For many multilingual individuals, speaking in one language for so long can lead to a ‘delayed recovery’ from suppressing their 2nd or 3rd languages. Previous research has shown that the delayed recovery leads to audible delays in language switching, but further research on suppression recovery has not dove beyond that conclusion.

Hypothesis

The time it takes to switch between two different languages, especially for those that have been suppressed for a considerable amount of time (ie. English to Mandarin) is slower on average in polyglots when compared to bilinguals.

METHOD

TASK: English and Mandarin Language Naming Picture Task
PARTICIPANTS: Bilingual (fluent in English and Mandarin) and polyglot (fluent in English, Mandarin and a third language) students.

DESIGN:
- The study will be performed as a within subjects design.
- Participants will be shown ten images and will be asked to name the images’ topics in the first two blocks; first block in Mandarin, second block in English.
- Third block will have a different set of images, where participants will then name in Mandarin.
- Participants will observe and name images through a computer application with keyboard input.
- Proficiency will be self-rated by participants through CEFR scale.

ANALYSIS

- A minimum of 20 participants can help validate significance.
- Large delay in average reaction times of Block 3 compared to Blocks 1 and 2.
- Mean average of reaction times and naming accuracy slowest for all participants in Block 3.
- More proficient bilinguals and polyglots had slower average accuracy and reaction times.

PROSPECTIVE CONCLUSION

- Suppression of more than one language slows down ‘recovery’ significantly more than just suppressing a single language alone.
- Effect of Linguistic Distance may play a role in language switching and suppression.
- Future studies can make larger blocks of words or utilizing more than two languages to observe differences among the language groups.