

- **Defining bilingualism**
- **Bilingualism and society**

Background preparation:

- *Kaplan (2016), Ch 7, “Being bilingual makes you smarter (or dumber)”*

0. Today's objectives

After today's class, you should be able to:

- Explain different types and degrees of “bilingualism” using these terms: *language dominance, heritage speaker, diglossia*
- Explain some ways that bilingualism is different, or viewed differently, in different social contexts
- Name and explain factors that should be controlled for in research on the abilities of “bilingual” speakers, and some of the difficulties in doing this

1. Warm-up

Discussion

- What does it mean to say that someone is **bilingual** (or multilingual)?
 - What two main categories of bilingual speakers does Kaplan identify?
- What are some relationships between bilingualism at the **individual** and **societal** level?

1. Warm-up

- Categories of bilingual **speakers**
 - **Balanced bilingual:** both languages from birth; used equally often and in similar contexts
 - **Unbalanced bilingual:**
 - a. More **proficient** in one lg than in another
— *or* —
 - b. Uses the languages in different **contexts**
- Patterns of bilingualism in **society**
 - **Bilingual** societies of **monolingual** individuals
 - **Bilingual** societies of **bilingual** individuals

1. Warm-up

- Types of bilingual speakers
 - Balanced bilingual
 - Unbalanced bilingual
- Patterns of bilingualism in society
 - Bilingual societies of monolingual individuals
 - Bilingual societies of bilingual individuals
- Can we classify each of these factors in Kaplan's example scenarios (Kaplan 2016: 133)?
[[link through Course Reserves](#)]

2. Relative language dominance in bilinguals

- Somewhat rare to find *perfectly* balanced speakers
 - Most have at least a difference in the **contexts** in which they use their languages
- Kaplan (2016: 134):

Some researchers have argued that there's essentially no such thing as a balanced bilingual — that all bilinguals use their languages differently.

 - It may be more meaningful to consider the **relative** degree of '**dominance**' of one language or another

2. Relative language dominance in bilinguals

Discussion

- In what ways might a bilingual speaker use their languages differently?

2. Relative language dominance in bilinguals

How might a bilingual speaker use lgs differently?

- Adult learners may have more limited L2 experience
- Some people have a specific narrow competency
 - Example: someone who can only read in L2
- Even people who learned two Ls in childhood may:
 - use one more often than the other
 - feel more comfortable in one than the other
 - use the two in very different contexts

Implications for research on 'bilinguals'?

2. Relative language dominance in bilinguals

- Some **special cases** in considering how to determine **language dominance** in bilingual speakers
 - Heritage speakers
 - Diglossia

3. Heritage speakers

Discussion

- What is a **heritage speaker**?

3. Heritage speakers

- **Heritage speakers**
 - Acquisition of first language was interrupted, or their first language is no longer dominant
 - Tend to have more monolingual-like **phonology** than someone who starts learning as an adult
 - But typically not entirely monolingual-like **syntax** (and may have a more limited **vocabulary**)
- This is a relatively new area of research in linguistics
 - Heritage speakers are a category of unbalanced bilingual — **different** from other categories?

3. Heritage speakers

- Example of morphology/syntax in a heritage speaker of Russian in the US ([Polinsky & Kagan 2007](#): 381)

Another tendency, especially with baseline languages that have an articulated system of oblique cases, is for the heritage language to have one generalized oblique case. In heritage Russian, for instance, in the plural, this case is the prepositional in *-ax*, which replaces the other oblique cases – compare the examples in (6). Intriguingly, a similar overgeneralization of the prepositional case is observed in Russian child language (Gvozdev 1961: 334) and in nonstandard dialects of Russian.

(6) Heritage vs. baseline Russian: oblique case marking in the plural

	Heritage	Baseline	
a.	bez rukav-ax without sleeve-PRP.PL	bez rukav-ov without sleeve-GEN.PL	‘without sleeves’
b.	mnogo stakan-ax many glass-PRP.PL	mnogo stakan-ov many glass-GEN.PL	‘many glasses’
c.	za skamejk-ax behind bench-PRP.PL	za skamejk-ami behind bench-INSTR.PL	‘behind the benches’
d.	dlja detj-ax for children-PRP.PL	dlja det-ej for children-DAT.PL	‘for children’

4. Diglossia

Discussion

- What is **diglossia**?

