Dimensions of Bilingualism

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Instructors: Anastasia Giannakidou, giannaki@uchicago.edu; Sayed Kashua; Na’ama Rokem, nrokem@uchicago.edu

Office Hours:

Na’ama Rokem, Wednesdays, 1:30-3:00, Pick 221
Anastasia Giannakidou, Tuesdays, 12-1:30, Rosenwald 201

Studying bilingualism has broad implications for our understanding of language, cognition, and culture, and has the potential to reorient the disciplines that study it. In this class, we study aspects of the bilingual experience, with emphasis on linguistic, cognitive, and socio-cultural implications of bilingualism, including artistic expression. Our goal is to understand bilingualism and code switching as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, and familiarize ourselves with numerous tools to study it. We raise the central questions of how languages co-exist in the mind, in speech, and in (popular) culture. We study phenomena such as code-switching and code mixing, second language learning, the bilingual conceptual organization, the relation between bilingualism and thought, and the impact of bilingualism on cognitive processes such as decision making, executive control. We also discuss how bilingualism is perceived in creative processes and literary texts, and what the impact of bilingualism is in the self-perception and emotions of individuals and social groups.

Class meets: Mondays, 1:30-4:00 in Logan 801

Course Requirements and grading:

1. Attendance, active participation in class discussions, and studying of the assigned readings are mandatory (20% of grade).
2. Two response papers based on thematic topics (maximum 1500 words). (30%)
3. Presentation and discussion leading in class. Students will be asked to prepare presentations of assigned material in class. (30%)
4. Final paper (maximum of 2000 words). (20%)

Unless otherwise stated, the readings are all available electronically on Course Reserves.
Course Schedule

**Week 1, March 30** - Introduction: dimensions of bilingualism, and basic concepts in studying bilingualism. Introduction of Sayed, and his work.


**Week 2, April 6** - Code switching and language mixing as a window to the bilingual experience. Bilingualism and language contact.


**Week 3 : April 20** – Impacts of bilingualism on cognition. Bilingualism and decision making.

**Class Visit: Boaz Keysar**


**Week 4 April 13: Dancing Arabs/ Arab Labor.**
Presentation of the material by Sayed. Discussion

**Week 5, April 27: Language and Nationalism. Roundtable with Orit Bashkin and Karlos Arregi**

Monica Heller, “Code-Switching and the Politics of Language” in One Speaker two Languages, 158-174

**Week 6, May 4: Language Politics in Israel/Palestine, Class visit with Uri Horesh**

**Week 7, May 11: Something on Sayed’s tv series? Exploring humor?**


**Week 8, May 18: Chang-rae Lee, Native Speaker. Bilingualism as a conflicting experience of not belonging**


**Week 9, May 25: Bilingualism and thought. The bilingual lexicon. Mental lexicon.**


**Week 10, June 1.**

Maybe have a workshop. A forum to present work that has been produced in the class?

Or maybe something on bilingual education? Let’s talk about it. Maybe we can invite Kim Potowski?