A Bidirectional View of Executive Function and Social Interaction

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In this chapter, we explore the idea that the relation between social interaction and executive functions might be best characterized as bidirectional. That is, that while developing executive function abilities almost definitely have considerable impact on emerging social understanding in young children, social interactions may also provide significant impetus for executive development. Working from a broadly Piagetian framework we include two avenues of exploration to illustrate. The first is that social collaboration on a problem might facilitate executive processes. Here we use the example of a collaboration on a strategic deception task. The second is that exposure to the ambiguous nature of social interactions may force the child to exercise more executive control, resulting in advances in various aspects of executive function. For examples, we draw from two research literatures—children's understanding of sarcasm and children's ability to grapple with acquiring more than one language.

The Debate on the Nature of Bilingual Proficiency

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This chapter examines research from other subfields of child bilingual development which have direct relevance for educational language policy. In particular, it explores how the child’s languages interact and how the child gains access to concepts and processing strategies through first (L1) and second language (L2). After outlining the concepts of bilingual proficiency, the chapter looks at bilingualism in one school in Mexico in order to distinguish between different kinds of language ability, focusing on the two skill areas that receive the most attention in school: reading and writing. It also considers how academic literacy skills learned through one language can be applied to school tasks that involve reading and writing in another language. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the related concepts of Common Underlying Proficiency, Central Processing System, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, and transfer.