

GER 150A1 Becoming Multilingual: Learning and Maintaining Two or More Languages

Spring Semester, 7.5 week I (January 15 – March 7, 2025)

The University of Arizona

Course Syllabus

(abbreviated version)

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.

Locations and Times

Semester: January 15–March 7, 2025

Meeting times: Online, self-paced

Due dates: Quizzes, Discussions and Assignments on Tuesdays and Thursdays as stated in the course schedule below and in the announcements on D2L.

Instructor Information

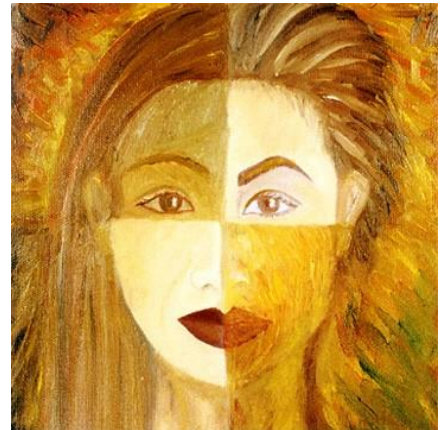
Professor: Dr. Peter Ecke

Department: German Studies

Contact: eckep@arizona.edu

Office Hours: Th, 12-2 pm in Zoom

Instructor homepage: [Click here.](#)



*Figure 1 Picture of woman with different face colors**

Course Objectives

Questions discussed in this course include: What is bilingualism/multilingualism? Who is bilingual? Am I bilingual? Is it all right to be bilingual/multilingual? Is it a burden or a blessing? What are attitudes and feelings that people have about bilinguals? What are language issues that bilinguals have to cope with? How frequent is bi/multilingualism? Are bilinguals born translators? Why do bilinguals sometimes switch languages? Does bilingualism have certain effects on personality or thinking? Are bilinguals also bicultural? What about their identities? What should I do if I wanted to bring up my child bilingually? What options are out there to educate my child bilingually? What consequences may it have for the child? How does language policy and the education system encourage or discourage bilingualism and language learning? What school types promote multilingualism? What can I do to successfully develop second language skills and become a functional bi- or multilingual? How can I effectively learn the pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar of another language, and how can I gain communicative competence in it?

This course is expected to have an impact on your attitudes toward and knowledge about your own language use and that of bi- and multilingual speakers including second language users and heritage language speakers. It may also impact your ability to learn and maintain two or more languages.

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.

Course Schedule

Module Date	Topic (Addressed course outcomes)	Quiz	Readings and Assignments
0: Jan. 16	Course Overview / Introduction (10)	0	Your background and expectations for the course (Discussions)

Module Date	Topic (Addressed course outcomes)	Quiz	Readings and Assignments
1: Jan. 21	Bilingual Adults Why are people bilingual? Describing bilinguals (1, 2, 3)	1-2	Grosjean xiii-xix Grosjean 3-17 Grosjean 18-27 Initial survey (Assignments)
2: Jan. 23	The functions of languages Language mode and language choice (4, 5, 7, 11)	3-4	Grosjean 28-38 Grosjean 39-50 Test your vocabulary (Assignments)
3: Jan. 28	Codeswitching and borrowing Speaking and writing monolingually (5, 9, 12)	5-6	Grosjean 51-62 Grosjean 63-76 Codeswitching: Siri vs. Google (Discussions)
4: Jan. 30	Having an accent in a language Languages across the lifespan (4, 2, 5)	7-8	Grosjean 77-84 Grosjean 85-96 Having an accent (Discussions)
5: Feb. 4	Attitudes and feelings about bilingualism Bilinguals who are also bicultural (5, 8, 14)	9-10	Grosjean 97-107 Grosjean 108-120 Journal 1 due (Assignments)
6: Feb. 6	Personality, thinking and dreaming, and emotions in bilinguals (11, 14)	11	Grosjean 121-133 Reflection on elective Choose from "Optional videos, audios and texts" (Assignments)
7: Feb. 11	Bilingual writers Special bilinguals (12, 8, 14)	12-13	Grosjean 134-144 Grosjean 145-159 Your favorite bilingual celebrity (Discussions)

Module Date	Topic (Addressed course outcomes)	Quiz	Readings and Assignments
8: Feb. 13	Bilingual Children In and out of bilingualism Acquiring two languages (6, 7, 15, 17)	14-15	Grosjean 163-177 Grosjean 178-190 4-year-old Bella speaking 7 languages (Discussions)
9: Feb. 18	Linguistic aspects of childhood bilingualism Family strategies and support (7, 9, 17, 12, 24)	16-17	Grosjean 191-204 Grosjean 205-217 US kids in Russia: What we can learn from them (Discussions)
10: Feb. 20	Effects of bilingualism on children Education and bilingualism & conclusion (15, 17, 18, 24, 12, 13)	18-19	Grosjean 218-228 Grosjean 229-245 Journal 2 “Good advice” due (Assignments)
11: Feb. 25	Foreign Language Learning 1 How many languages are there in the world? Is there a language crisis in the United States? What makes some languages harder to learn than others? How many languages can a person learn? Why are some people better at learning languages than others? (19, 20, 21)	20	Reading as PDF on D2L Optional bonus assignment due (Assignments) Apps and media for language learning (Discussions)
12: Feb. 27	Foreign Language Learning 2 Can monolingualism be cured? How have our ideas about language learning changed through the years? Can computers teach languages faster and better? Why study languages abroad? (20, 21, 6, 23)	21	Reading as PDF on D2L (Optional revision of Journal 2 due) Journal 3 (Assignments) Final survey (Assignments)
13: Mar. 4	Final survey Review and study for final exam		Final survey
14: Mar. 6	Final Exam		Final Exam (on D2L Quizzes)

