

Speakers and talks

[Kenneth Paap \(professor at San Francisco State University\)](#), keynote

Some Healthy Skepticism Regarding Bilingualism and Enhanced Executive Functioning

Many prominent bilingualism researchers believe that managing two or more languages enhances domain-general executive functioning (EF). Each seminal report of a bilingual advantage in attention-control is met with a wave of failed conceptual replications such that the number of studies reporting null results far outnumber those reporting advantages. Seven high-quality and recent meta-analyses converge on the common finding that the effect-size of the bilingual advantage is very small and that when corrected for publication bias is no longer distinguishable from zero. Large-scale studies, using highly-proficient early bilinguals living in language communities where switching occurs frequently, generally report no effects of bilingualism on EF. These null results for a bilingual advantage in EF mesh with recent meta-analyses of various types of cognitive training (e.g., working memory) showing no far-transfer for studies using active control groups. It follows that bilingual language control, like any skill, is mostly the product of shifting from effort-demanding controlled processes at training onset to less demanding, highly automatic, and domain-specific processing when the skill is acquired.

[Joke Dewilde \(professor at Dept. of Teacher Education and School Research, UiO\)](#), keynote

“It’s so pleasant here. I’ll take off my shoes” – connecting wellbeing and multilingualism

In the new 2020 school curriculum, health and life skills as well as multilingualism have been given prominence but have not been seen in connection with each other. While the interdisciplinary topic of health and life skills gives students competence in a way that promotes sound physical and mental health, all students should also experience proficiency in a number of languages as a resource, both in school and society. In my talk, I will revisit previous work and, both empirically and methodologically, explore possible connections between wellbeing and multilingualism, adopting a critical sociolinguistic framework.

[Minna Lehtonen](#) is Professor II at MultiLing and a Professor of Speech-Language Pathology at the University of Turku, Finland.

Skill learning as a framework for studying bilingualism and executive functions

There is continuing debate over whether bilingualism can confer advantages in executive functions. This idea is based on the assumption that bilingual language behaviors constantly engage domain-general executive functions. An alternative framework suggests that these are skills that become automatic with practice and come to rely on task-specific processes. If so, domain-general executive functions would not be trained by repeated practice. I will present a review that addresses the relationship between bilingual language use and executive functions from a skill learning perspective and discuss how these results converge with the findings of task-specificity in the cognitive training literature.

Valantis Fyndanis is a researcher and core group member at MultiLing & a Tenure-track Assistant Professor of Psycholinguistics/Neurolinguistics at the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus.

Exploring the relationship between multilingualism and verbal short-term/working memory: Evidence from academia

Fyndanis will present the results of a study investigating the impact of multilingualism on verbal short-term memory (STM) and working memory (WM) in neurotypical middle-aged and older individuals. Eighty-two L1-Norwegian sequential bi-/multilingual academics were tested with tasks measuring verbal STM/WM capacity. Degree of bi-/multilingualism for each participant was estimated based on a comprehensive language background questionnaire. Different measures of bi-/multilingualism were used. Data on potentially relevant non-linguistic factors were also collected. Results showed that number of known foreign languages predicts STM/WM capacity. He will discuss the results in light of recent studies on the impact of bilingualism on STM/WM.

Franziska Köder is a researcher, lab manager and core group member at MultiLing. Cecilie Rummelhoff is a Research Assistant at MultiLing and Maria Garraffa is a Associate Professor at University of East Anglia and a Research Professor at MultiLing.

Pragmatic skills in adults with ADHD: Are all languages affected equally?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is known to affect pragmatic language abilities. Some individuals with ADHD talk for instance excessively; others have difficulties focusing on a conversation or might frequently interrupt their interlocutor. However, so far pragmatic skills have only been assessed in individuals' first language (L1), and it remains unclear whether communication in a second (L2) or third language (L3) is affected equally. In a questionnaire study, adults with ADHD (N=81) rated their communication experiences in their L1, L2 and L3, and answered general questions on language learning and usage. Our results indicate that ADHD might affect individuals' L2 and L3 differently than their L1. Interestingly, participants did not generally perceive ADHD as a disadvantage when learning a foreign language, but also highlight positive effects.

Frances Kvietok Duenas is a postdoctoral fellow at MultiLing.

Claiming back the body: Quechua, Aimara and campesina women's experiences of Indigenous language reclamation in university

Kvietok draws on collaborative research with university students in Peru to consider their experiences of Indigenous language reclamation in higher education. Building on decolonial and language reclamation scholarship, she considers what we can learn from understanding multilingual learners' experiences through the lens of claiming back the body. She hopes to share how such a lens can help us unpack the intersectional layers of dehumanization learners encounter and also identify their own efforts towards humanization, contributing to individual and communal transformations towards greater wellbeing.

Bente Ailin Svendsen is a professor and core group member at MultiLing.

Multilingualism – a cognitive resource for some but not for all. Media discourses on multilingualism and ageing. Abstract TBA.

Monica Norvik is a researcher, core group member at MultiLing, & Hanne Gram Simonsen is a prof. emeritus, core group member at Multiling & Ingvild Winsnes is a phd-candidate Dept. of Linguistics and Scandinavian studies, MultiLing affiliate.

The Aphasia Impact Questionnaire: An assessment tool of emotional well-being in aphasia

There has been a lack in aphasia assessment of outcome measures on how persons with aphasia experience life with aphasia. The new *Aphasia Impact Questionnaire* (AIQ) is a patient reported outcome measure, and a part of the *Comprehensive Aphasia Test* (CAT). The CAT test is currently being adapted into more than 20 languages, paving the way for cross-linguistic research, as well as assessment of multilingual persons with aphasia. The AIQ is constructed to explore and evaluate the consequences of living with aphasia, and assesses communication, participation, and emotional well-being through a picture-based scale. The Norwegian version was published in 2021.

Anne Golden is a Professor emeritus and core group member at MultiLing & Toril Opsahl is an Associate Professor and core group member at MultiLing.

Emotions, well-being and language learning among Polish work migrants in Norway

In this talk, Golden and Opsahl adopt Mercer's ecological understanding of well-being as both individually and socially defined, "emerging from a person's subjective personal relationships with the affordances within their social ecologies" (Mercer, 2021, p. 16). They understand well-being as being closely related to emotional aspects of language learning (e.g. Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016) and to the concept agency, formulated by Ahearn (2001, p. 109), as "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act". Drawing on data from focus group conversations about stereotypes of Poles and Norwegians, they aim to gain emic insights into some of the affective dimensions associated with the process of acquiring Norwegian among Polish (work) migrants. Their analysis centers on experiences with language learning and use, related to social mobility and well-being, as well as the possibility of practicing Norwegian to gain the 'small-talk' competence necessary to ease social inclusion.

Ragnhild Bang Nes is a research professor at The Norwegian Institute of Public Health and Department of Philosophy, Classics, and History of Arts and Ideas at UiO. She is also an Associate Professor at the Department of Psychology, UiO.

What's (in) a Good Life?

Wellbeing is an increasingly important topic in politics, health services and popular culture. What is wellbeing from a psychological perspective, and how do we measure it? What factors and processes are particularly important and what do we know about the genetic and environmental underpinnings? And how can we improve wellbeing in individuals and populations?