were also recoded into different variables. All four answers were recoded from 0 to 3, whilst the fifth answer 'other' became 4. The answers to the question 'which language do you identify with most and why?' were analysed and manually divided into different groups.

3.2 Semi-structured interviews

The second part of the method was a qualitative content analysis, which originated from quantitative research, as it aimed to place the data set into categories (Dörnyei, 2007). “This type of analysis follows the very generalised sequence of coding for themes, looking for patterns, making interpretations, and building theory” (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 256). The chosen participants all required to be compound bilinguals speaking both Dutch and English. Age and gender were irrelevant. The survey offered these participants by paying attention to the questions ‘what nationalities do you have?’, ‘what nationalities does your father/mother have?’, ‘which languages do you speak?’, ‘do you speak the language of both your parents?’, ‘from what age did you start speaking multiple languages?’ and ‘what was the reason you started speaking another language?’. If participants answered they had a Dutch and English background, spoke both languages, learnt their second language from the age of 0 to 4 because of their parents, they were eligible for an interview. They were only contacted if they had left their contact details behind at the question ‘Would you be interested in an interview?’. The choice for semi-structured interviews was made because it offered the best way to receive information from participants, as individual time and attention was given to interviewees to respond, interact and delve into their own experiences and thoughts (Dörnyei, 2007). The semi-structured interviews were aimed to answer all three of the sub questions. By interviewing eight respondents, conclusions were drawn in regard to the participants’ thoughts on norms and values attached to their languages, to what extent they experience an identity switch when speaking Dutch or English and to what extent their perception of a language influences their identity switching.

It is important to note decentring in this research as I am a researcher with a similar background to the interviewees. Being a compound Dutch-English speaker myself, my own experiences and expectations could influence the interviews and the eventual outcome of the research. However, I aimed to ask questions and respond to answers as objectively as I could. This also includes the coding of the answers given by the respondents.

3.2.1 Procedure

The interviews would preferably take place face-to-face, but as this proved to be unfeasible, Skype and WhatsApp phone calls were implemented. Eight participants were interviewed for around 40 to 45 minutes, giving them enough time to think and discuss their answers. Leading up to the interview, I sent each interviewee a general idea of the questions I would be asking during the interview, without specifically describing individual questions so they could prepare all the questions in advance. The aspect of building rapport played a considerable part in these interviews (Cole, in press). During the interviews, I focused on “adaptation, accommodation, and the ability to adopt the interlocutor’s perspective” to gain better understanding and create a comfortable environment for the respondent (Pitts & Harwood, 2015, p. 92, in Cole, in press). In order to do so, I offered personal background information, aided with examples and aimed to keep the interview light-hearted. As the conversations were all done remotely, I believed it would be important for the interviewee to feel comfortable with the conversation and myself.

The topic list which formed the base of the interview can be found in appendix 3. At the start of the interview I presented more information on the topic and clarified that any information given by the interviewee is strictly confidential and will only be read by members of the university. I also gave them an indication of the length of the interview. The choice between speaking Dutch or English was determined by the preference of the interviewee. I prepared a topic list with possible questions prior to the interviews but left room for possible follow-up questions and extended answers. The structure of the interview was based on Baarda’s book concerning interview techniques (2017). The interview scheme is available in appendix 3 and was divided into six topics. The questions raised were not fixed, as the interview itself would dictate the course. The first topic was meant to ease the interviewee into the conversation, by explaining the research and giving more information regarding the interview (Baarda, 2017).

The second topic consisted of opening questions, again aiming to comfort the interviewee into the conversation. Some questions were identical to questions already raised in the survey, but they served as an introduction and to refresh the memory of the interviewer. This included the question regarding the age at which they started speaking two languages and how this takes form in their heads, to reaffirm their compound bilingualism (Heredia & Cieśllicka, 2014). A question regarding their competencies in their languages could open up a debate as to why this is. Further questioning concerned whether these competencies are context specific, influenced by the amount they speak their languages or due to their upbringing.

