

Braj and Yamuna Kachru
Distinguished Lecture in the Linguistic Sciences

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Stony Brook University

Wednesday, September 26, 2012, 7-8 p.m.
Room 223, Gregory Hall, 810 S. Wright St., Urbana

***Languages without borders: Models
of Multilingualism in Cognitive
Science and Sociolinguistics***

The effortless ease with which multilinguals weave in and out of languages constitutes a wondrous cognitive feat. This phenomenon, involving intricate grammatical patterning and sociolinguistic sensitivity raises fascinating questions for cognitive science, such as: Is multilingualism but an extension of monolingualism? How are the languages represented in the multilingual mind (and brain) and how do they interact in acquisition and processing? What are the cognitive mechanisms, costs and benefits? How are sociolinguistic constraints incorporated into a mental model? What are the limits and possibilities of current paradigms of research on the acquisition of multilingualism?

Conceptual breakthroughs, drawing on insights from multilingual communities in Asia and Africa, demand a convergence of linguistics, sociolinguistics, second language acquisition studies and cognitive science. These have made this phenomenon of central interest to a broad array of fields, including linguistics, sociolinguistics, stylistics, historical linguistics, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, first and second language acquisition, and second language teaching. In this lecture, I shall analyze some of these developments and propose some potentially fruitful directions of research.

Sponsored by the School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics

Free and open to the public. Following the lecture, a reception will be held in the Colonial Room, 1st floor, Illini Union, 1401 W. Green St., Urbana, from 8:30-10:00 p.m.