**Language attrition and bilingual development**

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Investigations of bilingualism usually focus on the development of the second language and the way in which the pre-existing native language impacts on this process (L1-to-L2-transfer). In this course it will be shown that thee is as much to be gained in terms of the understanding of the human language capacity by the changes that take place in the first language of speakers who become bilingual. In the first instance, theoretical models of language and language learning will be considered, and it will be discussed what predictions they make for language attrition and how the study of language attrition can help validate and refine these frameworks. Secondly, we will focus on changes and developments that can be seen at different levels of language (phonetics, morphology, syntax, lexicon) and to what extent extralinguistic factors, such as the age at which the speaker became bilingual or the amount of use s/he makes of the L1, can impact on the degree of attrition. Lastly, we will consider the development of heritage languages and the question of incomplete acquisition/attrition in this context.