Course Methodology

This course is an intensive online class. It consists of self-paced readings, recorded Zoom lectures, PDF slide summaries, D2L quizzes for each chapter, D2L group discussions, short assignments, three written journals of 550+ words, and a final online exam on D2L quizzes. Course participants will receive extensive feedback from the instructor.

Teaching Format

This course is an online course that includes self-paced reading, videos, reflective writing, and group discussions.

Required Text

Grosjean, F. (2014). *Bilingual*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. ISBN 978-0-674-06613-7.

Additional readings, radio broadcasts, podcasts, and video clips will be posted on D2L.

D2L Course Website

D2L is our platform for learning. It includes Announcements (with assignments, usually due on Tuesdays and Thursdays), and the Content sections: Resources, Interesting Links and the Chapters which contain Power Point slides for review and other materials, e.g., links to videos or news broadcasts if applicable. You will be asked to submit assignments to either the Discussions or the Assignments sections of the D2L course page and complete chapter quizzes under the Quizzes section. It is important that you familiarize yourself with the page on or before the first day of classes to make sure that you have access to all materials, assignments, and announcements. I will update the "Announcements" with assignments at least two nights before the reading and quiz is due. If you encounter any problems with D2L, please consult the D2L Help Page.

Grading Policy

Course activities and relative percentage in relation to final grade

Quizzes (13 on D2L)	20
Assignments and Discussions (D2L)	20
Journal 1	13.33
Journal 2	13.33
Journal 3	13.33
Final Exam	20
Total	100

Grading scale: 100-90% = A, 89-80% = B, 79-70% = C, 69-60% = D, below 59% = E

Description of Course Components and Assignments

Quizzes (20%)

Quizzes will be given online on D2L Quizzes about each assigned chapter of the book. They are due by 11:59 pm on the days listed in the course schedule. Once you have read the assigned

chapter, watched the Zoom lecture, and reviewed the corresponding PDF slides, you will do the corresponding chapter quiz on D2L under Quizzes. These chapter quizzes will normally contain about 10 questions (mostly true/false and multiple choice). There will be a limited time of 40 minutes to complete the quiz once you have started it. After the deadline, you will not have access to the quiz anymore. Late submissions are not possible.

Assignments and Discussions (20%)

We will read a book by Grosjean and a few additional articles. This will be about 60 pages per week. All instructions are posted under Announcements and under the Content modules on the D2L page. You will complete the reading and watch the Zoom lecture on or before the day the reading is due. (Example: Grosjean 3-17 should be read, and the corresponding quiz 1-2 should be completed by the end of January 21, i.e. 11:59 pm (see "Course Schedule"). There will be one or two additional small assignments, such as watching and commenting on a video clip or radio broadcast to apply what we have learned from the readings. Your comments will have to be submitted to the D2L Discussions or Assignments sections (as indicated in D2L Announcements). Assignments will not be accepted late except under special circumstances, such as illness.

Journals (journal 1 (13.33%) + journal 2 (13.33%) + journal 3 (13.33%) = Total: 40%)

You will write three reflective journals/papers (see topics and deadlines in the course schedule). In the journal, you will reflect about an issue related to language learning/use and multilingualism in your family, school, or community. You will take notes, write journal entries, reflect on your or others' experiences with language learning and use and connect them back to what we have learned from the readings. You will submit the journal entries as Word documents to the Assignments section on D2L. The three journals together will be a maximum of 30% of the final grade. Journals will not be accepted late except under special circumstances, such as illness.

Journal 1 "Your personal experiences with language learning" (due Feb. 4, 11:59 pm)

Reflect on your (or others') perceptions of and experiences with language learning and language use. This may include language use in your family, community or school, experiences you have had with accents, (bilingual) language use including codeswitching, (foreign) language learning, maintenance, and attrition. You could discuss or debate folk theories or opinions that you or others expressed about language learning or use. Compare or contrast some of these views with what you have learned in this class so far. Discuss your previous language learning experience (even if it is limited with respect to second/foreign language learning). Describe challenges and problems that you have experienced as well as successes and rewards and explore potential reasons for failure or success. Try to relate your reflections to concepts and theory from class. You may also pose open questions of interest to you with respect to language learning and use as well as bi- and multilingualism.

Journal 2 "Some good advice about language learning and use" (due Feb. 20, 11:59 pm)

For journal 2, you will choose ONE of the hypothetical scenarios listed under Content on D2L. 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. You will provide advice and detailed suggestions drawing on what you have learned in this course. You will have the opportunity to rewrite and resubmit your journal 2 and improve the grade you received for the first version if you resubmit the improved version by the set deadline.

