



## Empowering High School and College Students to Learn and Maintain Languages for Life Through Courses on Multilingualism

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Webinar, Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language and Literacy

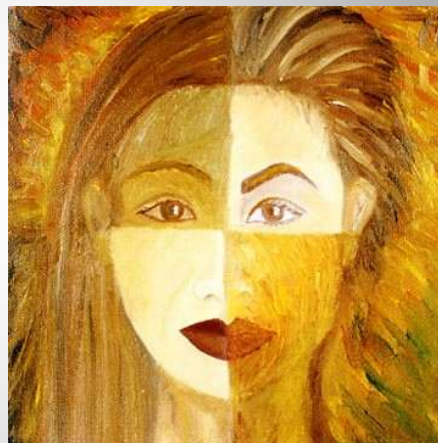
May 7, 2025, 2-3:30 PM Arizona (UTC-7)

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## Acknowledgement



- National Endowment for the Humanities Project: HB-294814-24
- “Becoming Multilingual: Empowering College Students to Learn and Maintain Languages for Life”



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## Why participate in this webinar?

- A new course for our students that relates to real-life issues/challenges
- A potentially interesting course for us to teach
- A course that may help our departments with student enrollments
- Contribute and share materials that help illustrate phenomena related to bilingualism & language learning



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## Overview

- History and rationale for the college-level GenEd course “Becoming Multilingual: Learning and Maintaining two or More Languages” (GER 150A1)
- Course’s objectives, learning outcomes, course participants (their language backgrounds, interests, and needs).
- Course content and main text
- Supplemental materials (broadcasts/podcasts, news reports, music videos and film clips) to illustrate phenomena related to bi-/multilingualism
- Alternative courses



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## Mentimeter: Who we are and what we do

1. Your area: What do you mostly do? (Single choice)

- ☐ Foreign/second language teaching
- ☐ Language teacher training
- ☐ Language program administration
- ☐ Bilingual education
- ☐ Literature and culture studies & teaching
- ☐ Second language acquisition research & teaching
- ☐ Teaching first language literacy
- ☐ Other

2. Which language do you study/teach primarily? (Short answer)

Short answer (100 characters)



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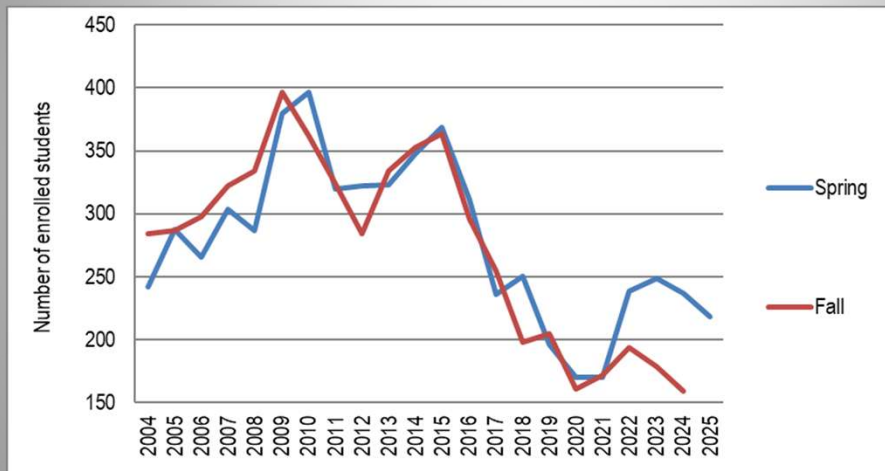
## History, context and rationale for a course on multilingualism & language learning



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## Enrollments in German Basic Language Classes (Fall & Spring)



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## GER 150A1 Course history and objectives

- Developed in 2015 to:
- introduce undergraduates to research on bi/multilinguals (who use two or more languages in their everyday life)
- help them see how myths about bilingualism and language learning persist
- and what the realities are.



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## Students agreeing with incorrect statements/myths about bilingualism

- Codeswitching reflects a lack of skills in the two languages involved. 24%
- Being bilingual is quite exceptional and rare 26%
- Bilingual children experience language disorders more frequently than monolingual children. 34%
- Bilinguals are two monolinguals in one person. 36%
- Bilinguals are equally proficient in 2 languages. 38%
- Bilingual children easily confuse/mix their languages. 61%



