



LLCd Symposium.
POSTER PRESENTATIONS.

Name: Swati Kandru

Brief Bio: Ms. Swathi Kandru has recently graduated from the University of York with a M.Sc. in Reading, Language and Cognition. Her thesis titled 'Novel word learning and executive functioning: A bilingual advantage' was successfully completed under the supervision of Dr. Meesha Warmington and Dr. Graham Hitch. She previously completed her undergraduate degree at St. Francis Degree College for Women, Hyderabad with a gold medal in Psychology. She presented her undergraduate thesis on implicit social cognition at a national conference at Christ University, Bangalore. She is currently looking to gain some clinical and research experience in the field of cognitive science before setting off to pursue a doctorate degree.

Title of Presentation: Novel word learning and executive functioning in Hindi-English speakers: A bilingual advantage

Abstract: Previous studies have shown a bilingual advantage in executive functioning and acquisition of novel words (Bialystok, 2001; Kaushanskaya & Marian, 2009). The present study examined working memory, attention and novel word learning skills of early sequential bilinguals who started to learn both languages before the age of 7, and further attempted to determine the relationships between these constructs. Participants comprised of Hindi-English bilinguals and native-English monolinguals between the ages of 18 and 35. All participants were students at the Universities of York and Aberdeen, bilinguals consisted of international students of Indian origin. To reconfirm the bilingual advantage in executive functioning, tasks designed to examine verbal and visual working memory (AWMA), selective attention (Flankers task) and response inhibition (Stop signal reaction time task) were used in Experiment 1. Results of a one-way ANOVA analyses showed that bilingual participants performed more effectively than monolinguals on tasks placing demands on working memory and response inhibition. Moderate correlations were observed between verbal working memory and response inhibition. The goal of Experiment 2 was to replicate these results on new sets of monolingual and bilingual participants, and to also examine how this advantage further related to word learning. The findings were replicated in Experiment 2 and a bilingual advantage was also observed on a visual-verbal paired associate learning task; bilinguals learned novel word in a new language (Spanish) faster and recalled them better than monolinguals. Correlational analyses revealed relationships between the working memory, executive control and word learning performances. These results suggest that early bilingualism leads to better executive functioning, which in turn aids in the efficient learning of novel words. This is line with earlier

bilingual research. In addition, this study has extended previous studies by providing a preliminary look at the associations between complex mechanisms in the bilingual brain which may have important implications for early bilingual education.