

EARLY CHILDHOOD LANGUAGE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

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The proposed research will focus on consequences of different bilingual environments for later social, cognitive, and language development. The specific research questions are:

1. Does the kind of bilingual environment (e.g. mixed environments, one school language-one home language, one-parent/one-language) within which a child is reared influence their language processing? Are some bilingual environments preferable to others? We aim to disaggregate bilingualism to investigate language processing in different types of bilingual learners at different points in development.
2. Do children from high- and low-SES groups demonstrate distinct patterns of language activation within each language? Prior studies have investigated bilinguals as a single group although bilinguals derive from a wide variety of learning environments. We will investigate the interaction of SES and multiple language exposure within different types of bilingual learners and across age groups.
3. What aspects of cognitive and social growth are nurtured by bilingual proficiency? By investigating participants' social-emotional and moral judgments, as well as creativity, this stream of research will go beyond commonly attested cognitive and linguistic consequences of bilingualism to determine how individual identity and attitude formation is influenced by early multiple language exposure.