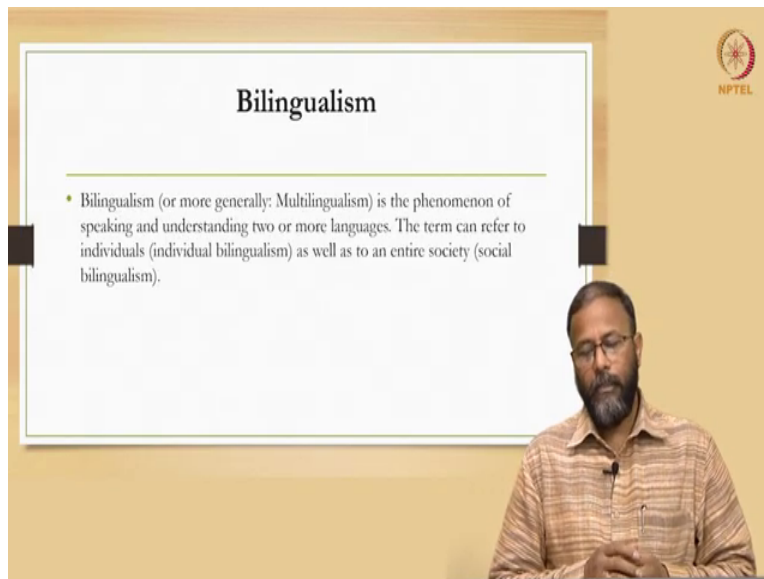


Fundamental Concepts in Sociolinguistics
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Lecture 19
Bilingualism - I

Welcome to class. Today we are going to talk about a very interesting and significant concept in Linguistics called Bilingualism. Bi refers to 2 in number, so bilingualism essentially is more than one language, two languages. So, the phenomenon refers to the capacity or the capability of an individual speaker to use and understand more than one language, two languages at least. And if it is more than two languages then it is called multilingualism. So, today we are going to talk about bilingualism as a linguistic phenomenon.

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Bilingualism

- Bilingualism (or more generally: Multilingualism) is the phenomenon of speaking and understanding two or more languages. The term can refer to individuals (individual bilingualism) as well as to an entire society (social bilingualism).

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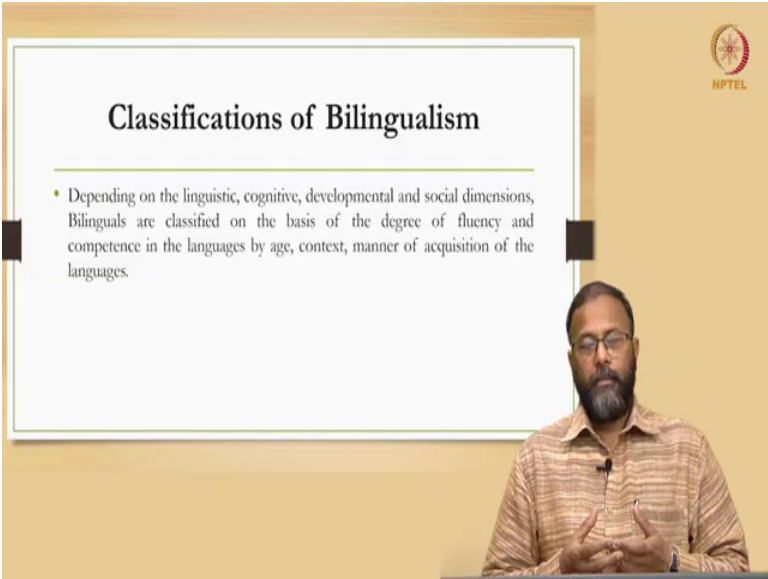
The slide is presented by a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a striped shirt, who is visible in the bottom right corner of the frame.

Now, bilingualism is the phenomenon of speaking and understanding two or more languages. The term refers to the individual speaker's capability, and capacity or maybe to the entire speech community or society. So, when it is individual, we are looking at the individual level, it is bilingualism our individual is called bilingual. When we are looking at a societal level then this whole society is called a bilingual society.

Looking at the linguistic trajectory and linguistic ecology of India, the average Indian is at least bilingual. So, bilingualism or multilingualism in India is a very natural and common phenomenon and we all are bilinguals, even if you speak one language, you understand and use several dialects of that language.