Questioning the interviewee's upbringing concerning the languages they were taught not only confirmed their compound bilingualism, it also formed a basis for further questions. By asking the interviewees about their upbringing by two individuals with different languages and cultural backgrounds, the discussion regarding a switch in cultural identity was opened up. Specifically, the question on varying norms and values made the respondents reflect on contact with other individuals and the influence that has on their own cultural identity (Dervin, 2012). The question regarding specific situations in which the respondent has a preference dived into the idea that individuals have different emotional repertoires which they can choose from (Zhu, 2013).

The questioning continued into the next topic concerning emotions, which focused on the emotions felt surrounding the languages. These questions were based on Pavlenko's research on emotions and whether or not the respondents feel emotions towards their languages, and if these are positive or negative (2008). By adding the question on third parties, a distinction was made between personal feelings and how others might perceive the languages without the emotional connection. This connected to Nortier's work on hierarchy between languages (2009).

The connotations felt towards languages could impact the cultural identity an interviewee feels, which was the next topic. This opened up the debate of a cultural identity and required examples of the interviewee. As mentioned earlier, Kuiper (2016) discovered among other things that some

participants do not experience a switch of personalities, and offers different reasons for this, such as the idea that the concept of one's identity might not be very clear to the participants. I aimed to avoid this by mentioning the concept of identity at an early stage and applying personal experiences to start the conversation. By asking the respondents which language they identified with more, the step from personality to identity switching was made, as identity according to this research concerns topics such as cultural differences within the individual (Zhu, 2013). Further questions aimed to cover all possibilities in which the respondent could feel different in their languages, such as previously covered aspects like emotions, but also went further by asking about certain topics, situations, norms or values (Bucholtz & Hall 2004; Sapir, 1985). The interview ended by thanking the interviewee, giving them time to comment on the interview, and once again asking if they would be interested in the findings.

3.2.2 Participants

By means of the snowball effect, the participants were found in the survey. In case this did not lead to enough interviewees, friends and family were contacted to ask around for more people. The minimum number of interviewees required was eight, as a smaller amount would limit the gathered information to such an extent that no sufficient data could be retrieved. Five participants I obtained due to the survey replied positively to my contact. The other three were found via friends and family and were contacted via text or Facebook message, depending on the contact details I received. Information on the eight respondents and their respective interviews can be found in table 1. The languages spoken during the interview are ordered according to frequency.

	Age	Gender	Nationalities	Country of residence	Duration interview	Languages interview	Date interview
R1	28	Female	NL – USA	NL	40:33	NL – EN	04-04-19
R2	21	Male	NL – UK	NL	49:01	NL	11-04-19
R3	22	Male	NL – USA	NL	37:42	NL – EN	03-04-19
R4	20	Female	NL – AUS	AUS	38:53	NL	03-04-19
R5	17	Female	NL – AUS	AUS	33:48	EN – NL	11-04-19
R6	24	Female	NL – USA	NL	42:39	NL	07-04-19
R7	24	Female	NL – USA	NL	45:51	NL	12-05-19
R8	23	Female	NL – S-A	NL	47:06	NL	10-04-19

Table 1: demographics of eight respondents of interviews

3.2.3 Data analysis

The interviews were recorded twice, once via mobile phone and once via laptop. These recordings were saved on the laptop and mobile phone, then sent to myself via e-mail to prevent accidental loss. The transcripts were written in Word documents and a single transcript was finished in three to four hours. Not only was the transcript needed to better analyse the data, it also offered another opportunity to repeat the information and be reminded of what was said (Dörnyei, 2007). The transcripts maintain anonymous, which was mentioned during the interview. They only offer basic information concerning the interviewee. In order to understand the division of collocutors, the interviewer is abbreviated to C, while the interviewee is abbreviated to the first letter of their first name in the interview transcripts. Beyond these transcripts, they have been abbreviated to R1 to R8 for a clearer structure. Six interviews took place via Skype, the other two over the phone, due to the malfunctioning of Skype. Unfortunately, the lack of face-to-face communication resulted in the loss of non-verbal communication, especially during the phone calls without visual cues (Dörnyei, 2007).

Incoherent and incomplete sentences were often left out of the transcript to appease the reading. If these sentences played an important role in the understanding of the given answer, they were written down. Utterances such as “uhm” were added to the transcript as they expose thought patterns within the interviewee, because it makes a difference in interpretation if a respondent was certain about his or her answer or not. Moments of laughter have also been added to the transcript, as they display the

ambiance of the conversation. Despite these attempts to add detail to the conversations, it is important to note that transcripts remain open to interpretation and are never fully objective (Dörnyei, 2007).

