

How to debias thinking: insight from the foreign language effect

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Much of our daily decision making is made without thorough reflection but is guided by intuitions and heuristics. Such thinking is effortless and efficient, but subject to systematic biases. People use metacognitive cues to decide whether their initial thinking is accurate enough, or whether they need to invest scarce cognitive resources into further deliberation.

Research on debiasing reports mostly null effects, or is only able to reduce a very specific bias. In this talk, I speculate whether and how such debiasing can be systematically achieved. That is, I review own and others research on how manipulating perceived task fluency (e.g., by forcing bilinguals to process a problem in their foreign language) can affect people's metacognition and help them to override their intuitive thinking errors.