



BILINGUALISM: A COGNITIVE AND PSYCHOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

PROF. BIDISHA SOM

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

INTENDED AUDIENCE : Undergraduates, Postgraduates, PhD students, Faculty Development Programme

INDUSTRY SUPPORT : Industries working in domains related to human cognition, society and language will find this useful.

COURSE OUTLINE :

The course offers a comprehensive take on the phenomenon of Bilingualism. Bilingualism is a seemingly simple fact of today's world, but this practice has implications beyond the realm of just communicative needs. Starting from how a society becomes and remains bilingual, the important aspects of a bilingual society, how this impacts many things like social attitude to business strategies and so on to a completely different world of the mind and brain of a bilingual: a wide range of interesting factors make it worthwhile to delve deeper. In order to bring out the various facets of this practice, the course will bring together linguistic, socio-pragmatic, psychological, applied and cognitive significance of this phenomenon. The students will learn about how linguistic and cognitive mechanisms interact in a bilingual mind and how these interactions shape the way the bilingual person processes information at various levels. Also included will be discussion on the topic of effects of bilingualism on general cognitive abilities of a person, be it children or the elderly. Thus, starting with the social factors responsible for bilingualism to the bilingual individual's language processing and how all this impacts our life at a broader scale, all these topics will be covered in this course.

ABOUT INSTRUCTOR :

Prof. Bidisha Som is a teacher-researcher in Linguistics. She received her Master's, MPhil and PhD degrees from JNU, New Delhi. She is currently working as an Associate professor of Linguistics in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Guwahati. She has taught courses on bilingualism, language-cognition, and sociolinguistics as B Tech electives. Her research work is currently focused on language processing among bilinguals, language and culture interaction, language acquisition among typical and atypical children and creating tools for language teaching. She has fourteen years of teaching experience at IITG.

COURSE PLAN :

Week 1: Becoming and being bilingual: Socio-historical aspects: Language contact: reasons and effect; Attitude and acculturation; Markers of a bilingual society: The continuum: Who is a bilingual? fractional and wholistic view of bilingualism; Types of bilinguals; learning pathways for monolinguals Vs bilinguals; bilingual's language mode; Bicultural bilingual. Bilingualism and multilingualism: some important points

Week 2: Bilingual acquisition: Childhood bilingualism; childhood SLA; adult SLA

Week 3: Bilingual cognition: Relativity; color cognition, perception of motion, grammatical categories, spatial language; conceptual transfer. Bilingual memory models; Episodic, semantic and working memory.

Week 4: Brain of a bilingual Cerebral laterality; aphasia & electrophysiological data; laterality in terms of Age of Acquisition, proficiency and control mechanisms; behavioral laterality

Week 5: Bilingual speech processing: Speech perception, comprehension and production in children and adults; base language effect in categorical perception and speech production.

Week 6: Bilingual lexical and sentence processing: Bilingual mental lexicon: phonological, orthographic, and semantic representations; models of lexical access: language selective Vs non-selective hypothesis; Models of bilingual representation and processing: RHM, BIA, BIA+, BIMOLA, Multilink; comprehension: effect of frequency, Age-of-Acquisition, context, priming, cross-language lexical properties. Production: language production models: MLF model, Uniform structure principle, the 4-M model, the abstract level model; selection and control in production; factors affecting production. Sentence processing; reading and writing;

Week 7: Cognitive consequences of bilingualism: Consequences of bilingualism: metalinguistic abilities; language control; executive control and cognitive reserve; Consequences of bilingualism: metalinguistic abilities; language control; executive control and cognitive reserve;

Week 8: Applied areas: Bilingual education; language planning and policy; language teaching; advertising; current trends in bilingualism research