So, language, when we say our language, it is a label, we have been naming it and one language can have multiple dialects, multiple variants and you use these variants, you are proficient in these variants, so you are essentially a bilingual. Monolingualism is something very uncommon and recent research shows that we all are naturally multilingual.

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The image shows a video frame with a speaker in the foreground and a presentation slide in the background. The slide is titled "Classifications of Bilingualism" and contains a bullet point: "Depending on the linguistic, cognitive, developmental and social dimensions, Bilinguals are classified on the basis of the degree of fluency and competence in the languages by age, context, manner of acquisition of the languages." The NPTEL logo is visible in the top right corner of the slide.

So, bilingualism refers to a state where an individual is able to use more than two languages and this is a wonderful phenomenon. I mean you might have seen people speaking or interacting, sharing in more than one language, maybe in two languages, three languages, you might have come across people who know four languages or five languages. Are they different? Do they have some special capabilities?

They are like us common people, it is a very natural phenomenon you can have access to more than five languages, more than four languages, more than two languages, so it is not something very specific, special thing, it is all about the circumstances, the situation, social situation, settings where we are born and brought up.

So, in the Indian context when we see, we see a majority of the population is at least bilingual so we know more than two languages. Now, the question is does it benefit us? Does it benefit the person who uses more than two languages, or three languages? Does it give some advantage to such people who have more than two languages or three languages at their disposal, they are capable of using it, they are able to use it, two languages, or three languages.

They have proficiency in many languages. Do they have an advantage or is it the case that learning many languages create a kind of cognitive load? So, if you look at this cognitive load thing very, very few people talked about it in the early stages, of early research works. But now it is widely held belief and proved through research that knowing multiple languages create a cognitive advantage.

And if you, suppose you can speak Hindi, you can speak Tamil, you can speak Manipuri and you can speak Assamese, Bangla, Marathi, and what advantage do you get? You get access to these different societies; you can develop solidarity and bond with the speakers of these languages. You are easily accepted, and your acceptability enhances, your accessibility to the linguistic resource, to the social structure of the speakers of those languages grows.

So, you can have lots of advantages by speaking and understanding multiple languages, it gives you additional linguistic resources. In some of the lectures, we will talk about code-mixing and code-switching and we will understand how beautifully these phenomena help learners, and users of the language to get a lot of cognitive, social, and other advantages.

So, knowing more than two languages or being bilingual or multilingual is an advantageous thing, you get a lot of advantages and leverage out of it. At the same time, recent research shows that it enhances our cognitive and analytical skills and mathematical skills, and perhaps this is the reason why most of the education policies, in the early educational policies, focus on exposing kids or the children to many languages.

NEP – National Education Policy 2020 also underlines the same fact that knowing more languages broadens the cognitive base of the learner, gives access to multiple cultures, it gives access to multiple linguistic resources, it enhances your mathematical abilities, analytical abilities, and cognitive abilities. So, bilingualism is a beautiful phenomenon.

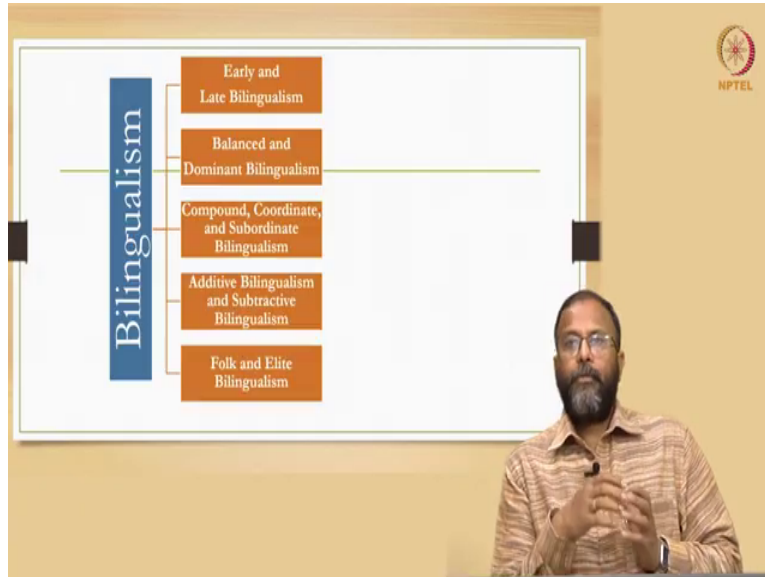
Now, the question is that if I say I am bilingual or multilingual, do you have, do I have equal proficiency and competence in all other languages, other than my mother tongue do I have access to or proficiency in all these languages similar, similar proficiency, equal proficiency or does it differ? Do I have mother tongue-like or native-like competence in language 2 or language 3 or do I have limited access to language 1, 2, or 3 or 4, whatever I know apart from my mother tongue?

