

Bilingual people take greater risks when feedback is given in their native language

April 16 2015

Recent research from Bangor University has revealed that Chinese-English bilingual individuals take more risk in gambling when feedback is given to them in Chinese, their native language, than in English, their second language.

In a study recently published in the *Journal of Neuroscience*, Shan Gao, Robert Rogers, and Guillaume Thierry from Bangor University's School of Psychology and Ondrej Zika from Aberystwyth University investigated risk taking in different language contexts.

As part of the study, Chinese-English students were asked to gamble in a computerized trial. They were given feedback in either Chinese or English in different parts of the experiment.

The results showed that participants made faster decisions and took more gambles when feedback was given in their native language, confirming that their attitudes towards the level of risk changed. Feedback given in English led to fewer gambles and slower responses overall compared with feedback in Chinese.

Trend showed that when people received positive feedback in their native language, it was associated with greater trust than in their second language, in turn leading to greater risk taking.

Professor Guillaume Thierry explains:

"Imagine if we generalise this to every bilingual speaker: if you are involved in an activity requiring that you take risks, it may be better to give you feedback in your second language to minimise risk. And of course the flip side: if someone wants to get you to take more risks, they should give you feedback in your [native language](#). Now an even more interesting aspect of the findings is that it only applies for positive -not negative- [feedback](#).

"This is the first time in my career that I hesitated submitting a paper on ethical grounds. If online gambling companies used this result creatively, they could substantially increase their margins. But then again, there is a flip side. If we disseminate this information fast enough, bilingual individuals may be aware of this fallacy and protect themselves, for instance by strategically always gambling in their second - or a foreign - language."

More information: "Second Language Feedback Abolishes the "Hot Hand" Effect during Even-Probability Gambling" *The Journal of Neuroscience*, 15 April 2015, 35(15): 5983-5989; [DOI: 10.1523/JNEUROSCI.3622-14.2015](#)

Provided by Bangor University

Citation: Bilingual people take greater risks when feedback is given in their native language (2015, April 16) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-04-bilingual-people-greater-feedback-native.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.