**Connecting the cognitive and social aspects of bilingualism**

Research shows that bilingualism in any languages, regardless of their status, prestige, and worldwide diffusion, can give children and adults a range of linguistic, cognitive and social benefits - although not in all cases. I will first briefly describe the main misconceptions and facts about bilingualism over the lifespan, focusing in particular on current research on minority and minoritized languages and how bilingual education can contribute to their maintenance. I will then argue that more attention should be paid by researchers, educators and policy makers to children’s attitudes and perception of their languages, as well as speakers’ confidence in their own bilingual competence. Finally, I will suggest that the dissemination of correct information on bilingualism in different sectors of society can help building firm community foundations for inter-generational language transmission, enable informed decisions about bilingual education, and establish a vital connection between language policy and speakers; I will show how the *Bilingualism Matters* organisation is addressing these aims.

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Antonella Sorace is Professor of Developmental Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh. She is a world leading authority and has published widely in the field of bilingualism across the lifespan, where she brings together methods from linguistics, experimental psychology, and cognitive science. She is also committed to bringing research to people in different sectors of society . She is the founding director of the non-profit organisation *Bilingualism Matters*, which currently has thirty branches in three continents.