In order to analyse the qualitative data from the interviews, NVivo served as an analysis tool to code and categorise the given answers by the eight respondents. However, before this process could take place, the transcripts had to be reread and reflected on, whilst making notes in the process in order to fully understand the different topics that became apparent in the interview (Dörnyei, 2007). After achieving a fuller understanding of the conversation, different answers and utterances could be categorised under labels. This simplified an answer, but also highlighted it within the masses amount of text (2007). This part of the research again displayed the iterative component when axial coding was applied as the understanding of the interview grew (2007). In some instances, words from the transcripts itself were used as labels. After these labels were set up, second-level coding was applied to move beyond descriptions and focuses more on patterns. The process of coding required new labels as specific topics were raised by the respondents (Dörnyei, 2007). When labels seemed too similar, they were merged into one broader label.

Within NVivo, all the transcripts were uploaded onto the programme. The division of the different nodes was based on the three sub questions:

1. To what extent do the participants feel connected to the norms and values attached to the languages they speak?
2. To what extent do the participants experience a switch of identities when speaking Dutch or English?
3. To what extent does the perception of a language influence identity switching of the participants?

Besides these three topics, a fourth node called 'introduction' comprised of three sub nodes focusing on where the respondents were born, in what language they preferred to conduct the interview in and their upbringing. The latter was again categorised into the languages they spoke with their parents and to what extent they find it easy or difficult to switch languages. The first sub question was labelled 'norms and values', which divided into two sub nodes, namely 'due to culture' and 'due to

family'. The second sub question was called 'identity switching' and was divided into four different categories. The first two discussed 'identification with language' and 'identification with nationality', whilst the third concerned 'cultural identity differences' and the fourth categorised 'responses of others' concerning the topic. The third sub question was titled 'perception of languages' and was divided into four categories. The first category was called 'influence of countries' and divided the respondents' opinions on the influence of the country they were raised in compared to the country of their other language into 'culture', 'family relationships' and 'language'. The second category was 'preference language' and included all the comments made about the respondents' preference for a specific language, based on four aspects, namely 'emotions', 'family', 'linguistics' and 'specific situations'. The third and fourth category were reserved for 'responses others' and 'value of language', in order to see how the respondents and third parties perceive the two languages.

4. Analysis

The analysis is divided into the two methods, namely the survey and the semi-structured interviews. The acquired findings will formulate answers to the three sub questions and ultimately answer the main research question.

4.1 Survey

As mentioned in the method, this survey served multiple purposes. Not only did it provide compound bilingual respondents for the interview, it also offered insights on bilinguals in general. The survey was filled in by 143 respondents. The mean age of these respondents was 31.9 (SD 13.1) with one missing value. The frequencies on the question when people learnt a second language can be seen in table 2 below. As only '0 – 4 years old' is deemed compound bilingual, that means 97 people consider themselves to have different forms of bilingualism. The majority of this group learnt their second language after the age of 18, meaning the definition of bilingualism was very broadly interpreted. This requires a cautious interpretation of the results by the interviewer.