This is question number one. Question number two, to what extent of proficiency and competence can be labeled as level someone be bilingual or multilingual? So, do we count L1, L2, L3, L4 in a linear way, or do we have a complex phenomenon and or is it a complex phenomenon where we cannot actually distinguish the boundaries of L1, L2, L3, L4, L5? So, it all depends.

So, in understanding the different levels of competence, different levels of proficiencies, and different levels of accessibility to these linguistic resources, we can classify bilinguals based on the degree of fluency, the degree of competence in the language used by let us say age as a demographic factor, the context in which it is used, social setting, the way individual acquires it and the domain where we use them.

So, there are multiple factors that determine the degree of competence, proficiency, and accessibility to linguistic, and other linguistic resources and we will go through all of these one by one.

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So, if you look at the types of bilinguals or the categories of bilinguals or bilingualism as a phenomenon, you can come across multiple classifications and categories. But there are certain defined and globally accepted categories that we will refer to in this class. So, first and foremost is early and late bilingualism. So, who are these early and late bilinguals? Who is an early bilingual? Who is a late bilingual? Both are bilinguals but who is early who is late, we will talk about it in a while.

Then the second category we can talk about is balanced and dominant bilinguals. So, what do you mean by balanced bilingualism or dominant bilingualism, we will talk about it in a while. Compound coordinate and subordinate bilingualism, we will talk about it. Another category that is very important category is additive bilingualism and subtractive bilingualism and the last important category, not the least but last important category we have is folk bilingualism and elite bilingualism.


So, we have these categories of bilinguals depending on the context in which they use the language, depending on the manner in which they have acquired the other language, and depending on the degree of their fluency and level of competence. Right now, we will not talk about competence in terms of linguistic, grammatical, cultural, and pragmatic competencies.

We will go by a generic, general definition of competence where you are able to use language, the second or third language in all four skills easily, like listening, speaking, reading, and writing,

there are integrated linguistic skills and if you are able to use that language equally with equalities in all these skills so that is a very generic definition we will consider today.

So, now we have five distinct categories of bilinguals. So, early and late bilinguals, balanced and dominant bilinguals, compound, coordinate and subordinate bilinguals, additive and subtractive bilinguals, and folk and elite bilinguals. So, we will go through each of these categories one after the other.

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Early and Late Bilingualism

- Early bilingualism is defined as the acquisition of more than one language in the pre-adolescent phase of life (Bactens Beardsmore, 1986). Late bilingualism has been defined as the acquisition of one language before and the other language after the age of 8 years.
- Early and late bilinguals are distinguished based on their attainment of linguistic competence. Early bilinguals attain native-like competence in both languages. According to Swain (1972) early bilingualism manifests bilingualism as a native language.
- Late bilinguals are regarded as non-native speakers of the L2, who do not attain the required competence in L2, as evidenced by structural grammatical inadequacies and inability to detect linguistic ambiguity (Bactens Beardsmore, 1986).

So, let us start with early and late bilinguals. What do we mean by that? So, early bilingual or bilingualism is defined as the acquisition of more than one language in the pre-adolescent phase of life. So, early stage, very early childhood, when you learn more than two languages. Whereas late bilingualism or late bilinguals are those who acquire the other language, other than the mother tongue after let us say the age of roughly 8 years of age.

So, by the time the learner or the person has acquired the native language completely, the person has become linguistically adult and the person has acquired the mother tongue completely so that learning of the mother tongue or acquisition of the mother tongue is complete and then takes on the other language. Early bilingualism refers to the exposure of the child to two or three languages simultaneously in early childhood.

So, it will be very difficult for us to determine based on the level of competency which is the mother tongue, because the child will acquire all these two or three languages with equal ease, competence, and effortlessly, so the child will have equal competency in all these languages if the child is exposed to more than two languages in the early childhood where the child is still in formative years of acquisition of mother tongue.

