Multilingualism research in Southern California:
Cross-disciplinary perspectives on dual language experience

Friday, October 6, 2017

A research conference around the launch of Bilingualism Matters at UCR
Supported by the Center for Ideas and Society and co-sponsored by the departments of Psychology, Hispanic Studies, and Comparative Literature and Languages

Program

8:00-8:30 am: Coffee and Registration

8:30-9:45 am: Introductory Remarks: Dean Milagros Peña

8:45-9 am: Introduction to the Conference: Judith Kroll, UC Riverside: Why bilingualism matters in Southern California

9-9:20 am: Covadonga Lamar Prieto, UC Riverside: Spanish-English Bilingualism in California from a Historical Sociolinguistic Perspective

9:20-9:40 am: Mark Warschauer, UC Irvine: "Mi Abuelo Fue Bracero": Bridging Languages, Cultures, Generations, and Communities through Digital Stories

9:40 -10 am: Megha Sundara, UCLA: Development of word segmentation in bilingual infants

10-10:20 am: Maria Carreira, Cal State Long Beach: Living Bilingualism: Language management strategies that support Spanish-language maintenance among Latino youth.

10:20-10:40 am: Elizabeth Davis, UC Riverside: Biobehavioral Assessment of Emotion and Emotion Regulation Processes in Bilingual Speakers

10:40-11:00 am: Karen Emmorey, Gabriela Meade, Katherine Midgley, & Phillip Holcomb, San Diego State University: ERP evidence for implicit activation of ASL in deaf bimodal bilinguals

11-11:30 am: Coffee Break + Posters

11:30-11:50 am: Alexandra Jaffe, Cal State, Long Beach: Socialization to bilingual personhood through poetry: *Chjam'è Rispondi* in a Corsican school

11:50-12:10 pm: Vrinda Subhalaxmi Chidambaram, UC Riverside: Switching up structures: What bilinguals can tell us about the viability of syntactic theories

12:10-12:30 pm: Paola (Giuli) Dussias, Penn State University: Switching palabras

12:30-2 pm: Lunch + Posters

2-3 pm: Keynote Address

Antonella Sorace, University of Edinburgh and *Bilingualism Matters*

Enhancing the scientific and public understanding of bilingualism

3-4 pm: Community Panel:

Erika Thompson, California School for the Deaf: ASL/English Bi-modal Bilingualism and Bi-literacy at California School for the Deaf

Melissa Herzig, Gallaudet University: Maximizing the child's brain and cognitive development through early ASL and English bilingualism

4-4:30 pm: Coffee Break + Posters

4:30-4:50 pm: Christine Chiarello, UC Riverside: Cortical Indices of Bilingual Language Experiences

4:50-5:10 pm: Elizabeth Peña, UC Irvine: Effects of Divided Input in Bilingual Children with Language Impairment

5:10-5:30 pm: Hyejin Nah, UC Riverside: Code-switch as indigenous activism

5:30: Conference wrap up and future directions

Speakers and Talks for October 6 Multilingualism Conference

Keynote Address:
Antonella Sorace, University of Edinburgh and *Bilingualism Matters*

Enhancing the scientific and public understanding of bilingualism
Two types of "bridges" can foster the scientific and public understanding of bilingualism. The first type links different research fields in the effort to address particular research questions and explain particular phenomena. I will discuss two examples. First, there is a surprising convergence in developmental paths among different early and late bilingual groups, such as child bilinguals, advanced adult second language speakers, and native speakers experiencing attrition due to long-term use of another language. Second, the often-reported cognitive benefits of bilingualism are not equally likely to be found in all contexts. I will argue that an explanation of these phenomena requires studying the interactions of linguistic, cognitive, and social factors, and consequently benefits from cross-disciplinary collaborations. The second type of bridge connects research to the community with the aim of enabling people from all sectors of society to make decisions informed by research rather than misconceptions. I will describe how the research and information centre Bilingualism Matters is successfully building both types of bridges worldwide.

