**The Linguistic Interdependence Theory**

The **Linguistic Interdependence Theory**, proposed by **Jim Cummins**, is a foundational concept in second language acquisition and bilingual education. The theory suggests that proficiency in a first language (L1) provides a strong foundation for learning a second language (L2). In essence, it argues that certain cognitive and academic skills are transferable between languages.

1. **Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP)**:
	* Cummins posits that there is a shared cognitive and academic proficiency across languages. Skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and literacy are not confined to one language but can support learning in another.
	* For example, if a student develops strong reading skills in L1, these skills can be transferred to L2 with appropriate exposure and support.
2. **Threshold Hypothesis**:
	* A minimum level of proficiency in L1 is required for the positive transfer of skills to L2.
	* If the student lacks sufficient development in L1, learning L2 might be hindered, as there is no strong foundation to build upon.
3. **Implications for Bilingual Education**:
	* Bilingual programs that encourage the development of both L1 and L2 are more effective than those focusing exclusively on L2.
	* Subtractive approaches (where L1 is suppressed in Favor of L2) can negatively affect both language learning and cognitive development.
4. **Iceberg Analogy**:
	* Cummins uses an iceberg metaphor to illustrate his theory. The visible part of the iceberg represents the surface features of each language (e.g., vocabulary and grammar). Below the surface lies the Common Underlying Proficiency, which supports both languages.

**Applications**

* **Education**: The theory emphasizes the importance of supporting students' L1 in educational settings to ensure their cognitive and linguistic development is not disrupted.
* **Curriculum Design**: Encourages dual-language or bilingual programs that nurture L1 while introducing L2 gradually.
* **Language Policy**: Advocates for language policies that recognize and build upon the linguistic strengths of multilingual learners.

**Cummins' Interdependence Hypothesis**

Is it true that the more languages you know, the easier they are to learn? Here, Marguerite is hoping that this is the case. She has been given another language to teach and she is hoping that her French students will be able to use their language skills to learn Spanish. Marguerite may know, from taking multiple languages herself, that many theorists suggest that languages are interconnected to one another. Cummins’ Interdependence Hypothesis focuses on this concept, offering some insight into how languages may influence one another.

**What is the Interdependence Hypothesis?**

Cummins' interdependence or iceberg hypothesis reveals the relationship of the first language to the learning of another language.  What appears to be two very different phenomena on or above the surface is actually interdependent psychologically.

**What is the Common Underlying Proficiency?**

The **C**ommon **U**nderlying **P**roficiency (CUP) model or the "one balloon theory" described by Jim Cummins purports that proficiencies involving more cognitively demanding tasks (such as literacy, content learning, abstract thinking and problem-solving) are common across languages. The CUP model is represented with the "dual iceberg metaphor" and is the basis of the hypothesis called the linguistic interdependence hypothesis.



**What else does Cummins say?**

**LINGUISTIC INTERDEPENDENCE HYPOTHESIS:**

This hypothesis, represented as a "dual-iceberg," posits that every language contains surface features; however, underlying those surface manifestations of language are proficiencies that are common across languages. The dimension of language used in more cognitively demanding tasks that involve more complex language is CALP, which is transferable across languages.

**THRESHOLD HYPOTHESIS:**

This hypothesis proposed by Jim Cummins is called the additive bilingualism enrichment principle. It explains the relationship between bilingualism and cognition, supporting the notion that individuals with high levels of proficiency in both language experience cognitive advantages in terms of linguistic and cognitive flexibility while low levels of proficiency in both languages result in cognitive deficits. This hypothesis further describes the three types of bilinguals (Proficient, Partial, and Limited) and two distinct processes of bilingualism as additive bilingualism and subtractive bilingualism.

**ADDITIVE BILINGUALISM:**

This is a process by which students develop both fluency and proficiency in a second language while continuing to develop proficiency in their first. The process involves adding a second language, not replacing the first language with the second language (which is known as subtractive bilingualism).

**BICS & CALP:**

These terms are commonly used in discussion of bilingual education and arise from the early work of Cummins (1984) in which he demonstrated his ideas about the two principal continua of second language development in a simple matrix. BICS describes the development of conversational fluency (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) in the second language, whereas CALP describes the use of language in decontextualized academic situations (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency ). For more information on BICS & CALP click [here](https://sites.ualberta.ca/~obilash/bics%20calp.html).