PIRE INFORMATION MEETING

August 2015
PIRE: Partnerships for International Research and Education:

OISE-0968369: *Bilingualism, mind, and brain: An interdisciplinary program in cognitive psychology, linguistics, and cognitive neuroscience* (2010-2016)

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Center for Language Science
(http://www.psu.edu/dept/cls/pire/)
More people in the world are bilingual than monolingual.

But until very recently, bilinguals were considered to be a “special” population.
The view about bilingualism has changed, in part as a consequence of the upsurge of research involving bilingual speakers and second language learners.

On the 125th anniversary of the journal *Science*, Kennedy and Norman (2005) identified the biological basis of second language (L2) learning as one of the top 125 questions to be answered in the next 25 years of research:
Bilingualism in the news

Juggling two languages tunes our brains
Bilingualism good for the brain, researchers say

The skill helps improve multitasking and prioritizing, and helps ward off early symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, experts say.

"Being bilingual has certain cognitive benefits and boosts the performance of the brain, especially one of the most important areas known as the executive control system," said York University psychology professor Ellen Bialystok at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science being held in Washington, DC.

Bilingualism Is Like A Mental Gymnasium For The Brain

Juggling languages can build better brains
There is a new attitude about bilingualism:

"Monolingualism is the illiteracy of the 21st century"

Gregg Roberts

People have come to see that bilingualism is a tool for revealing the workings of language, the mind, and the brain.
How to do research on bilingualism in Central PA?

Collaborate with others in locations where bilingualism is more prevalent and where bilingualism takes different forms
What is PIRE?

- PIRE: *Partnerships for International Research and Education* *(National Science Foundation:*
  

- Awarded to Penn States’ Center for Language Science in 2010 (through 2015) [http://cls.psu.edu/](http://cls.psu.edu/)

- Our PIRE grant: *Bilingualism, mind, and brain: An interdisciplinary program in cognitive psychology, linguistics, and cognitive neuroscience*
Illustration of research questions

• What allows speakers to keep their two languages apart? Can you effectively “turn off” one of your two languages?

• What enables some adults to learn a second language easily while others struggle?

• Are children better learners than adults?

• How do bilingual kids discover the relevant sounds in their language? How can they figure out where the words are in a stream of speech?
Illustration of research questions

• Does foreign-accented speech influence listeners’ comprehension of speech? Is this different for bilingual speakers and monolingual speakers?

• When kids learn language, the input that they hear is variable. How do they acquire grammar in the face of variability?

• Do bilingual speakers pronounce words differently than their monolingual counterparts?
Illustration of research questions

• If you speak a language that has a grammatical feature (like gender in Spanish) and want to learn a second language that has almost the same words as your first language but does not have that specific grammar feature, can you “turn off” that feature?

• How is the grammar of heritage speakers different from the grammar of the speakers where the heritage language originates?

• What rules do people follow to assign to the same sentence different meanings depending on the context?

• What factors can have an impact on success in adult language learning? And how can experimental studies inform and improve foreign language instruction?
Researcher at work!
Researcher at work!
Researcher at work!
What does a PIRE fellowship cover?

- All expense-paid trip (expenses cannot exceed the PIRE budgeted amounts):
  - Airfare
  - Lodging
  - Meals and incidentals
  - Research expenses
  - Summer tuition (more on this later)
Who can apply?

• U.S. and non-U.S. citizens (the latter must be in the College of the Liberal Arts)

• Must conduct research for the proposed summer research experience that fits with the goals of the CLS PIRE project

• Must have completed research experience with a CLS research faculty member for at least one year prior to summer travel
Who can apply?

• Students can apply during the time they are completing the research experience

• In other words, students who plan to enroll in research credits with CLS faculty in Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 are eligible to apply for Summer 2016
Who can apply?

Students who currently do not have research experience can prepare themselves for eligibility by enrolling in research credits with a CLS faculty member starting in Fall 2015 and continuing in Spring 2016.
Who can apply?

Eligible students will have at least once semester in residence remaining at PSU after returning from the summer abroad research experience.
What are PIRE fellows expected to do?

- Enroll in 6 credits of LING 496 during the summer of travel abroad.

- Enroll in 3 research credits with their CLS advisor during the returning in-residence semester (i.e. Fall 2016 for students traveling during Summer 2016) to complete their project and present their work at the CLS.

- Attend the CLS meetings, which are held every Friday morning from 9:00 to 10:30 in Moore 127.
How do you apply?

• Completed application form. A copy of the application form can be directly downloaded from [http://www.psu.edu/dept/cls/pire/pire_faq.html](http://www.psu.edu/dept/cls/pire/pire_faq.html)

• Copy of your Curriculum Vitae

• A letter of recommendation from the CLS faculty research advisor. The letter of recommendation and application materials must be sent directly to Sharon Elder at [pireundergrads@gmail.com](mailto:pireundergrads@gmail.com)
When are applications due?

• Applications are due Friday December 04\textsuperscript{st}, 2015

• Applications must be sent by email to Sharon Elder at \texttt{pireundergrads@gmail.com}

• Questions about the application process should be directed to your PIRE faculty advisor. You can also write to Sharon Elder at \texttt{pireundergrads@gmail.com}
PIRE Faculty

Communication, Sciences & Disorders
Carol Miller
Chaleece Sandberg
Nicole Etter

French
Lisa Reed
Marc Authier

German
Carrie Jackson
Mike Putnam
Richard Page

Psychology
Michele Diaz
Judy Kroll
Ping Li
Janet van Hell
Dan Weiss

Spanish
Matt Carlson
Giuli Dussias
John Lipski
Karen Miller
Marianna Nadeu
Rena Torres Cacoullos
Visit the PIRE Website!

http://www.psu.edu/dept/cls/pire/
Questions?