Mark Watschauer, UC Irvine
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"Mi Abuelo Fue Bracero": Bridging Languages, Cultures, Generations, and Communities through Digital Stories

Bilingual education researcher Jim Cummins identified the potential of multimedia "identity texts" to promote language learning and identity among linguistically diverse students. In this talk, I revisit that concept by examining digital stories created by Latino youth in the Coachella Valley. These stories allow students to draw on their and their families' funds of knowledge and advance their multilingual skills while addressing pressing community concerns.

Alexandra Jaffe, Cal State, Long Beach
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Socialization to bilingual personhood through poetry: *Chjam'è Rispondi* in a Corsican school

On the French island of Corsica, bilingual schools primarily serve French-dominant children and are intended as tools of Corsican language revitalization. This presentation examines language socialization practices in two Corsican bilingual schools surrounding apprenticeship to the poetic genre of the *Chjam'è rispondi* (Call and Reponse). Traditionally practiced by expert, male poets, the *chjam'è rispondi* involves one poet improvising a 6-line poem and his opponent responding immediately with another 6-line verse. The analysis focuses on the sociolinguistic and cultural implications of the apprenticeship of novice minority language speakers to this expert genre in schools, following a 6-month long collaborative project undertaken by the author and two Corsican bilingual teachers and their classes.

Elizabeth Pena, UC Irvine
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Effects of Divided Input in Bilingual Children with Language Impairment

As compared to their typical peers, bilingual children with language impairment perform below that of their typically developing bilingual peers on language measures.. Level of first and second language exposure is additionally closely associated with language performance. Yet, it is unknown if language performance in children with language impairment is similarly associated with language exposure as it is for children with typical development. We tested Spanish-English bilingual children (LI = 100; TD = 500) in both Spanish and English on measures of morphosyntax and semantics to evaluate if .their language performance was differentially affected by level of English input and output and/or language ability. The similar slopes across language measures of children with and without language impairment suggests that there is no disadvantage to divided input by ability. Where there were differences in slope by ability children with language impairment who had divided input were somewhat advantaged relative to their typically developing peers, despite their lower scores at all levels of English input and output.

Megha Sundara, UCLA
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Development of word segmentation in bilingual infants

In this talk I will present a series of experiments on 8-month-olds' ability to find words in Spanish and English. Infants had three kinds of language experience (a) monolingual English (b) monolingual Spanish or (c) bilingual Spanish and English. The Head-turn Preference Procedure was used in all experiments. Bilingual infants were able to segment bisyllabic words in both Spanish and English earlier than their monolingual peers. I will discuss the implications of these results for our understanding of the in(ter)dependent development of word segmentation abilities of bilingual infants.

Karen Emmorey, San Diego State University
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ERP evidence for implicit activation of ASL in deaf bimodal bilinguals

Karen Emmorey, Gabriela Meade, Katherine Midgley, & Phillip Holcomb

In this ERP study, deaf ASL-English bilinguals made semantic relatedness decisions to pairs of English words, and half of the semantically unrelated pairs had phonologically related ASL translations (e.g., CHEESE; MOVIE). As previously found for unimodal (e.g., Chinese-English) bilinguals, targets in pairs with phonologically-related translations elicited smaller negativities than targets in pairs with phonologically unrelated translations within the N400 time window. This finding suggests that the same lexico-semantic mechanism underlies implicit co-activation of a non-target language, irrespective of language modality. However, the scalp distribution of the priming effect was localized to right anterior sites, which we interpret as reflecting a unique neural generator for phonological form processing in sign language. Further, in contrast to unimodal bilingual studies that find no behavioral effects, we observed phonological interference in reaction times, indicating that bimodal bilinguals may not suppress the non-target language as robustly as unimodal bilinguals. Overall, these results indicate modality-independent language co-activation that persists longer for bimodal bilinguals.

Maria Carreira, Cal State Long Beach
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Living Bilingualism: Language management strategies that support Spanish-language maintenance among Latino youth.

Immigrant languages are often lost within the span of three generations in the United States. A number of factors underlie this state of affairs, notably, factors related to the timing, amount, and type of input that immigrant children receive to their home language, as well as factors related to unfavorable societal attitudes and misconceptions about bilingualism in general, and some languages in particular. For the most part, research on immigrant languages has focused on the role that parents, educators, and policymakers play both in language shift and maintenance. The role played by children has received considerably less attention. In this presentation I will use narratives by bilingual Latinos to argue that immigrant children manage their bilingualism carefully, embracing and defending their home language at times and strategically rejecting it at other times, as warranted by the situation they find themselves in. I will discuss the implications of this research for language maintenance initiatives and for Tse (1998)'s four-stage model of ethnic identity development.

