

Glossary

Multilingual terminology

Word	Definition
Bilingualism	Knowledge of two languages.
Multilingualism	Knowledge of two or more languages.
EAL (English as an Additional Language)	"A pupil is recorded to have English as an additional language if they are exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English. This measure is not a measure of English language proficiency or a good proxy for recent immigration." (Department for Education, 2022). Note: The term EAL is in current use by the teaching profession in the UK. In this course, we won't use it as it places English at the centre of its definition, and therefore isn't inclusive of multilinguals across the globe.

General glossary

Alphabetic Script	Writing system based on alphabetic characters (eg, English, Spanish, Russian, Greek).
Code-switching	The alternating use of more than one language within the same utterance or sentence, usually respecting syntactic rules.
Cognates	Set of words from different languages that share a common etymological ancestor and share a similar meaning, spelling and/or pronunciation.
Community language	Language spoken by members of minority groups or communities within a majority language context.
Cross-linguistic	Across different languages.
Cross-linguistic influence	Ways in which knowledge of one language can affect another within a multilingual speakers' experience.
Cultural assimilation	Cultural assimilation is the process in which a minority group or culture comes to resemble a society's majority group or assume the values, behaviours, and beliefs of another group whether fully or partially.
Decoding	Process of translating written language into speech by matching a letter or combination of letters (graphemes) to their sounds (phonemes) and recognising the patterns that make syllables and words.
Grapheme	Written symbol that represents a sound (phoneme).

Heritage language	Language other than the dominant/societal one, usually spoken at home by family.
Language exposure	Language the learner is exposed to.
Language input	Language the learner hears or reads.
Language status	Perceived value of a language in the political, social and economic context of a given place.
Linguistic distance	The degree of distance between two languages or dialects.
Mutual exclusivity	Mutual exclusivity is a word learning constraint that involves the tendency to assign one label/name, and in turn avoid assigning a second label, to a single object.
Non-alphabetic script	Writing system with no alphabet, usually with symbols that translate into syllables or represent meaning of an object or a notion.
Orthography Depth	Degree to which a language has a simple grapheme (letters) to phoneme (sounds) system. Languages with a shallow orthography are easier to read as they have a regular and predictable written to spoken form system. For languages with deep orthography, there are different spelling patterns for the same pronunciation. For example: in though and through, 'ough' is spelt the same but pronounced differently.
Perceptual narrowing	Decline in the ability to discriminate between or recognise stimuli that are no longer relevant for development.
Phoneme	Smallest unit of sound in speech. Eg, /k/ in "cat"
Phonological awareness	Ability to recognise and manipulate the sound structure of words.
Phonology	The study of the patterns of sounds in a language and across languages.
Proficiency	The ease with which someone can use a language for spoken and/or written communication.
Societal language	The official language of the state or country one lives in.
Syntax	The grammatical arrangement of words in a sentence.
Theory of mind	The ability to ascribe states of mind to other people and understand people other than ourselves.
Translanguaging	The mixing of two languages in spoken or written form.