Welcome to the first edition of the official LAB Lab Newsletter! We would like to start off by thanking all of the families who have participated in our studies and continuously supported us. Continue reading to find out what we have been up to!

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What do a parrot and a dog have in common?
Do bilinguals have two separate parts of their brain for each language?

Do bilinguals have two separate parts of their brain for each language? Most research says no! A bilingual’s two languages are very interconnected. Research has shown that words that begin with the same sound even across two languages are associated with each other. But the way they are connected may not be as straight forwards as you imagine. Have you ever noticed that the Spanish P in *perro* (dog) is pronounced more similarly to the English B in *barrel* than the English P in *parrot*? In fact, the way people pronounce B and P can be a good sign of what their native language is. Spanish and English both use the same alphabet symbols, but the way letters are pronounced in not exactly the same. So, are words that begin with P in Spanish connected to words that begin with B or P in English?

We tested this in recent project in the Bilingualism Lab that looked at how bilingual adults who speak both Spanish and English perceive the difference between B and P. Participants visited the lab to do an eye-tracking task, which involves sitting in front of a screen and looking at pictures while the computer tracks what the participant is looking at. Participants saw pictures of a parrot and a dog (perro) or a barrel and a dog (perro). Then they heard the name of one of the pictures in English, for example *parrot*. Participants looked to both the parrot and dog (perro) for a short amount of time before clicking on the image they heard. The looks they made during the very short time before they answer (sometimes in under a second!) indicate the thought process that’s going into finding the answer.

We found that when they heard a word that starts with a P in English, they were likely to look at an image that also starts with a P in Spanish before making their answer. However, when they heard a word that started with a B in English, they were not likely to look at an image that starts with P in Spanish. So, even though the English B and Spanish P are pronounced more similarly to each other, people still associate English P with Spanish P more.

These results help us understand how the language system of a bilingual is interconnected at the sound level. This is important to know when moving forward with language treatments for bilinguals who have trouble producing certain sounds. If we treat the language system as a whole rather than just one language at a time, we may have better outcomes!

Contributed by Margarethe McDonald
CURRENT STUDIES

*WE ARE RECRUTING!*

LEARNING IN TWO LANGUAGES

- We are recruiting 4 and 5 year old children who speak English and Spanish
- 4 sessions at the Waisman Center OR 4 VIRTUAL ZOOM sessions, 60-90 minutes each, games and testing
- FREE language report, COMPENSATION for participation ($15-30 gift card for each session)
- Scheduling is flexible
- Call, email, or complete the interest form below to get in touch with the lab and see if your child qualifies, or for more information

Help us to better understand how children learn to speak in 2 languages!

LANGUAGE DELAY STUDY

- Our lab is recruiting children with typical development or language delay ages 2 (24-35 months) and 4 years exposed to English and Spanish
- Help us to advance bilingualism and language research. Compensation for your participation is a $35 gift card.
- Participation consists of two 20-40 minute sessions in-person OR virtual over Zoom, with word games and questionnaires for parents
- Flexible scheduling; When you and your child are available
- Contact us to see if your child qualifies or for more information

Help us learn more about bilingualism and Developmental Language Delay!

Scan here to contact us and find resources!

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LAB LAB IN THE COMMUNITY

September 13, 2023

LAB Lab Team tabling at Aldo Leopold Elementary School for the Resource Fair for intellectual and developmental disabilities.

They had the opportunity to meet different organizations and make new connections!

September 14, 2023 & October 12, 2023

LAB Lab was able to attend Centro Hispano's Mercadito, held on Thursdays from 4-7pm.

The team was able to connect with community members and other organizations!

October 31, 2023

LAB Lab attended Baby’s First Halloween at Madison Children’s Museum!

We had a great time interacting with all the children and families at the event!
THANK YOU

We appreciate your continued support! Please stay tuned for upcoming issues of our Newsletter. We are so excited to share what we are up to!

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact: uwbilingualismlab@waisman.wisc.edu