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Bilingual children have better memories

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Bilingual children develop better working memories than those who only know one language. This is according to new [research](http://www.alphagalileo.org/ViewItem.aspx?ItemId=128650&CultureCode=en) from the University of Granada and the University of York in Toronto in Canada, which showed young people who can speak in multiple tongues often have a memory that effectively holds, processes and updates information over short periods of time.

Published in the Journal of Experimental [Child Psychology](http://decp.bps.org.uk/), the study included a sample of bilingual children aged five to seven and discovered the more difficult the working memory tasks set, the better the bilingual kids performed.

Working memory is of particular importance because it relates to the execution of numerous activities including mental calculation and reading comprehension.

Julia Morales Castillo of the Department of Experimental Psychology at the University of Granada said: "Bilingualism does not only improve the working memory in an isolated way, but they affect the global development of executive functions, especially when they have to interact with each other."

Chartered Psychologist Dr Tony Cline of University College London commented: "We have known for some time that the challenge of learning to speak more than one language confers positive advantages in cognitive development. This study from a team that included Canadian as well as Spanish researchers helps to clarify how that might occur - through a more efficient integration of all the skills involved in the executive control of our thinking processes, including working memory."