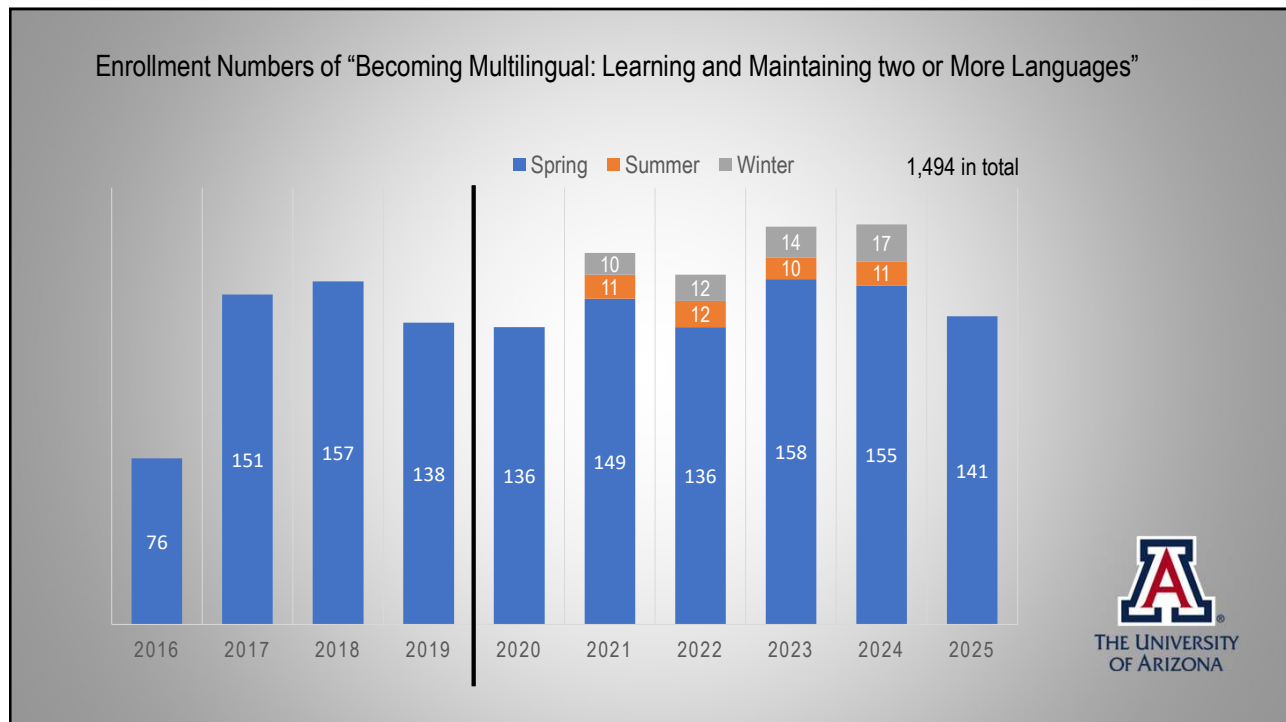
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## Offered

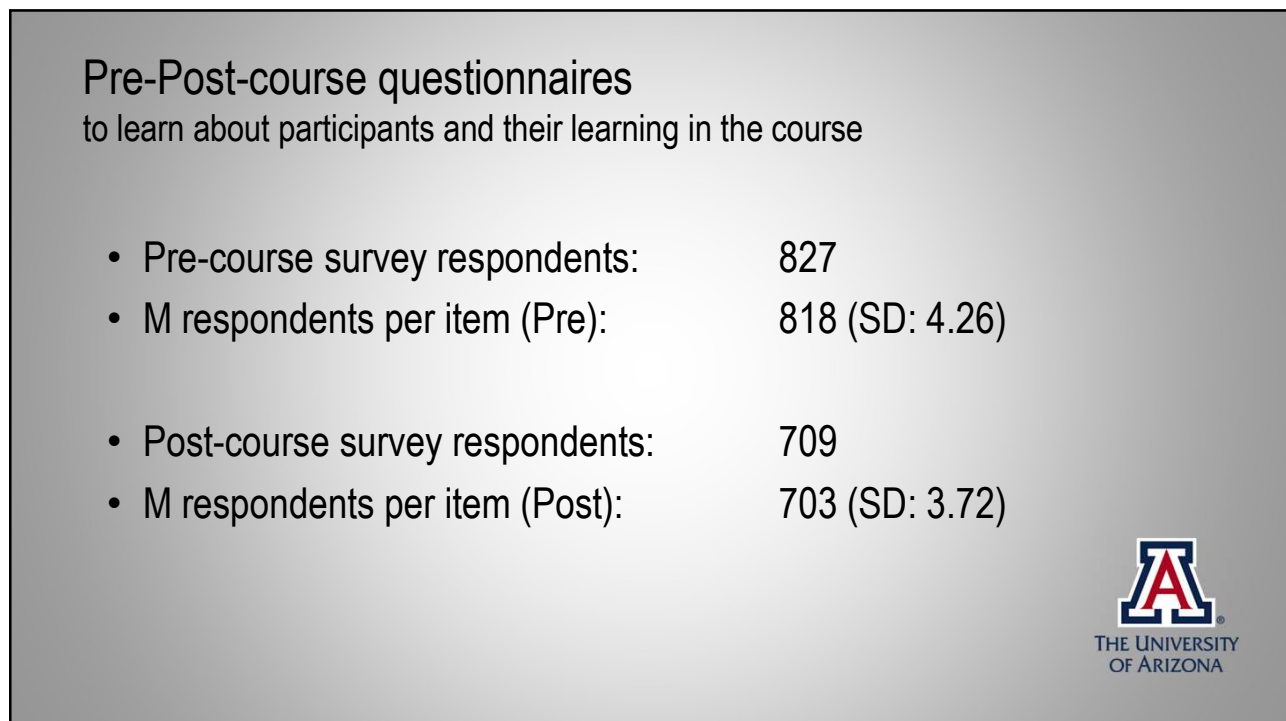
- 10 times to date during spring semesters
- 8 times during summer/winter sessions
- to 1,494 UA students
- Including Hispanic, international, and migrant students.
- Students who experience challenges related to their perceived language proficiencies and cultural identities