4. Diglossia

Diglossia

- An entire community uses two language varieties
 - One at home, with families and friends — called the variety for ‘low’ functions (L)
 - One in official contexts, likely including school — called the variety for ‘high’ functions (H)
- Sometimes only the H variety is a written language

4. Diglossia

- Sometimes, H and L are closely related
 - Arabic: 'Standard' (H) and regional varieties (L)
 - Switzerland: 'Standard' (H) and Swiss (L) German
 - Many AAE speakers are diglossic with 'S'AE
- But H and L are not always related
 - Spanish/Guarani in Paraguay
 - English or French/local languages in parts of Africa
 - ...

4. Diglossia

- Diglossic situations have implications for bilingualism research — how do we **measure** language ‘balance’ or language ‘dominance’?
 - Questions about how ‘often’ each language is spoken may not take context into account
 - Tests for determining which language is ‘dominant’ may look for the same vocabulary knowledge in both languages — but what if different subsets of vocabulary are known, because the two languages are used in different contexts?

5. Bilingualism: Individuals and societies

Kaplan (2016: 136):

...obviously, bilingual people don't exist in a vacuum.

There are many reasons to be bilingual; the social context of bilingualism affects how, and how often, each language is used.

- What are the two broad patterns of “bilingual” societies that Kaplan discusses in sec 7.2?

5. Bilingualism: Individuals and societies

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 - Bilingual societies of **monolingual** individuals
 - Bilingual societies of **bilingual** individuals

5. Bilingualism: Individuals and societies

- Bilingual societies of **monolingual** individuals
 - Two groups of speakers coexist, but each is relatively monolingual (e.g., French/English in Quebec, Flemish/French in Belgium)
 - These situations often reflect conflict (past or present) based on language differences
 - Bilingualism in some individuals may be 'asymmetrical' — L_a speakers may be more likely to know L_b than vice versa
- Related pattern: A society has two official languages, but one is much more rarely spoken (e.g., English/Irish in Ireland)

5. Bilingualism: Individuals and societies

- Bilingual societies of **bilingual** individuals
 - Diglossia (discussed above)
 - Linguistically diverse regions where for various social, political, economic reasons, people tend to know more than one language
 - . Local / regional / national languages
 - . Languages of nearby communities
 - Multilingual societies like these can differ greatly in how they view the relative **value** or **prestige** of different languages (or of being bilingual)

6. Bilingualism and social factors

Discussion

- What are some ways in which bilingualism is and is not **valued** in US society?

6. Bilingualism and social factors

- What are some ways in which bilingualism is and is not **valued** in US society?
- Are there any **factors** at play here that might affect **results** in research studies about bilingualism, balance/dominance between languages, and intelligence?

6. Bilingualism and social factors

Some bonus slides — for more on this topic

- Narratives cited by Kaplan (2016: 150) that acknowledge some **social complexities** of the issue of bilingualism
 - [Abbadly \(2013\)](#)
 - [Rodriguez \(1980\)](#) [click through from Table of Contents]
- What are some similarities (related to bilingualism) between these two narratives?
- What are some differences?

6. Bilingualism and social factors

- A basic similarity:
 - Both of these narratives look at the acquisition of language by a child exposed to Spanish/English
- Some differences between the two narratives:
 - Abbady writes from the parent's current perspective; Rodriguez writes from the (distant) child's perspective
 - Abbady writes about life in Spain in the 2010s; Rodriguez writes about life in the US in roughly the 1960s to 1970s

6. Bilingualism and social factors

- Can we identify different attitudes about bilingualism, English, and Spanish in these two narratives?
- Can we identify different social factors (at the level of the family or at the level of the society) that might be related to these two different attitudes?
- What are some personal feelings that come up about parents and children and (not) sharing a language?

7. Bilingualism and acquisition — online quiz!

For fun (also reviews some Ch 5, Ch 6 content!)

- “Bilingualism quiz”
<http://bilingualmonkeys.com/what-do-you-know-about-bilingualism/>
 - Caution: This is from a popular-audience site
 - But at least the quiz questions are taken from Grosjean (2010) [cited by Kaplan in Ch 7]

8. Tips for Group 5 (Ch 7 case study)

- Kaplan makes the point that the term **bilingual** can cover a whole range of situations
 - Different kinds of bilinguals may show different patterns of language dominance
 - Different bilingual speakers may have different attitudes toward their multiple languages
 - Why is it important to acknowledge this range of situations in bilingualism research?
- “Being bilingual makes you smarter (or dumber)”: What **measurable research questions** do we see in the case-study section of Ch 7?