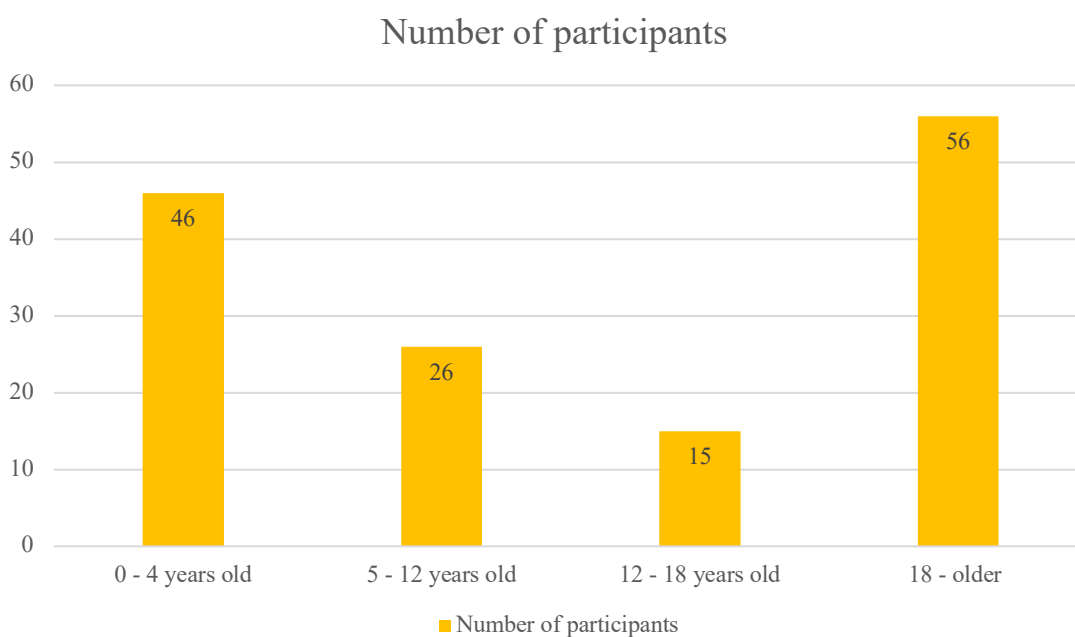


Table 2 Age Categories on learning a Second Language and Frequencies (n=143)

Regarding the question ‘Do you feel that your cultural identity changes when you speak one language or the other?’, where respondents could choose from 1 to 7, the mean was 4.8 (SD 1.7). The participants were divided into people that filled in ‘0 – 4 years old’ and the remaining three other answer options for the question ‘From what age did you start speaking multiple languages?’. After doing so, the differences between group 0 (0 – 4 years old) and 1 (5 – 12, 12 – 18, 18 – older) could be found. Group 0 consisted of 46 participants, whilst group 1 contained 97. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the question ‘Do you feel that your cultural identity changes when you speak one language or the other?’ for group 0 and group 1. There was no significant difference in the scores for group 0 (M=5.0, SD=1.6) and group 1 (M=4.6, SD=1.7) conditions; $t(141)=1.2$, $p=0.08$. This means that even though there is a difference in group 0 and group 1 in regard to their thoughts on a possible cultural identity switch, this difference is not significant.

An independent-samples t-test was also conducted to compare the question ‘How would you rate your language skills? In the order of your previous answer (1= not very good, 7= native like)’ for group 0 and group 1. As the participants were required to fill in all seven possible languages without always being able to speak seven languages, they often filled in a 1 for the languages they do not speak. For this reason, I only took the first two languages into consideration, as all participants spoke at least two languages. There was no significant difference for language 1 in the scores for group 0 (M=6.9, SD=0.3) and group 1 (M=6.8, SD=0.8) conditions; $t(141)=1.0$, $p=0.06$. There was also no significant difference for language 2 in the scores for group 0 (M=6.4, SD=0.7) and group 1 (M=6.3, SD=1.0) conditions; $t(141)=0.6$, $p=0.21$.

For more information on the 46 respondents, only their cases were selected in order to find descriptive data. In order to test if group 0 spoke the languages of both their parents, the answers to this question were recoded into different variables. The answer ‘Yes, both fluently’ was recoded to 0, the answer ‘yes, but one better than the other’ was recoded into 1 and all other answers were recoded into 2. The results of this question can be found in table 3 below. The vast majority stated they speak

both their parents' languages fluently or one better than the other. A small percentage speak only one of the two languages they were brought up with. The results of the question 'What was the reason you started speaking another language?' was more divided, as seen in table 4. The answer option 'Other' represents all the written responses of participants who could not relate to the four previous offered answers.

	Yes, both fluently	Yes, but one better than the other	All others
Speak languages of both parents	60.9%	30.4%	8.7%

Table 3 Percentages of proficiency in languages of parents by Compound Bilinguals (n=46)

	'My parents spoke in two different languages to me from birth'	'I moved to another country'	'I attended school where they spoke another language'	'I took language courses'	Other
Why another language	58.7%	10.9%	10.9%	2.2%	17.4%

Table 4 Percentages of Answers to Question 'Why Another Language' by Compound Bilinguals (n=46)

The final information regarding the 46 respondents concerned which language they identified with the most and why. By manually tallying, the 46 responses were divided into the languages they identified with most and their reasoning for this. The results are revealed in table 5 below.