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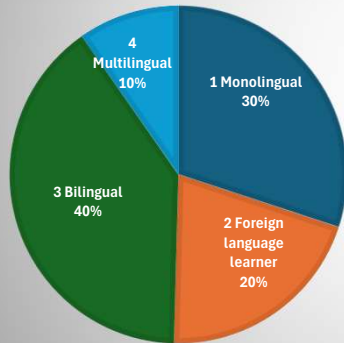


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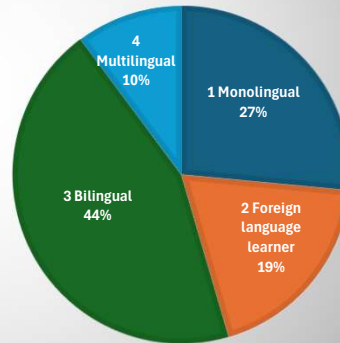
## Being monolingual or bilingual

Which term, do you think, best describes you and your language experiences/background?

Pre (n = 825)



Post (n = 706)



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## Course participants' languages

Users	Language	L1	n	(L1)	n	L2	n	L3	n	L4	n	L5	n
1252	English	59.58%	746	10.06%	126	28.75%	360	1.36%	17	0.16%	2	0.08%	1
596	Spanish	25.67%	153	20.81%	124	40.10%	239	8.05%	48	2.18%	13	3.19%	19
170	Other	35.88%	61	20.00%	34	12.35%	21	18.82%	32	5.29%	9	7.65%	13
152	French	0.00%	0	4.61%	7	46.05%	70	33.55%	51	8.55%	13	7.24%	11
151	Mandarin	60.26%	91	9.27%	14	11.92%	18	11.26%	17	2.65%	4	4.64%	7
146	Arabic	78.77%	115	5.48%	8	3.42%	5	4.79%	7	0.00%	0	7.53%	11
107	German	9.35%	10	1.87%	2	35.51%	38	28.04%	30	9.35%	10	15.89%	17
91	ASL	1.10%	1	5.49%	5	45.05%	41	20.88%	19	9.89%	9	17.58%	16
84	Japanese	4.76%	4	1.19%	1	33.33%	28	29.76%	25	16.67%	14	14.29%	12
62	Korean	25.81%	16	4.84%	3	12.90%	8	24.19%	15	12.90%	8	19.35%	12
47	Chinese other	23.40%	11	55.32%	26	4.26%	2	6.38%	3	2.13%	1	8.51%	4
46	Russian	10.87%	5	21.74%	10	17.39%	8	21.74%	10	10.87%	5	17.39%	8
45	Cantonese	15.56%	7	17.78%	8	13.33%	6	28.89%	13	4.44%	2	20.00%	9
41	Vietnamese	36.59%	15	21.95%	9	17.07%	7	2.44%	1	0.00%	0	21.95%	9
40	Latin	2.50%	1	2.50%	1	40.00%	16	25.00%	10	5.00%	2	25.00%	10
39	Italian	0.00%	0	12.82%	5	15.38%	6	38.46%	15	12.82%	5	20.51%	8
35	Hindi	22.86%	8	20.00%	7	11.43%	4	17.14%	6	5.71%	2	22.86%	8
29	Portuguese	0.00%	0	6.90%	2	24.14%	7	24.14%	7	10.34%	3	34.48%	10
27	Hebrew	3.70%	1	18.52%	5	22.22%	6	18.52%	5	7.41%	2	29.63%	8
23	Tagalog	21.74%	5	13.04%	3	26.09%	6	0.00%	0	4.35%	1	34.78%	8
16	Polish	37.50%	6	6.25%	1	6.25%	1	6.25%	1	0.00%	0	43.75%	7
10	Telegu	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	10.00%	1	0.00%	0	20.00%	2	70.00%	7

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How did you learn your languages?  
Institutionally (school, classes)

