Department of Linguistics presents

A Bilingual Signature of Inhibitory Control

Presented by: **Tamar H. Gollan**

DATE
Monday,
May 16, 2022

Talk Time
2:00pm to 4:00pm

Location
Andrews Conference Room 2203, Social Sciences & Humanities Building

Light Refeshments will be served

Abstract:

One of the most striking findings in the field of psycholinguistics is the reversed language dominance effect. Most bilinguals have one language that is relatively more proficient/dominant for most purposes. Speech in the dominant language is typically produced faster and with fewer errors relative to the nondominant language. But when bilinguals are cued to switch back and forth between languages dominance sometimes reverses – in this context bilinguals respond more slowly in the language that is usually more proficient (and faster in the language that is usually less proficient). This unusual pattern has been replicated in bilinguals of many different language combinations, and in a variety of tasks including production of single picture name and of fully connected speech elicited by reading aloud. The reversed dominance effect appears to be totally unique to language production with no clear parallel effect in nonlinguistic tasks. Reversed language dominance provides strong evidence that bilinguals rely on some form of inhibitory control to make it possible to switch between languages, and to avoid speaking one language when they mean to speak the other. What remains to be determined is why dominance sometimes reverses but other times does not, a puzzle we are beginning to unravel by asking if bilinguals who do reverse dominance also switch languages more efficiently overall, and if the ability to reverse dominance changes as bilinguals get older.

About Dr. Gollan:

Tamar H. Gollan, Ph.D. is a cognitive and clinical neuropsychologist whose research specializes in the psycholinguistics of bilingualism, aging, and Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Gollan is a professor in the department of Psychiatry at UCSD, contact PI for the Latino Core of the UCSD Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, and faculty in two joint doctoral programs between UCSD and SDSU (in Clinical Neuropsychology, and Language and Communication Disorders). Dr. Gollan's research has been continuously funded by individual investigator awards from NIH and NSF since 2002. In recent years Dr. Gollan developed the Multilingual Naming Test (MINT), and focused on the cognitive mechanisms of language switching in bilinguals of various language combinations. Her earlier work investigated why bilinguals have more tip-of-the-tongue states than monolinguals and developed the Frequency-Lag Hypothesis as an alternative to the assumption that all the cognitive consequences of bilingualism should be attributed to between language interference.

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