Which language do you identify with most?	Why?
All languages	- It depends on the situation
Dutch – 20 times	- Born and/or raised in the Netherlands - Mother tongue
English – 12 times	- Easier to express - Family language - Born and/or raised in English-speaking country - Due to upbringing
French – 2 times	- Born and/or raised in French-speaking country
Spanish – 2 times	- Born and/or raised in Spanish-speaking country
Frisian – 1 time	- Proud and uniqueness
Hebrew – 1 time	- Easier to express
Indonesian – 1 time	- Most fluent
Limburg dialect – 1 time	- No given reason

Table 5 Languages Identified with Most and Reasoning by Compound Bilinguals (n=46)

4.2 Interviews

With an overview of all 143 respondents and more detailed insights on the 46 compound bilinguals, the next step is to compare this to the eight compound bilinguals and their answers given in the semi-structured interviews concerning possible identity switching.

4.2.1 Introduction

The first sub node covers the birthplace of the eight respondents. Two respondents were born in English-speaking countries but moved to the Netherlands at the young ages of 6 months and 2 years old. Two others were born in the Netherlands and moved to an English-speaking country when they were 2 and 5 years old. The other four were born and raised in the Netherlands. Three respondents currently live in English-speaking countries.

When asked about a preference for Dutch or English during the interview itself, one respondent preferred speaking in Dutch, whilst one other preferred English. The six others did not specifically

mind but assumed there would be a moment during the interview where they would feel the need to switch. Seven out of eight interviews were predominantly in English and every interview contained at least one sentence in Dutch and English. In regard to their upbringing, the focus was put on the languages they spoke with their parents and to which degree they are capable of switching between their languages. Five participants stated that the division of languages was reasonably straightforward with their family. Their parents spoke their respective languages and with their siblings it can depend on the context or topic of conversation. The other three have encountered more of a mix of languages in which nobody refrained to one language. One solely spoke English until Dutch became more apparent and another stated there is no strict division, but specific situations are connotated to specific languages. The third did not speak to his English-speaking parent on a daily basis, but usually spoke English with a sibling. Three respondents mentioned the idea of a ‘family language’ which is a mixture of both Dutch and English. The question regarding their ability to switch between their languages brought up this ‘family language’ once again, as two participants found it difficult to maintain one language or the other when speaking to people unaware of the mixed ‘family language’. Three stated that they do not find it easy to switch, that it depends on the situation or that it depends from which language they have to switch, finding it easier to switch from Dutch to English than vice versa. The final three respondents find it easy to switch languages.

4.2.2 Norms and values

The node regarding norms and values was divided into two sub nodes which reflected the two factors that played a role in the respondents’ lives when learning about culture-related norms and values. Within the first category, the focus was on norms and values that the parents had passed on to their children in their respective languages and how these were related. Three respondents mentioned politeness on their English-speaking side in regard to swearing less, feeling more prude, and saying ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ more often. Two other interviewees mentioned that one of their parents valued

family more, which resulted in them finding it easier to speak about family in a specific language. One of which even switched from Dutch to English during the interview when elaborating on family. Two respondents mentioned that they carried these language specific norms and values on to their other language, which makes them feel that they do not completely belong to one culture or the other. They have instead created a very unique identity which involves parts of both cultures. Two respondents mentioned they could not think of specific norms or values passed on by their parents, but felt that the general culture attached to their languages did indeed influence how they spoke these languages.

The influence of the culture connected to the languages is something three respondents mentioned in their interviews. One mentioned the idea that it is much easier to express love in English than it is in Dutch:

“In English, like you say “I love you” so easily. Even in our family, if I had an entire conversation with my brothers in Dutch, we would say “I love you” instead of “ik hou van je”
But I think that’s in general a culture thing. I don’t think any of my friends ever say “ik hou van je” to their parents or to friends or something”. – R1

The other two respondents focused on politeness yet again, but disagree on which language offers more possibilities to be polite. One states that the English culture is more polite, while the other stated that the Dutch language offers a polite form of ‘u’, which the English language lacks and that swearing occurs more often in English. She attributes this to the Australian culture in which swearing is a common occurrence.