Paola Dussias, Penn State University
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Switching palabras

A looming belief among educators and parents is that codeswitching is a sign of linguistic anomaly. Yet, research reveals that bilinguals who habitually engage in codeswitching do not haphazardly switch between languages. From a psycholinguistic perspective, codeswitching bears the hallmark of cross-language activation and represents a research tool to examine how bilinguals systematically (dis)engage two languages. In this talk, I will discuss how through Bilingualism Matters at Penn State, we have used the research on code-switching to reach out to the public to clarify the role of code-switching as a patterned-governed communicative behavior to which speakers conform, and to explain how codeswitching can be an important tool in the advancement of the scientific study of language and the brain.

Elizabeth Davis, UC Riverside
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Biobehavioral Assessment of Emotion and Emotion Regulation Processes in Bilingual Speakers

Elizabeth L. Davis, Laura Quinones-Camacho, Cova Lamar Prieto, Scott Savage

Prior research has revealed differences in how people use emotion regulation strategies across cultures, but little is known about whether bilinguals (people who have two languages and potentially two cultures) regulate emotions differently based on the language they are speaking. In this study, we considered bilinguals' use of emotion regulation strategies that facilitated engagement with or disengagement from negative emotion, to assess whether and how these strategies were associated with bilinguals' physiological reactivity in four discrete emotion and language contexts. We elected to use measures of physiological responding because they allow measurement of aspects of emotional responding that are not detectable at the behavioral level, to offer valuable new information about bilinguals' implicit experience and regulation of emotions. We explored how self-reported emotion regulation strategies, involving either greater emotional

engagement or disengagement, related to participants' sympathetic reactivity (measured by cardiac pre-ejection period; PEP) while describing emotional experiences. 99 Spanish-English bilinguals (M = 20.8 years; SD = 2.11; 73 women) took part in this study, which employed a 2 (emotion: sadness, fear) X 2 (language frame: Spanish, English) within-person design. Participants were interviewed about times they had felt sad and afraid in both Spanish and English, and described what they had done to regulate the emotion. Answers were coded for emotion regulation strategies that indexed emotional engagement (e.g., cognitive reappraisal) or disengagement (e.g., behavioral distraction). Results generally supported hypotheses that greater emotional engagement would be associated with increasing sympathetic arousal, but this pattern differed depending on the context. These findings support growing evidence that bilinguals' physiological reactions to emotional events are dependent on the language (and emotional) context and contribute to ongoing research into cross-cultural differences in people's physiological reactivity by highlighting how these processes operate for the understudied bilingual population.

Erika Thompson, California School for the Deaf
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ASL/English Bi-modal Bilingualism and Bi-literacy at California School for the Deaf

Early exposure to ASL enables deaf children to naturally acquire the conversational form of a language through the stronger of their senses (visually, rather than their weakness in hearing). This critical language foundation helps deaf children master academic learning (and a second language) as they enter school. Instruction and communication at CSDR occur through ASL and English, in the written form in whole group settings and in the spoken form as applicable to individual students and in small groups. ASL and English are used fully, either alternatively or separately in the classrooms with a teaching purpose to model each language in its correct form and to enrich students' language abilities. Written English is a requirement, and additional modalities of English vary for each child. Lessons in ASL/English bilingualism becomes increasingly demanding. The first step for students to master is bilingualism, which is the use of basic interpersonal communication skills in ASL and English. Newly enrolled students who have not learned sign language will benefit from an ASL immersion class at CSDR, to assist them in the bilingual learning environment. The second and ultimate step for all students is bilteracy, which is applying literacy skills in two languages with cognitive and academic language proficiency. To foster students' increasing ability to read and write in English, ASL literacy includes ASL Viewing of literature and informative materials, Videosigning skills, translanguaging, and language analysis, all of which reinforce the bridging between the two language modes. CSDR values all language modes of signacy, literacy, and oracy, in the order of what is most accessible to deaf learners, and according to each individual's needs.