So, if you have mother tongue and another tongue simultaneously exposed to the child, a child is exposed to simultaneously mother tongue and another tongue it will be difficult for us to and this

is the common case in India a child learning let us say two languages or a Tamil speaking child or family settled in Delhi north, Tamil is a language of Tamil Nadu, but let us say a Tamil speaking family settles in Delhi and the child is exposed to Tamil and Hindi at a very early age of life.

And if it so happens that the child is surrounded by Hindi-speaking native speakers all around, the child will have access to Hindi in very early childhood, and the child will learn Tamil as their mother tongue and Hindi as well as another tongue simultaneously, because the exposure is very early, and child will become bilingual and with excellent command on both the languages.

Early and late bilinguals are distinguished based on their attainment of linguistic competence, so how they attain competence in these two languages we can distinguish early and late bilinguals. Early bilinguals attain native-like competence in both languages as we just mentioned, Swain says *early bilinguals manifest bilingualism as a native language*, so it is very difficult to distinguish the native language the mother tongue, and another tongue among such people or learners or a child and children which one is L1 and which one is L2 because they have equal and almost excellent command on both the languages that is the beauty of early bilingualism.

Whereas late bilingualism, bilinguals, or bilingualism can be regarded as non-native speakers of L2, L1 is let us say mother tongue, so Tamil is the mother tongue and Hindi is another tongue, a second language. So, if you say late bilingual that means the person or the child has been exposed to L2 let us say Hindi after the child completed the acquisition of L1 like Tamil.

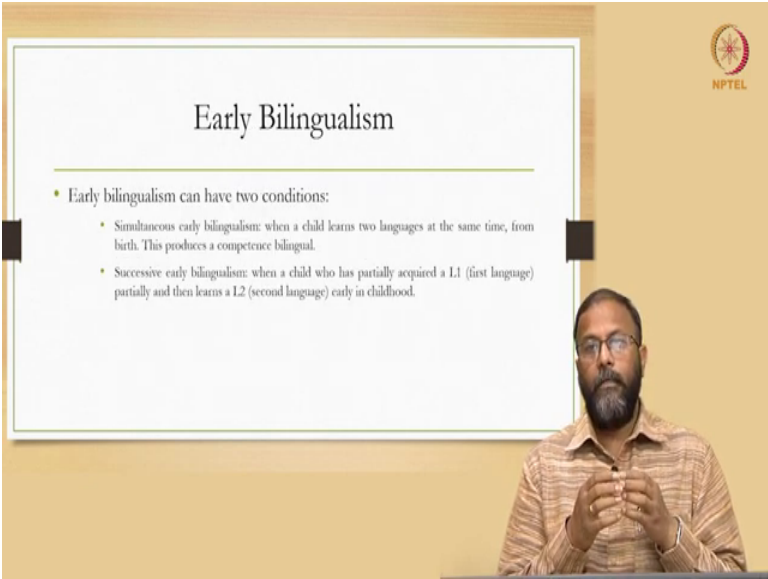
The child will have an excellent command of L2 as well there is absolutely no problem. But it will have little difference and restrictions in terms of detecting linguistic ambiguity or developing a native speaker's intuition in the language. So, that means late bilinguals, in that case, the acquisition of L1 is complete and L1 is established in our linguistic repertoire as a mother tongue, and you have excellent command and you become a native speaker of L1.

When you are exposed to L2 let us say by crossing the age of 8 or 9 by the time the acquisition of L1 is complete and learning of L2 starts. So, there will be a little different as compared to the other child which has L1 and L2 exposure to L1 and L2 simultaneously. And what is the difference?

In the other case like the early bilingual case, the child will have an excellent command like native command in both languages, the child will be able to identify and detect linguistic ambiguities, the child will be able to develop native-like intuition in language whereas in late bilinguals they will have command on a structure of the language, absolute command on the structure.

When it comes to pragmatics or when it comes to using of it they will have little challenges or restrictions on detecting ambiguity or developing native-like intuition, linguistic intuition, so unlike native speakers, they will be, they can be identified as late bilinguals.

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The image shows a video frame with a presenter in the bottom right corner. The main part of the frame is a slide titled "Early Bilingualism". The slide content is as follows:

Early Bilingualism

- Early bilingualism can have two conditions:
 - Simultaneous early bilingualism: when a child learns two languages at the same time, from birth. This produces a competence bilingual.
 - Successive early bilingualism: when a child who has partially acquired a L1 (first language) partially and then learns a L2 (second language) early in childhood.

