

Speaking a Mile in Someone Else's Shoes

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Pacific Standard:

In the midst of a debate over the potential cognitive benefits of learning a second language, new research suggests it may have social value as well. Actually, even being around people who speak different languages may help children learn to take others' perspectives, making communication more effective for everyone.

“[E]xposure to multiple languages is, and has been for millennia, an integral part of human development,” writes a team led by University of Chicago psychology graduate student Samantha Fan in *Psychological Science*. “Children in multilingual environments routinely have the opportunity to track who speaks which language, who understands which content, and who can converse with whom,” suggesting that language exposure may help them better comprehend the social aspects of conversation. In particular, the team argues, it might help kids learn an important skill, albeit one that's difficult to master: taking the perspectives of the people they're listening to.

Read the whole story: [*Pacific Standard*](#)