Melissa Herzig, Gallaudet University
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Maximizing the child's brain and cognitive development through early ASL and English bilingualism

Bilingual education provided through signed as well as written/spoken languages lead to strong cognitive development advantages and is a significant predictor of academic success. Research from the National Science Foundation Science of Learning Center on Visual Language and Visual Learning (VL2) has made some key discoveries about the type of effect the visual

processes, visual language, and social experiences have on the development of cognition, language, reading, and literacy of the benefit of all humans. The research has shown that the brain processes signed and spoken language in the exact same brain tissue; Early access to sign language displays significant visual attention and processing benefits for children, including stronger vocabularies, language competence and world knowledge, and literacy and reading skills. Access to bilingual education from an early age is also instrumental in the child's lifelong cognitive, emotional, and social development. Contrary to popular belief, bilingualism does not cause language delay or language impairment; studies have shown that switching to one language may negatively affect a child's language acquisition.

Christine Chiarello, UC Riverside
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Cortical Indices of Bilingual Language Experiences

Human brain structure is highly malleable and sensitive to a variety of experiences. We have been exploring the association between bilingual language experience (among heritage Spanish-English bilinguals) and variations in cortical organization using structural neuroimaging. We have found differences between monolingual and bilingual adults in cortical thickness of a critical cognitive control region (anterior cingulate). In addition, speech sound learning ability is predicted by thickness of a different frontal region (left anterior insula) for bilingual, but not for monolingual, adults. Finally, the thickness of several language and cognitive control brain regions differs between bilingual children with balanced versus unbalanced language proficiency. As language experience differs across individuals so does the structure of the cerebral cortex, reflecting variations in the extent of second language use and learning ability.

Vrinda Subhalaxmi Chidambaram, UC Riverside
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Switching up structures: What bilinguals can tell us about the viability of syntactic theories

The study of theoretical syntax is devoted to understanding how sentences are built. This boils down to two essential questions: (1) What are the various parts of a sentence? and
(2) How do these parts fit together to produce a coherent and grammatical whole? Of course, the answers to both of these questions will vary widely depending upon a number of factors, not the least of which is the particular language being investigated. Languages differ from one another in fundamental ways, but one unifying characteristic is that they exhibit a baffling degree of complexity. Given the quagmire of structural dependencies and variability, it seems incredible that our minds have the computational power to process a single language, much less two or more. In fact, considerable evidence has shown that bilinguals simultaneously make use of both languages. Occasionally, this is even observable (as in code-switching). In this talk, I will explore some of the syntactic differences we find between languages, how some of those differences have been analyzed as parametric variation, and how speakers of multiple languages could be the key to understanding how and when parameters can be switched.

Covadonga Lamar Prieto, UC Riverside
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Spanish-English Bilingualism in California from a Historical Sociolinguistic Perspective

The presence of Spanish language in California, and thus that of bilingual populations of Spanish and English, can be traced to the XIX. However, Spanish language is considered an immigrant language in California. The equilibrium between the two languages has been unbalanced in terms of political power and social capital, and it has in turn conditioned the public presence of Spanish. However, the presence of Spanish speakers with their own dialect of Spanish has been constant thru this almost two centuries. Departing from XIX previously unpublished manuscripts and reaching testimonies of current DACAmented students, this presentation delineates a timeline of the political, social and linguistic conflicts between both languages. At the same time, this timeline allows for the dialectal description of Southern California Spanish as a young, independent variety of Spanish.

Hyejin Nah, UC Riverside
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Code-switch as indigenous activism

This presentation engages bilingualism from the perspective of indigenous peoples' activist inquiries over languages. For urban Mapuche, an indigenous people living in Santiago, Chile, displaced from their traditional land, bilingualism is a heavily charged notion. As their language, Mapudungun, has been "stolen" from them by colonization, Mapuche must speak *Winkadungun* (the language of the thieves) or Spanish to survive. In this presentation, I examine how urban Mapuche connect bilingualism to the question of what language is, and who determines how to use languages in the context of colonization, where dominant languages have been imposed upon indigenous or minority people. To this end, I scrutinize what I call participatory or community-based code-switching between dominant and marginalized languages as active forms of indigenous activism.