

The ‘Bilingual Advantage’ May Not Actually Be a Thing

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New York Magazine:

It feels like at some point in the recent past, the notion that being bilingual offers certain cognitive advantages (above and beyond allowing one to communicate in two languages) went fully mainstream. It almost seems obvious now: Well, *duh*, obviously exposure to a whole other language is going to change your brain in beneficial ways, specifically when it comes to focus and switching between tasks. But not so fast: A new metastudy in *Psychological Science* suggests that there’s some skewing going on when it comes to which sorts of studies on this subject are published — and, as a result, which ones trickle down to garner mainstream attention.

A team led by Angela de Bruin of Edinburgh University examined 104 papers on the bilingual advantage presented at academic conferences, which are often venues for researchers to get feedback on early results before refining their work and attempting to get published in peer-reviewed journals. The papers de Bruin’s team looked at were almost evenly split when it came to which ones had results supporting the notion of a bilingual advantage and which ones presented results challenging the notion (including “mixed findings” papers that leaned slightly in one direction or the other).

Read the whole story: [*New York Magazine*](#)