

Optimism Bias is Robust in a Second Language

Most people are irrationally optimistic

Optimism bias: Rating positive events as more probable than negative events

Optimism bias correlates positively with positive mood, and negatively with depressive symptoms

We tried to manipulate optimism bias - might be useful for treatment

Bias is reduced when participants use their second language? (Oganian et al., 2019)

Research Questions:

If people practise estimating probabilities in their second language, does this reduce optimism bias in their first language too?

Does this training affect their mood?

Method

334 students in Turkey, studying in English

Participants estimate probabilities of positive and negative events, in Turkish

Pretest - training - posttest

Training intervention:

Participants rate events, half in English, half in Turkish - *Language Switch* condition

Participants rate all events in Turkish - *Control* condition

Results

Switching language made no difference to optimism bias, or mood!

However, optimism bias always correlated as expected with positive mood and depressive symptoms, $\rho_s = .35 - .63$

Conclusions

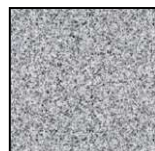
Optimism bias is a robust effect!

If people are fairly proficient in their second language, switching does not affect the bias (Oganian et al., 2019)

Are probability estimates informed by current mood (affect-as-information hypothesis)?

This happens at quite a basic level of processing, so language context does not disrupt it?

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