	N	%
English	474	37.8
Spanish	325	51.3
French	127	78.4
ASL	68	66
German	60	53.6
Mandarin	48	32.4
Japanese	36	37.9
Other	33	20.9
Latin	30	79
Arabic	20	14.4
Italian	19	57.6



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How did you learn your languages?  
Individually (on your own, apps, books)

	N	%
Japanese	49	51.6
English	39	3.11
German	32	28.6
Korean	28	47.5
French	25	15.4
ASL	21	20.4
Spanish	20	3.2
Russian	15	32.6
Portuguese	14	46.7
Cantonese	14	35.9
Mandarin	11	7.4



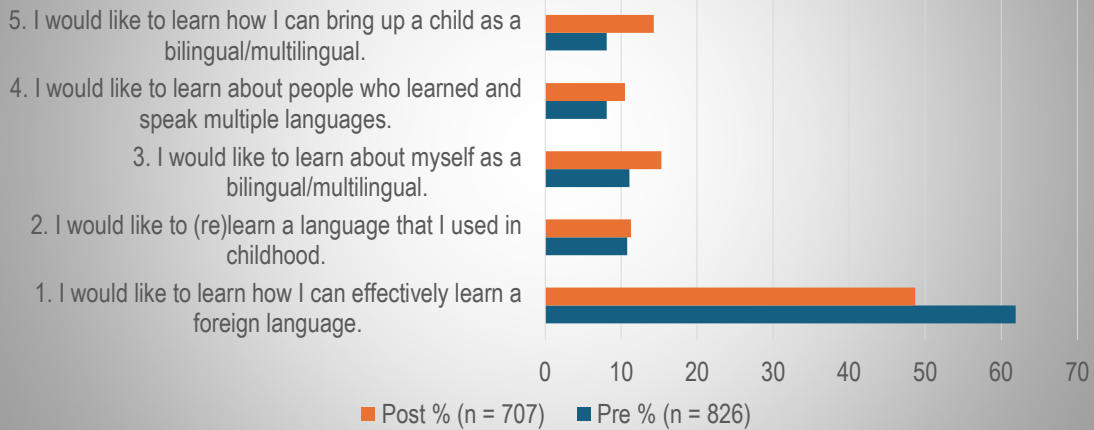
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## Interest in course topics



Which of these questions are you most curious to learn about in our course?



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## Questions about course history and participants?



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## How is the course described in the catalogue?



Pre-Summer-Session (May 19 – June 7, 2025)  
The University of Arizona  
Course Syllabus  
Peter Ecke

### Description of Course

How do people effectively acquire and maintain two, three, or more languages over a lifetime? How does becoming multilingual affect a person's identities, behaviors, thinking, emotions, and health? What factors contribute to successful language learning and maintenance and counteract language forgetting and loss? By exploring the perspectives of social scientists, course participants analyze how multiple languages can be learned, processed, and used in child- and adulthood, and in family and school settings. They appraise the benefits and costs of becoming multilingual and gain insights that will help them make informed decisions with respect to their own language learning and use in college, their professions, and their (future) families.

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### Course learning outcomes



#### Course Outcomes

By actively participating in this course, students will be able to:

- 1 Define who a bilingual person is,
- 2 State why people are bilingual and how frequent bilingualism is in the world,
- 3 Explain reasons for why people become monolingual or bilingual,
- 4 Describe bilinguals in terms of language use and fluency,
- 5 Critique and rectify common myths, stereotypes, and misperceptions about bilinguals,
- 6 Demonstrate children's, adults', and their own potential to acquire several languages,
- 7 Summarize factors that facilitate the learning and maintenance of languages,
- 8 Appraise potential benefits and costs of being 'multilingual', develop empathy for the challenges that bilinguals and foreign language learners face
- 9 Express how an individual's languages can influence each other,
- 10 Describe your language background, language development, and proficiencies,
- 11 Inspect social scientists' research methods to study bilinguals' language dominance, fluency, thinking and personality,
- 12 Discuss the impact that bilingualism has for families, professions, media, entertainment, and communication technology,
- 13 Identify the conditions under which (first and second) language skills can be lost,
- 14 Analyze to what extent bilingualism relates to biculturalism, personality, identity, and thinking,
- 15 Review the effects that institutions (family, school, employers, governments) have on language development,
- 16 Plan to make informed decisions about their language learning (in college and beyond),
- 17 Role-play providing advice about language use strategies in a friend's (future) family,
- 18 Compare different school choices and discuss how they can affect a child's language, identity, and well-being,
- 19 Demonstrate a critical awareness about language policies and practices in US schools,
- 20 Share resources to practice and assess language skills,
- 21 Identify the characteristics of an effective language teacher,
- 22 Identify language teaching methods that have been used over time,
- 23 Provide suggestions on how to acquire a "good" pronunciation, effectively learn vocabulary, grammar, and culture,
- 24 Employ the perspectives of (bilingual) children, parents, language teachers, policy makers, and social scientists.