4.2.3 Identity switching

The node called ‘identity switching’ was divided into four categories. The first two concerned identification with language and nationality, which sometimes seemed to overlap. When asked if the respondents identified more with one language than the other, four answered English, giving examples

such as that it is more international and they do not like sounding Dutch. An example is given by R4, when asked which language she identifies with more:

“It depends on where I am. Everyone here knows I am half Dutch, so I am always the Dutch woman. But when I’m in the Netherlands, everyone knows I live in Australia, so I am the Australian. So I do not feel a strong connection to one or the other. It is more a bit of both”. – Translated.

Two stated that they like speaking Dutch as it is more special than English, one answered that she does not have a preference. When shifting the question towards nationality, two respondents changed their preference from one language to the other, but six stated they do not feel like they fit in with either nationality. Two answered they feel more European, one described it as ‘Netherlands plus’. Two felt more American, while one identified more with the Dutch culture and the ‘gezelligheid’. One respondent felt more connected to their Australian nationality as she had spent most of her life there but prefers the Dutch culture.

When asked specifically about their cultural identity, not everyone felt a switch in the same way, but all felt it to some extent, stating it often occurred subconsciously. Four participants noted a variation in their voice which changed pitch or spoke slower. Differences in humour were also mentioned by three respondents. An example is given by R7:

“In Dutch I’m more cynical or sarcastic and I especially notice this when I’m with my mother. I’m not sure if it’s an American thing that they’re less sarcastic, but she doesn’t get it and she’ll think I’m being mean. I then have to explain that I’m only joking”. – Translated.

Two respondents mentioned they felt more emotional in one language which they related to their upbringing and the language they expressed their emotions in as a child:

“I’m a lot more emotional in English. Because I used to speak English when I was in trouble, so I tended to speak English when I did something wrong or said something I wasn’t allowed to say. As a child you feel very emotional in those situations. So when I speak English, I feel

more emotional deep down. I also notice I find it easier to let things out then. I don't often tell people what is going on in my life, but when it's in English, I won't stop talking! Everyone needs to know! I find it easier to speak, I speak with emotions. When I'm angry I will switch to Dutch because my vocabulary is bigger to make clear that I'm angry." – R3, translated.

Family was also brought up, as two respondents stated they spoke more about food in English, as this was more important on that side of the family. Six respondents mentioned culture playing an important part in their identity switching. Examples were their directness and feeling more independent in Dutch, whilst they felt more insecure, positive, social or louder in English. Also noted by two respondents was the difference between the English-speaking countries, as Australian, British, American and South-African cultures are very diverse and lead to different cultural identities in English.

Five respondents were also able to think of examples given by people in their surroundings, whilst the other three had not received comments. Especially in situations where the third parties were not able to understand the respondent speaking in the other language, they stated the respondent sounded more intelligent and having a very different voice. A respondent with an American background has been told she becomes louder and more amicable in English, whilst an Australian speaking Dutch was told she became childish.

4.2.4 Perception of languages

Under the third node it is relevant to take the countries the participants live in and have lived in into consideration, as these factors might influence their perceptions of the languages they speak. These influences have been divided into three categories, namely culture, family relationships and language. The first category mentions the idea of pride. When asked if she had felt differently about her languages if she had been raised in the United States instead of the Netherlands, R1 and R7 strongly agree, as R1 states:

“I think I would have been prouder of my Dutch identity. I think that is typically American. That even if your grandmother is Dutch, you will still very much identify with being Dutch, even if that’s not really the case.” – Translated.

Another topic raised is the freedom that the Dutch culture has to offer, which two respondents believe they would have missed if they were raised in their respective English-speaking countries.

An example given by R2:

“The Dutch soberness and freedoms, you don’t have those in England. Here I was sent to get something on a bike at a very young age, which is something you wouldn’t see in England. You’re let go at a very young age; everyone can cycle anywhere they want. In England I would have been in a uniform on a bus. Yes, I’m happy to have been raised in the Netherlands. I think I would have been very different otherwise.” – Translated.

