

In our daily lives, we encounter people that belong to other groups (for example, people from a different ethnicity). Sometimes, these outgroup members are perceived as a threat, which can lead to the development of stereotypes and prejudice. Stereotypes are beliefs that we have about members of other groups, and prejudice refers to the feelings that we develop towards them. As both stereotypes and prejudice can have negative effects, it is essential to find ways of preventing their expression.

This project aims at understanding the mechanisms underlying a relationship between bilingualism and reduced stereotype expression. More specifically, we will evaluate whether there is an association between various aspects of the bilingual experience and the likelihood of expressing stereotypes. This project is a follow-up of a previous study that we conducted, where we found that bilinguals were less likely to express stereotypes compared to monolinguals.

**Previous research has shown that having a flexible mindset and more efficient executive control can reduce the expression of stereotypes.** Executive control refers to the mental abilities that guide our behaviour toward different objectives, and its development can be influenced by different life experiences, such as bilingualism. The extra effort that bilinguals make to use the languages they know seems to work as a training exercise, helping them be more flexible and develop a more efficient executive control. If more efficient executive control is beneficial for reducing stereotypes, then **bilinguals should express less stereotypes due to their extra “training” in executive control.** However, the enhancement of executive control abilities seems to be influenced by the specific language experiences that a bilingual has. **In this project, we analyse whether particular language experiences** (e.g., frequency of use of more than one language on a daily basis, frequency of switching between languages, degree of language proficiency in foreign languages) **are related to differences in the likelihood of expressing stereotypes.**

To address the project aims, we will re-analyse the responses of bilinguals to different questionnaires on language, executive control, stereotypes, motivation, and multiculturalism. **To conduct these analyses, we will combine two different analytical approaches, Structural Equation Modeling and Network Modeling.** Structural Equation Modeling will allow us to test the associations between different bilingual experiences and the expression of stereotypes, taking into account the mediating role of executive control. In addition, Network Modeling, a recently developed technique, will allow us to explore all the possible interrelations between our variables without restricting them to a mediation. In the network model, we will also consider the influence of motivation to respond without prejudice and multicultural experience because motivation to respond without prejudice is closely related to the likelihood of expressing stereotypes, and multiculturalism is often present in the life of bilinguals. The analytical approach that we will implement in this project is very novel, and, to date, no study has used Structural Equation Modeling and/or Network Modeling to answer similar research questions.

The results from this project will enhance our understanding of the possible consequences of bilingualism in society and will provide some insights into possible ways of reducing the expression of stereotypes and prejudice.