

Re: Quadrilingual

Source: <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2004-09/4095.html>

From: mb (azythos2_at_hotmail.com)

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tor826@yahoo.com (Tor) wrote

> *The article reported that a bilingual child may have gaps in his
> vocabularies (knowing a word in one language but not in the other) or
> have trouble retrieving a word (knowing the word in both languages,
> but remembering it only in the language that he is not speaking at the
> moment). When the child is talking to a monolingual person and
> encounters a gap or has trouble retrieving a word, he will hem and
> haw, but when he is with a bilingual child like himself, he will
> simply inject the word from the other language, knowing that he will
> probably be understood. The article expressed concern about this
> mixing of languages (not quite the same, of course, as the mixing you
> mention above), but I don't remember exactly what was bad about it.*

Hard to see what's so bad about it, if it's the normal case of having heard the word in one language and not yet in the others. Of course that will happen very often with everybody (it would be troubling only if it concerned "basic" vocabulary like "come, go, give, mother" etc.). After all, adults are in the same situation when they encounter something they haven't known before --that's one of the main reasons there are loanwords. What is important, of course, is the consciousness of it (my son used to make an intro: "well, I don't know its name in French so I'll say it in German") which will prompt a request for learning the words.