Regarding family relations, three respondents mention the fact that if they had lived in their English-speaking countries, their Dutch would not have been as strong as their languages are now. They attribute this to the limited use of the Dutch language, but more so to the limited amount of contact they have with their Dutch family, giving them less reason and opportunity to learn the language. Within the category of language, two respondents stated they would have appreciated the Dutch language more if they had been raised in their English-speaking countries, as it becomes more special when nobody else has the ability to speak a second language.

The second sub node within the perception of language discusses the perceived preference of language. Respondents have given four general factors that influence their choice of language. The first concerns emotions as two respondents mentioned they prefer being emotional in one language as this is the language they used to talk about their emotions as a child. Four others have stated they prefer being able to switch between languages as they do not want to spend time finding the right words when they are emotional. The second category is closely related as three respondents state they prefer speaking English regarding family situations due to better relationships with their

English-speaking side of the family. The third category covers linguistic aspects, as three respondents have stated they prefer English over Dutch as the vocabulary is broader and allows one to be more specific. Others prefer Dutch as they find it easier to be formal. The most comments concern the fourth category, which involves specific situations or topics of conversation. R1 mentions her preference to speak in Dutch about serious topics as she thinks more logically in Dutch, just like her Dutch father. The other six respondents discuss football, food, school, work, art, whilst R5 states her English is always better than her Dutch.

When discussing how the respondents value their languages, four mention their frustration about imperfections in one of their languages. R2 mentioned how English feels more special as it has a holiday sentiment and is strongly related to family, while two others said they do not think Dutch is a very nice language. Five respondents prefer not to choose a language as they see the value in both, understand how two is always better than one, and that being able to see two different cultures from up close can teach you about yourself and others. Questioning how others might value English and Dutch proved to be a more difficult question. Two respondents said that people outside of the Netherlands would probably rate Dutch positively as it is a second language, which not a lot of people have. R4 thought most Dutch people would probably say that their language is useless and ugly.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The research question was divided into two parts: To what extent do compound bilingual Dutch-English speakers feel part of different cultures and to what extent do they experience identity switching when shifting between Dutch and English? Answering these two questions required three sub questions:

1. To what extent do the participants feel connected to the norms and values attached to the languages they speak?
2. To what extent do the participants experience a switch of identities when speaking Dutch or English?
3. To what extent does the perception of a language influence identity switching of the participants?

In this research, compound bilinguals can relate to both their cultures and often do not feel 100% connected to one or the other. This contradicts Sapir, who stated that language equals culture (1985). The participants in this research speak two languages fluently, but do not feel a full connection to either cultures. Instead, they feel a unique third identity which is a combination of the two cultures. This identity can switch when shifting from one language to the other, which hinges on the norms and values attached to these languages, their perception of these languages and specific contexts they find themselves in. I will elaborate on this by diving into each sub question.

When discussing norms and values attached to the languages the respondents speak, the transcripts show culture and language are closely related (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). Not only have the respondents internalised the norms and values passed down by their parents and others around them, they also strongly associate their languages with family ties. The language connects them to their family and the culture they have witnessed growing up. Speaking a specific language makes them feel closer to, and a part of the connected culture (Sapir, 1985). Six respondents had examples related to parental influence on their Dutch and English which related to manners or family relationships. General norms and values connected to the Dutch or English-speaking culture mostly regarded the language as expressions of love are easier said in English and politeness can be argued to be more

apparent in either language. Important to note are the differences between Australian, British, American and South-African English and their cultures. However, the respondents all felt slightly out of touch with both their cultures, as they take on parts of both, but not all. Dervin's idea of culturality becomes apparent as people change their identity constantly, depending on context (2012). Their identity seems indeed to be fluid when interacting with others around them (2012).

This switch of languages is internalised at a very young age as the respondents speak two languages at home. The majority of the compound bilinguals in the survey also stated they speak both languages at the same level of proficiency. In the interviews, the respondents mentioned that with their siblings, they often code switch or have a family language which includes both languages. This concept of a family language is also mentioned in the survey. All eight respondents stated they feel different when switching languages, but not all to the same extent. They can constantly switch languages, think in both languages and feel different when they switch. They do not simply speak another language, they take on the cultural aspects connected to the language and apply it. This change takes form in many different ways, such as change in voice, difference in humour, emotional expressions and connections to family. Five respondents also stated that their surroundings have mentioned a switch in their identities too (Pavlenko, 2006). The answers from the survey come to a similar conclusion, as the average of people believing in an identity switch is high. Although there was no significant difference between the compound bilinguals speaking a second language from birth until the age of four, compared to people who learnt a second language past the age of four, the first group did rate a switch in cultural identity higher than the second group.