Journal 3 “A plan of action” (due Feb. 27, 11:59 pm)

For journal 3, you will choose ONE of the three topics: (1) “How I become proficient in a foreign language: An action plan”, (2) “How I regain my language: An action plan”, (3) “How my child grows up bilingual: An action plan”. You will outline in detail what you plan to do to reach your goals with respect to the learning of a foreign language, the (re-)learning of a heritage/family language or the upbringing of a child as a bilingual and relate your action plan to what we have discussed and learned from social science research about bi/multilingualism.

Journal grading:

Each journal should be submitted as a Word Document, double-spaced, in Times New Roman, font size 12, 1-inch margins, and include a minimum of 550 words (be about 2 pages long). The journals will be graded according to these criteria: Task completion (/10), description of multilingual issues (/10), relation between observation/information and theory (/10), depth of reflection and interpretation (/10), and quality of writing (/10), Total: /50 points x 2 = /100 %.

Journal grading rubric:

I will apply the following grading rubric when grading your journals. Please review it and keep the criteria in mind when writing your journal.

Task completion (10 max)

9-10	Journal meets or exceeds required length, discussion closely relates to topic
8-9	80-90% of required length, discussion mostly relates to topic
7-8	70-80% of required length, discussion usually relates to topic
6-7	60-70% of required length, discussion partially relates to topic
0-6	0-60% of required length, discussion does not relate or rarely relates to topic

Description of language issues and multilingual issues (10 max)

9-10	Numerous interesting multilingual issues are identified and very well described
8-9	Several interesting multilingual issues are identified and quite well described
7-8	Some multilingual issues are identified and more or less well described
6-7	Only a few multilingual issues are identified and not very well described
0-6	Very few or no multilingual issues are identified and/or insufficiently well described

Relation between observation/information and theory (10 max)*

9-10	Frequently concepts & theories from readings are used appropriately
8-9	Repeatedly concepts & theories from readings are used mostly appropriately
7-8	Occasionally concepts & theories from readings are used mostly appropriately
6-7	Rarely concepts and theories from readings are used and not always appropriately
0-6	Concepts and theories from readings are not used or are not used inappropriately

*Note. Here I expect you to use (when appropriate) terms and concepts from the readings, e.g., complementarity principle, language use and fluency, codeswitching, accents, language mode, interference, bicultural identity etc.

Depth of reflection and interpretation (10 max)

9-10	Discussion shows a great deal of reflection about and sensitivity toward deeper multilingual issues (e.g., language need, motivation, learning, maintenance, use, identity) based on careful observation and identification of evidence
8-9	Discussion shows reflection about deeper multilingual issues (e.g., language need, motivation, learning, maintenance, use, identity) based on some observation and

	identification of evidence
7-8	Discussion shows some reflection about deeper multilingual issues (e.g., language need, motivation, learning, maintenance, use, identity) based on some observation
6-7	Discussion remains mostly superficial following stereotypical assumptions about language and multilingualism without reflection
0-6	Discussion does not go beyond common stereotypes about language and multilingualism without reflection. It remains on the surface.

Quality of writing

9-10	Journal is logically structured & easy to comprehend, spelling & grammar are impeccable
8-9	Journal is mostly logically structured & easy to comprehend, spelling & grammar are good
7-8	Journal is structured & comprehensible, spelling & grammar are acceptable
6-7	Journal is not well structured, in part difficult to comprehend, spelling & grammar are barely acceptable
0-6	Journal has little or no structure, is not or very hard to comprehend, spelling & grammar are not acceptable

Final Exam (20%):

The final exam will be given online on D2L under Quizzes on Thursday, **March 6**. You can take the exam at any time between 12:01 am and 5:00 pm (Arizona time!) on that day, but you will have a limited time of 60 minutes to complete the exam once you start it. The exam will consist primarily of multiple-choice and yes/no questions – constructed mostly to ensure that you have understood the terms and concepts used in the study of bi/multilingualism. Reading the book chapters, reviewing the Power Point slides of lectures under “Table of Contents” and completing the quizzes and assignments will be good practice for the exam.

Honors Credit (optional)

Students interested in honors credit or extra credit will work on a group project that includes between two and four students. The objective of the project is to produce an educational video about a multilingual individual, family, school, business, or organization illustrating challenges, processes, experiences and/or achievements of bilinguals or foreign language learners. In addition to the video, groups will submit one 800-word paper that describes and explains the subject(s) and issue(s) displayed in the video and how these correspond to or substantiate insights from social science research. The video should be between 5 and 10 minutes long. Groups will submit a link to an online platform where the video is accessible or an AVI or MP4 file on a flash drive or DVD. One option is recording the video via Zoom (arizona.zoom.us). Select Record to Cloud option and you will receive a link (it is the second link in the email from Cloud). Another option is recording (and editing) the video and uploading the video file to our D2L page / UA Resources / Panopto. Honors contract information is available at the Honors College Website.

Subject to Change Statement

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.