

Anna Morpurgo Davies Lecture

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Why language learning opens the mind: old prejudices, trendy myths, and new research

These are interesting times for both the scientific and the public understanding of multilingualism. Old prejudices about learning more than one language in childhood are still widespread, yet new misconceptions about the ‘bilingual advantage’ treat language learning as a panacea. We need two types of ‘bridges’ to debunk old and new myths: bridges that connect different research fields to help understand the interacting factors affecting multilingualism, and bridges to bring a balanced picture of multilingualism research to people from all sectors of society who need to make informed decisions. In this lecture, Antonella Sorace will describe how the research and public engagement centre Bilingualism Matters is successfully building both types of bridges worldwide.