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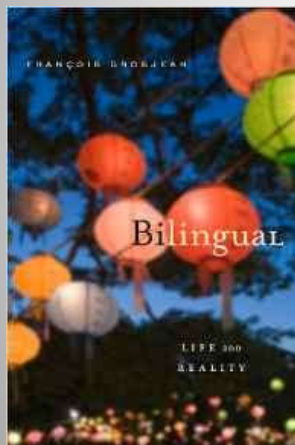
## What do course participants have to do?

- Read assigned book chapters.
- Attend a lecture.
- Review lecture slides.
- Complete quiz.
- Complete discussion entry or written assignment
- 3 longer writing assignments



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## Main Text (free e-book through University library)



- Grosjean, F. (2012). *Bilingual*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.  
– ISBN 978-0-674-06613-7
- Additional readings, video and audio files on D2L.



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## Three parts of the course

- Bilingual adults
- Bilingual children
- How to learn a foreign language



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## Bilingual adults

- Why are people bilingual?
- How can we describe bilinguals?
  - In terms of fluency and use
- How do bilinguals adapt their speech to people and contexts?
- Language use & change across the lifespan
- Attitudes and feelings towards bilingualism
- Special bilinguals



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## Bilingual children

- How can children go in and out of bilingualism?
- Ways of becoming bilingual
  - Simultaneously or sequentially, in childhood or adulthood
- Linguistic aspects of bilingualism
  - Dominance in a language, activation of languages
- Family strategies to bring up children as bilinguals
- Effects of bilingualism on children's development
- Bilingual schools and program types



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## How to learn a foreign language

- How do I effectively learn a foreign language?
- How do I become bi- multilingual?
  - How many languages are there in the world?
  - What makes some languages harder to learn than others?
  - Why are some people better at learning languages than others?
  - How have our ideas about language learning & teaching changed through the years?
  - How can apps & media help us learn/teach languages?
  - Why study languages abroad?




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## Supplemental materials, tasks and assignments



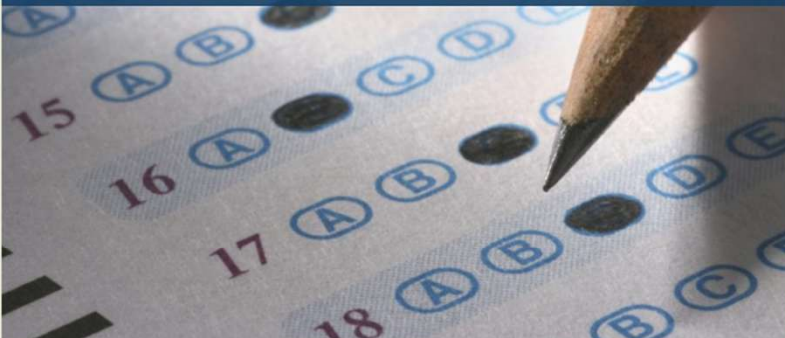
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**Free Resources: Tests**  
<https://itt-leipzig.de/>



INSTITUTE FOR TEST RESEARCH  
AND TEST DEVELOPMENT e.V.

### VOCABULARY TESTS



**How many words do you know?**

---

Test your receptive and productive vocabulary in different languages. What percentage of the 5000 most frequent words have you mastered?

For each language, you can test your "receptive" or "productive" vocabulary by clicking on the respective term.

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## Free Resources: Tests

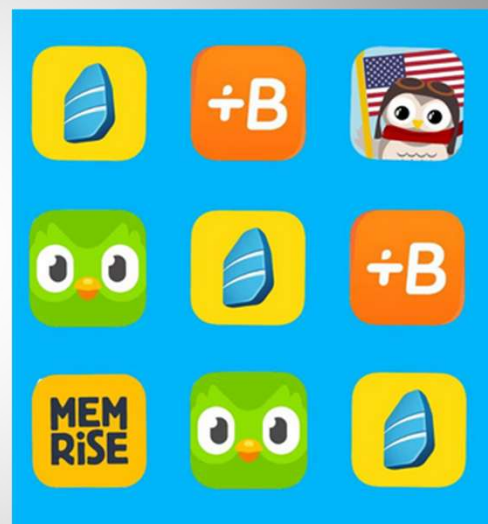


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## Free Resources: Apps & Media

Discussion task for students:

