

RESEARCH STUDENT SEMINAR

Thursday 15 March 2018
12:30 – 13:30

**SEERC Conference Room,
Proxenou Koromila Building**

“Examining the Role of Acculturation and Language Learning and Use Motivation in the Bilingual Cognitive Advantage”

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ABSTRACT

There is an ongoing debate regarding the effect of bilingualism on nonverbal cognitive functioning. Specifically, it has been suggested that the ability to speak more than one language may enhance the executive control system; however, recent studies have failed to document such a bilingual advantage, thus questioning the robustness of earlier research. Given the inconsistency in overall findings, it is crucial to determine whether a bilingual advantage does indeed exist, and if so, whether it only occurs in specific bilingual populations, and under particular contextual circumstances. The current project aims to fill a gap in the field by exploring the role of the broader sociolinguistic context in the bilingual cognitive advantage. As such, we examine how acculturation in the dominant society and motivation to learn and use the dominant language, might affect the strength of the bilingual advantage. The first study investigates two bilingual populations in the Balkans – the Albanian minority in Serbia, and the Bosniak minority in Kosovo – who are embedded in different sociolinguistic contexts (i.e. due to the socio-political history of this region), and are thus expected to differ in acculturation and language learning and use motivation, while at the same time speaking the same language pair (i.e. Serbian/Bosnian – Albanian) and matching in religious background (i.e. Muslim). Given its innovative approach, the findings of the current project are expected to bring us a step closer to understanding the bilingual cognitive advantage, and the specific circumstances under which it might emerge.

The seminar series is open to all members of *staff* and *students* of CITY and to any *externals* that wish to attend.