

# Later lexical development in bilinguals

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**Abstract:** We investigated object naming in Dutch-French bilingual children to determine the developmental trajectory of the cross-language convergence in naming patterns shown by bilingual adults. We collected name choices for nearly 200 common household containers from French-Dutch simultaneous bilinguals of 6 different age groups, along with monolingual control groups. Multidimensional scaling analysis on a group level suggests that convergence is present in bilinguals at all ages. On the individual level, pairwise between-subject correlations show that monolingual naming patterns in different languages show a remarkable correspondence at younger ages. Between age 5 and adulthood, the naming patterns of monolingual children demonstrate increasing divergence as they learn the language specificities of their L1. Bilingual children, however, maintain a fully converged naming pattern up till age 10. They start learning some language-specific idiosyncrasies from age 12 onwards, but never to the extent of monolinguals. We propose a gradual divergence perspective for bilingual lexical development.