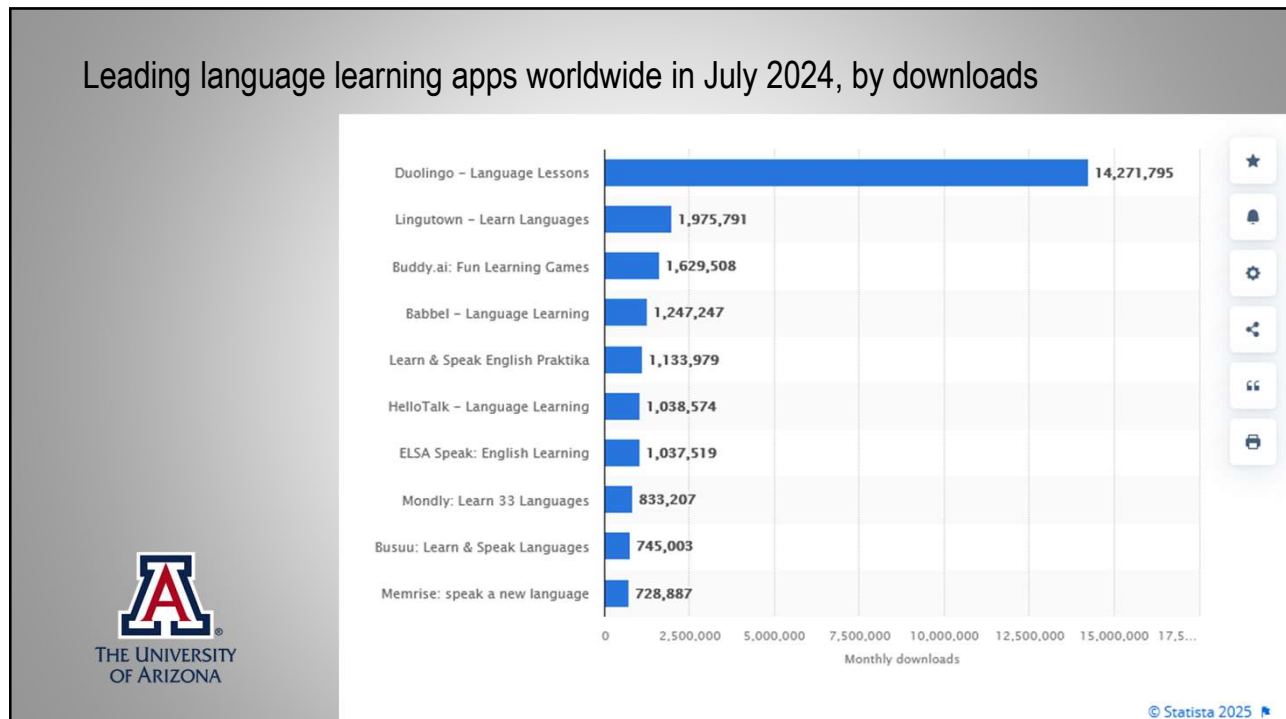
- Please post here any apps or media that you found more or less useful for language learning.
- Please explain what makes these media particularly helpful or limited in its usefulness.



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Topics: Language choice/codeswitching/practical applications  
Podcast: NPR/Latino USA

Assignment (Topic: Language choice/codeswitching)

- Bilinguals may want to address their cell phone or smart speaker assistant in more than just one language.
- How well Siri and Google assistants cope with mixed English and Spanish was tried out by Sandra already in 2016.
- Listen to "Will Siri ever speak Spanglish" to find out which speech recognition system was doing better at the time. -Siri or Google?



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How well do Siri and Google assistants cope with mixed languages?



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Topics: Language choice/codeswitching/practical applications  
Podcast: NPR/Latino USA

- Assignment (cont.)
- Test your own phone assistant. How well does it respond to instructions in two or more languages?
- Switch languages within sentences. (Get help from someone else if you only speak one language.)
- Report what you found, what your assistant could or could not do and try to explain why this was the case.
- Comment on anything else you found interesting and respond to at least one of your peers' entries.



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Google Assistant Advertising showcasing its bilingual functionality



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Topics: Accents, nonverbal communication  
Feature film: "Inglorious Bastards" (2009): "The bar scene"  
Michael Fassbender played a British spy in World War II.

**What gave him away as a spy?**

- His strong accent
- Avoidance of eye contact
- His choice of a drink
- A hand gesture



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Inglorious Bastards (2009)

Michael Fassbender played a British spy in World War II.

What gave him away as a spy?

- His strong accent
- Avoidance of eye contact
- His choice of a drink
- A hand gesture



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The British spy's who accented German was enough for people to doubt him, but what really gave him away was the hand gesture for '3' (glasses).



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Topics: Special bilinguals, languages for the professions  
Which languages does this secret agent speak?



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Topic: Special bilinguals  
Which languages does this secret agent speak?



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Topic: Special bilinguals

Which languages does this secret agent speak here?



