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Brief article

Components of executive control with advantages for bilingual children in two cultures

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Abstract

The present study used a behavioral version of an anti-saccade task, called the “faces task”™, developed by [Bialystok, E., Craik, F. I. M., & Ryan, J. (2006). Executive control in a modified anti-saccade task: Effects of aging and bilingualism. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 32, 1341–1354] to isolate the components of executive functioning responsible for previously reported differences between monolingual and bilingual children and to determine the generality of these differences by comparing bilinguals in two cultures. Three components of executive control were investigated: response suppression, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility. Ninety children, 8-years old, belonged to one of three groups: monolinguals in Canada, bilinguals in Canada, and bilinguals in India. The bilingual children

in both settings were faster than monolinguals in conditions based on inhibitory control and cognitive flexibility but there was no significant difference between groups in response suppression or on a control condition that did not involve executive control. The children in the two bilingual groups performed equivalently to each other and differently from the monolinguals on all measures in which there were group differences, consistent with the interpretation that bilingualism is responsible for the enhanced executive control. These results contribute to understanding the mechanism responsible for the reported bilingual advantages by identifying the processes that are modified by bilingualism and establishing the generality of these findings across bilingual experiences. They also contribute to theoretical conceptions of the components of executive control and their development.



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Keywords

Bilingualism; Executive function; Cognition and cultural; Cognitive development

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