

How learning languages translates into health benefits for society

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Credit: Paul Brennan/public domain

The advantages of speaking a second language - for health and mental ability - are to come under the spotlight at an event at the AAAS annual meeting in Washington, DC.

Experts in bilingualism will examine how learning a second language at any age not only imparts knowledge and [cultural understanding](#), but also

improves thinking skills and mental agility. It can delay brain ageing and offset the initial symptoms of dementia.

During the symposium, researchers will examine how findings from bilingualism research are currently applied, and how they could best benefit society through education, policymaking and business. Experts will examine current research themes related to bilingualism from infancy to old age, and explore their implications for society.

Professor Antonella Sorace of the University of Edinburgh, who established and directs the Bilingualism Matters Centre, will focus on research on minority languages, such as Gaelic and Sardinian. She will discuss whether the benefits associated with [minority languages](#) are consistent with those of learning more prestigious languages.

Professor Sorace will be joined by researchers from San Diego State University, Pennsylvania State University, Concordia University, Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Connecticut.

The symposium, entitled 'Bilingualism Matters' is directly inspired by the Bilingualism Matters Centre at the University of Edinburgh, which is at the forefront of public engagement in this field and has a large international network. The event will take place from 1.30-4.30pm on Saturday 13 February in the Marshall Ballroom South, Marriot Wardman Park, Washington DC.

Professor Sorace, of the University of Edinburgh's School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences, said: "We are excited to reflect on Edinburgh's experiences in bilingualism as an international example of cutting-edge scientific research and [public engagement](#), and to share the current state of research in this area and its relevance for the general public."

Provided by University of Edinburgh

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