

Determining a Bilingualism Index: Evidence From Lebanese Control Bilinguals

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Abstract : The ability to communicate in at least two different languages is shared by a growing number of humans. Recently, many researchers have been studying the elderly bilingual population around the world in neuroscience, and yet, until today there's no accurate nor universal measure or methodology used to examine bilingualism across these studies which constitute a real challenge for results generalization. This study contributes to the quest of a multidimensional bilingualism index and language proficiency literature by investigating a new bilingualism index from a reliable subjective questionnaire the Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (LEAP-Q), multi-linguistic tests, and a diverse bilingual population all featured in one analysis and one index. One hundred Lebanese subjects aged between 55 and 92 years old divided into three different bilingualism subgroups (Arabic prominent, balanced, and French prominent) were recruited and underwent the LEAP-Q with a set of linguistic and cognitive tests. The analysis of the collected data led to the creation of a robust bilingualism index from speaking and oral understanding scores that underline specifically bilingualism subtype according to cutoffs scored. The practice implications of this index, particularly its use within bilingual populations, are addressed in the conclusion of this work.

Keywords : bilingualism, language dominance, bilingualism index, balanced bilingualism, Arabic first language, Lebanese, Arabic-French bilingualism

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