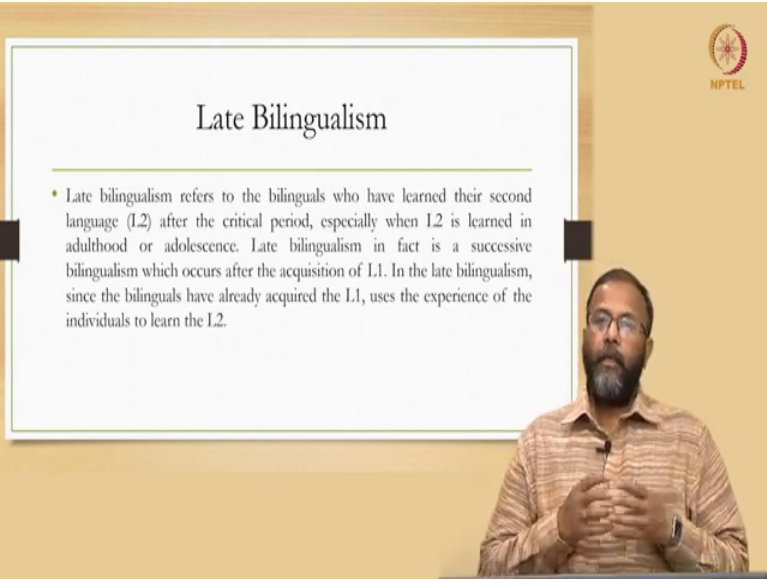
So, when we say early bilingualism still, we can have two different cases, and conditions. One is simultaneous and one is successive. So, simultaneously that means they are, the kids are exposed to L1 and L2 simultaneously and equally, so exposure is almost equal, the social setting is the same, where both languages are spoken and used by adults around the child and the child has access to both languages with equal ease and opportunities. So, that is simultaneous bilingualism, early bilingualism.

Successive early bilingualism refers to that phenomenon where a child has started with let us say L1 and to an extent, the child has gained it like 3 or 4 years of age, and then a child is exposed to

L2, the second language. But because it is before the age of (0) (22:37) and the child's acquisition process is still not complete, the learning will be far better than the late bilinguals.

So, even if it is successful bilingualism, the way, it will be different from late bilingualism. Why? Because the learning of the first language, acquisition of the first language is not still complete. So, partially acquired not still complete and the child has access to another language. So, it will be successive early bilingualism but better than enriched and better access to the linguistic resource as compared to those of the late bilinguals.

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Late Bilingualism

- Late bilingualism refers to the bilinguals who have learned their second language (L2) after the critical period, especially when L2 is learned in adulthood or adolescence. Late bilingualism in fact is a successive bilingualism which occurs after the acquisition of L1. In the late bilingualism, since the bilinguals have already acquired the L1, uses the experience of the individuals to learn the L2.

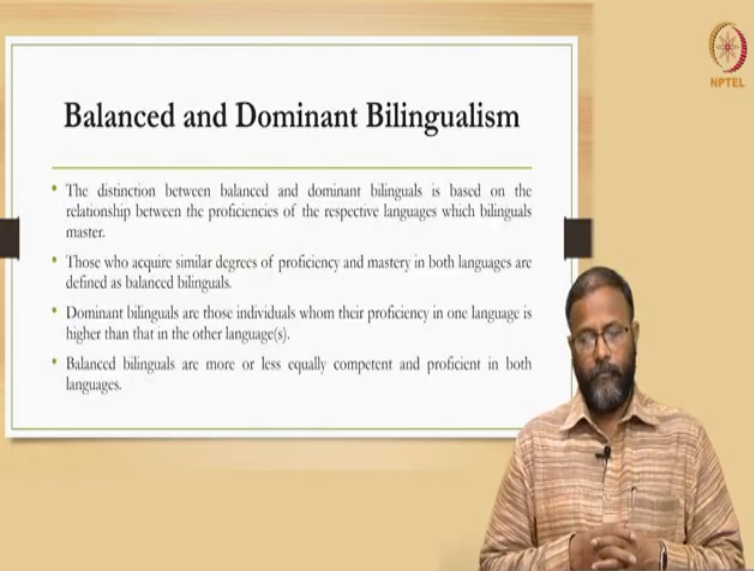
Whereas late bilingualism refers to bilinguals who have learned their second language after their first language and after the critical period. You can recall the idea of a critical period in language acquisition, you had a long discussion on that. And it happens especially when L2 is learned in adulthood or adolescence.

