



Population effects on languages:
*Modelling population dynamics and language transmission
from the perspective of language learning, contact and change*

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THE ROLE OF BILINGUALS IN LANGUAGE DYNAMICS

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We review and discuss the role played by bilinguals in the competition between two languages and in the formation of a bilingual community, in the framework of various three-state models, starting with the Baggs-Freedman model until generalized models proposed recently.

While in some models bilinguals do not affect the probability of transition of an individual from monolingualism to bilingualism or vice versa, in other models they have a relevant role, which may lead to a different dynamical behavior and to the existence of a stable bilingual community.

The picture presented provides suggestions about the conditions necessary for the formation of a stable bilingual community, in particular concerning the perceived status of bilinguals and the transition rates between the monolingual and the bilinguals groups.

The crucial role of bilinguals is further discussed for some case with spatial dimensions or inhomogeneous backgrounds.