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Topic: Special bilinguals

- James Bond speaking: German, Russian, Danish here, (French, Japanese, "Oriental languages"...)
- Discussion
- Idealized language skills and disposition for learning
- Balanced multilingual, multicultural agents are a minority



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Topic: Special bilinguals

## Other areas in which bilingualism and L2 skills can be beneficial

- Linguists
- Applied linguistics
- Second/foreign language teachers
- Translators and interpreters
- Business
- Sales
- Advertising
- Marketing
- Engineering
- Health
- Education
- Politics
- Journalism
- Law
- Sports (tennis, soccer)



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Topic: Bilingual children: In and out of bilingualism

## 4-year-old Bella speaking 7 languages

- Watch the 2 videos about 4-year-old Bella speaking 7 languages.
- In these videos on Russian TV and Australian TV, Bella must perform several tasks in the 7 languages she supposedly knows. If she completes these tasks, she will get a prize in the end.



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## 4-year-old Bella speaking 7 languages



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## 4-year-old Bella speaking 7 languages



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Topic: Bilingual children: In and out of bilingualism  
**4-year-old Bella speaking 7 languages**

- In your discussion entry,
- (a) comment on how Bella performed in the language(s) you know and how, you believe, Bella performed overall,
- (b) comment on anything you found interesting or noticeable, and finally
- (c) ask one question you would have asked Bella's parents if you were in the audience.
- Comment on at least one of your peer's entries.



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Topics: bilingual children/age as a factor, family language strategies, acculturation

**An American family in Russia ("My family's experiment in extreme schooling")**

- Watch this video about the language learning experience of 3 children of an American family in Russia.
- Share what, you believe, one can learn from this video and to what extent it confirms or refutes what we have read about bilingual child language acquisition.



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An American family in Russia (at the beginning in Russia)



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An American family in Russia (after 4 years before returning to the U.S.)



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## An American family in Russia

- Immersion
- Age
- Family language strategies (home-outside home)
- Immersion
- Acculturation



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Topics: Attitudes and feelings about bilingualism,  
Bilinguals who are also bicultural,  
Disadvantages of being bilingual

- What are problems related to being bilingual mentioned by Matoustar?



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What are problems related to being bilingual?



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What are Problems related to being bilingual mentioned by Matoustar?

- Word finding problems
  - Smaller vocabulary in one language compared to monolinguals
  - Time needed to retrieve a word (e.g., in fluency tasks or elicited tip-of-the-tongue states)
- Using accents and being perceived as someone weird by others
- The feeling of belonging nowhere
- Stress and pressures to not make any mistakes



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“Real Women Have Curves”: What are issues that could be discussed?



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“Real women have curves”  
Topics: Bilingual/bicultural identities  
Language choice/codeswitching

- Which identities appear to interact and clash in the movie?
- Age, ethnicity, gender, social class, education
- What appears to determine language choice and codeswitching in this scene?
- Person, in-group/out-group, power-relations, topic (work, school vs. family domains)



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## Your input

- What materials (movies, TV series, video clips, music videos, broadcasts, podcasts, literature etc.) do you suggest as supplemental materials in a course on multilingualism and language learning?



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## Writing assignment example:

### Journal 2: "Some good advice about language learning and use"

- You will choose ONE of 3 hypothetical scenarios.
- In these scenarios, a family member or friend will ask you for advice with respect to language learning/use strategies and/or educational decisions that need to be made by a family member or parent when challenged by a life-changing event.
  - The adopted child (adopted 7-year-old, Spanish-speaking Pedro in the US)
  - The expatriates (a German and Brazilian) and their baby (in Boston, USA)
  - A US couple (and their 2 kids) moving to Shanghai, China
- You will provide advice and detailed suggestions drawing on what you have learned in this course.



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## Topics: Special bilinguals, language choice

### Your favorite bilingual celebrity

- Please share with us a bilingual artist, singer, actor, writer etc. you like and learn about other bilingual celebrities from your peers. Post a summary of who the celeb is, the languages the person uses, and a link to a video or webpage with more information about the person.



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### Échame La Culpa - (Put the blame on mi)

- Luis Fonsi
  - Puerto Rican singer and songwriter (also known for "Despacito")
- duet with Demi Lovato
  - American singer, songwriter and actress born in New Mexico



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TyHvyGVs42U>

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Luis Fonsi, Demi Lovato – Échame La Culpa



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## Linda Ronstadt

- Born in Tucson, AZ
- Of German, English, and Mexican ancestry
- Rock and Roll Hall of Fame
- Songs in English and in Spanish on Content/Bilingual artists



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## Linda Ronstadt



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stq4-gg-J74&index=4&list=PLCS2LMIsOKoBacsPEVhJonC78mxv6xXw5>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOrdHgNtuac&list=PLoGwoq3ZTS25fukxikkSWZ2p-tlsTkOtI>

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- Discussion question:
- Why did she start singing in Spanish?
  - Express own (cultural/ethnic) identity/heritage...
  - Address (cultural and linguistic) identity of a specific audience
  - Connect with that audience
  - Perform in a less dominant heritage language?