In regard to the perception of a language and its influence on identity switching, the respondents felt positive and negative emotions towards their languages (Pavlenko, 2006). These emotions are related to the sound of the language, the opportunities to use it and the freedom of expression they feel. Respondents felt a sense of hierarchy in their languages, but differed on the interpretation (Nortier, 2009). English was seen as favourable as it offers a broader range of people to

speak to, it has more opportunities to be used in a formal setting or emotions are better expressed. Others perceive Dutch in a positive light as it is more unique and also has advantages in regard to formal use. This uniqueness was also mentioned in the survey. All respondents agree on the benefits of speaking two languages fluently, which according to the respondents, is shared by others. The location of their upbringing played a part in their perception, as most respondents stated they would have perceived their languages differently had they lived in the country of their other language. The perception of their languages is strongly related to where they live and their relationship with family. A common phenomenon in the interviews and survey was the appliance of switching languages depending on the situation. Reoccurring themes were emotional states, family relations, language opportunities, topics of conversation and surroundings (Pavlenko, 2008).

During the interviews, the participants aimed to find a balance between the power of their languages and their own agency. Do the respondents switch identity because they feel more comfortable in a specific language within a given scenario, or do their languages restrict them in one language or the other? The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis states that language does not determine, yet most definitely affects how we perceive the world (Whorf, 1956, in Zhu, 2013). It gives power to language. On the other hand, Dervin's concept of culturality shows how the agent always decided when and how to adapt (2012).

In the writing of this research, a number of strengths and limitations can be mentioned. An interesting phenomenon in this research was the broad interpretation of bilingualism by participants in the survey. It shows the difficulty of defining the concept, but also the unfamiliarity of bilingualism. The majority of the survey was filled in by people who had acquired a second language after the age of 18 and therefore were not compound bilingual. If this survey had only been spread across the Netherlands or Australia, the results might have been significantly different. The widespread of the survey offered a more general view of the interpretation of bilingualism.

Being bilingual myself poses a threat of influencing the research in a negative way, as my own experiences can influence the respondents' answers or my interpretation of their answers. However, I believe it has also offered unique insights, which would have possibly been left behind in another research. At the start of the interview, the respondents were asked in which language they preferred to speak. This compelled me to speak both languages too, but one interview in particular was exceptional, as it was the only interview primarily in English. This gave me the opportunity to analyse myself and reflect whether I recognised differences between me interviewing in Dutch and in English. For example, I felt a sense of insecurity at the start as it was my first full interview in English and speaking with other bilinguals could raise expectations. On the other hand, it felt more natural to speak about the subject, as the research itself is written in English. Another noticeable difference was my voice, which lowered when I switched to Dutch.

Besides strengths, there are also limitations to be mentioned. In the interviews, some respondents focused more on language, whilst others spoke more about culture. The transcripts show that the questioning could have impacted this, as some respondents were asked if they felt differently about their languages, whilst others were questioned if they felt differently about their cultures. Another aspect is the survey, which subconsciously seemed to point towards compound bilinguals. The multiple-choice answers were all very much aimed at finding compound bilinguals, which resulted in the loss of information on other forms of bilingualism. A third limitation was the difficulty of distinguishing between personality and identity. The existing literature confirms this issue as scholars define the two concepts interchangeably and differ on their interpretation. A final limitation was the limited diversity in the respondents for the interviews. All aged between 17 and 28 and two cases of siblings, future research can delve deeper into identity switching on a broader scale.

An idea for further research on this topic of bilingualism could be the analysis of the different English-speaking countries and the cultures they bring along. This research opened up that debate when respondents acknowledged the differences between the English-speaking countries, but did not

have the tools to delve into this deeper. A comparative research on the possible differences between the countries and cultures could also offer more information on the shaping of identity. The focus can shift more to culture and these participants' thoughts on identity switching and bilingualism.

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