So, you have already completed the learning or acquiring the first language, the native language, and you have become a master of it and then at a later stage in life after your critical period, you are exposed to the second language. So, learning a second language will not be as effortless as it is compared to the early bilingualist. So, the learner has to make a lot of effort to learn.

And that learning will not be close to native-like intuitions in a second language. So, in late bilingualism since the bilinguals have already acquired the L1 the mother tongue, they use the experience of L1 to learn L2, it is successive, L1 is complete, learning of L1 is complete and then you learn L2 as a second language.

And the experience of acquisition in L1 is used as a resource to learn a second language. So, the proficiency in L2 will not be similar as compared to the early bilinguals who learned both these languages before the critical period, so that is early bilingualism and late bilingualism and that is the difference.

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The slide is titled "Balanced and Dominant Bilingualism" and features an NPTEL logo in the top right corner. It contains a list of four bullet points defining the terms. A man with a beard and glasses is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide frame, appearing to be presenting.

- The distinction between balanced and dominant bilinguals is based on the relationship between the proficiencies of the respective languages which bilinguals master.
- Those who acquire similar degrees of proficiency and mastery in both languages are defined as balanced bilinguals.
- Dominant bilinguals are those individuals whom their proficiency in one language is higher than that in the other language(s).
- Balanced bilinguals are more or less equally competent and proficient in both languages.

Then we move to another category and that category is called balanced and dominant bilingualism. So, the distinction between balanced and dominant bilinguals is based on the relationship between proficiencies of the respective languages which bilinguals master. So, balanced as the term suggests both linguistic resources are available to the user, and to the speaker and the speaker has balanced access, equal access to both resources.

But dominant bilingualism as the term suggests means there must be one language that is dominant and dominantly present, used and the other language is subordinate or under it, not as dominant, not, so both the languages are not at equal footing, one has precedence over the other.

So, what do you mean by that? So, those who acquire similar degrees of proficiency and mastery in both languages are defined as balanced bilinguals. So, those bilinguals who have let us say mastery and proficiency, competence in two languages equal and they use it with equal ease, they are balanced. In that case, L1 does not dominate L2 or L2 does not dominate L1. So, both are balanced and both are equal.

So, the user has access to both the languages and linguistic resources with equal ease, competence, and proficiency. So, none of the two languages dominates the other. So, that is balanced. Dominant bilingualism means dominant bilinguals have their proficiency in one language superior or higher than that of the other language.

So, if I speak, if I am bilingual, I speak Tamil, I speak Hindi, if I have equal competence in Tamil and Hindi both without any problem, I am a balanced bilingual. So, I have two languages Tamil and Hindi in my verbal repertoire and I have access to both linguistic resources with equal ease. So, my understanding and knowledge of Tamil do not dominate my understanding and knowledge of Hindi or vice versa, I am a balanced bilingual.

So, I am a person with free will depending on the social setting, need and requirements I can use Hindi or I can use Tamil and I have absolutely no problem in using that, choosing one and using that. So, I am a balanced bilingual. But if my Tamil dominates my Hindi or if my Hindi dominates my Tamil, what does it mean?

That my proficiency in Tamil is better and enriched than that in Hindi, which means my Tamil is dominant and I am bilingual, I can use Hindi and Tamil but predominantly Tamil takes over. So, my skills, linguistic skills, my access to Tamil resources, and linguistic resource is far better enriched and dominant as compared to these things in Hindi.

So, that means if I do so, or if I am this is my case where my Tamil is dominant and Hindi is not as easily available to me, then I am a dominant bilingual, a Tamil dominant bilingual. So, I am bilingual, I am using two languages, and I have access to two languages, but my Tamil understanding and competence are far higher and superior compared to my Hindi understanding and competence.

So, balanced bilinguals are more or less equally competent and proficient in both languages. However, dominant bilinguals have one language, and competence in one language is superior to competence and proficiency in other languages. So, that is balanced and dominant bilingualism.