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- French-born musician of Spanish origin.
- Sings in French, Spanish, English, Italian, Arabic, Catalan, Galician, Portuguese and occasionally in other languages



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## Ricardo Lemvo



- (& Makina Loca, band in Southern California)
- Congo-born of Angolan ancestry
- Afro-Latin / Cuban songs
- multi-cultural and singing in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Lingala, and Kikongo
- Find him on D2L Content/ Bilingual artists



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## Namika - Je ne parle pas français

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=103bx\\_Waacc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=103bx_Waacc)

- Namika grew up in Frankfurt, Germany.
- Grandparents are from Morocco
- Song is about a French man who she does not understand but wants to keep talking to her.



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Namika: "Je ne parle pas français"



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Topic: Accents and their perceptions



- In English and Punjabi
- Country and Eastern



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### Sarah Wickett ft. Rahul Bains "Accent"



...  
 I was like damn  
 that accent  
 I am a fan  
 what you call that  
 I'm gonna need a man  
 with that accent  
 with that accent!  
 ...

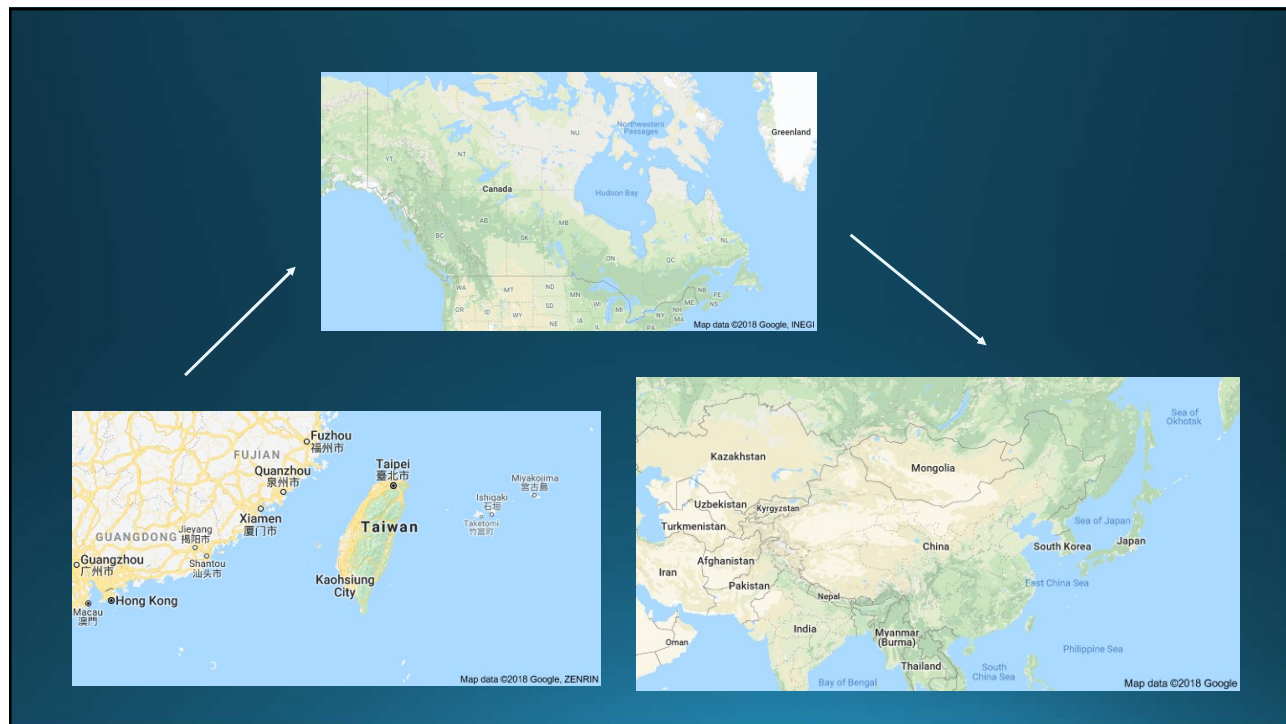
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### Henry Lau

- Canadian singer, rapper, dancer, composer, record producer, beatboxer, actor and entertainer
- mostly active in South Korea
- Parents are of Chinese (Hong Kong and Taiwanese) descent.
- His culture(s) & identity?



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- To recruit and keep students in our language programs, we need to get them excited about languages and cultures.
- Needs, interests, motives are key
- Pop-culture as a factor

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## Summary and outlook

- College-level GenEd course “Becoming Multilingual: Learning and Maintaining two or More Languages”
  - Students explore how multiple languages can be learned, processed, and used in child- and adulthood, and in family and school settings.
  - appraise the benefits and costs of becoming multilingual
  - gain insights that will help them make informed decisions about their own language learning and use in college, their professions, and their (future) families.



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## My hope

- Consider developing/teaching
- Similar courses in community colleges, high schools or as workshop for parents
- A course for students that relates to real-life language issues/challenges
- A potentially interesting course to develop and teach
- A course that may help language departments with student enrollments



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