**Why study bilingualism?**
- Policy
  - How to "integrate" non-English-speaking children
  - How to teach languages more efficiently.
- Understanding the mind
  - Language and cognition
  - Different languages -> ?

**Examples of multilingual regions**

**Bilingualism is popular**

**Bilingualism is HOT!**

- Early studies: bilingualism bad
  - 60’s - maybe not
  - Lately - bilingualism good

**Bilingualism: it doesn’t make you dumber**

**Myths**
- Learning more than one language confuses a child.
- Learning two languages may cause cultural identity or split-personality problems in children.
- Children should learn a first language well before being exposed to a second language.
- Bilinguals have lower IQ’s.
- A person cannot be a Real Bilingual™ if they learn a second language late.
- Bilinguals have to translate from their weaker to their stronger language.
Bilingualism may make people better at:

- Cognitive flexibility and cognitive control
- Metalinguistic abilities
- Concept formation
- Divergent thinking and creativity
- Cognitive style
- Reading
- Understanding others
- Aging gracefully, cognitively speaking

Things to keep in mind

- Can we separate bilingualism from cognition?
- What is bilingualism, anyway?
- What is the correct control group?
- Correlation is not causation.

So, can bilingualism make people smarter? How would we know?

My biases

- Look at development
- Look at process, mechanism
- Use computational models to unearth mechanism
- (grudgingly) Same for neuro-imaging

An example...

What does this tell us?

- Critical period and lateralization => A language module on a maturation timeline. OR

  * Implicit vs. Explicit learning (Jewela)
    - Implicit linguistic competence vs. explicit rule learning
    - Gradual loss of plasticity of the procedural memory for language.
    - Greater reliance on conscious declarative memory for learning in general.

The plan

- Overview of bilingual super-powers
  - Cognitive flexibility
  - Metalinguistic awareness
- Overview of bilingual (and lang learning) processes
  - Representation
  - Switching
- Processing
- Revisit bilingual super-powers