

# [The effects of bilingualism education essay](https://assignbuster.com/the-effects-of-bilingualism-education-essay/)

Historically, bilingualism had been quite a controversial during 1920s – 1950s. People would think that bilingual meant being a lower-class citizen. Some studies even showed that on oral tasks and performance-based tasks, monolinguals always did better than bilinguals. However, during 1960s, a breakthrough study showed that bilingual children outperformed monolinguals on most of the tasks. Nowadays, people speak different other languages around us, the stereotypes of being bilingual must have changed and so as the attitude toward it. The new studies show more and more benefits of being fluent in more than just one language. In “ Beyond the Classroom: Bilingualism, Cognitive Skills, and Health”, Wodniecka and Cepeda explores the effects of bilingualism on cognitive skills and health. They encourage the readers to believe that bilingualism can reduce the severity of ADHD, improve cognitive skills and memory, and may delay dementia during aging.

Before we begin to analyze the argument being made here, we must first understand the authors′ backgrounds, the relationship of them to the article, and the audiences of the article. Zofia Wodniecka is currently a postdoctoral fellow at York University in Toronto. She teaches psycholinguistic and behavioral characteristics and explores bilingualism from these perspectives. Nicholas J. Cepeda is an assistant professor and heads the Cognitive Flexibility Lab at York University in Toronto. He teaches educational psychology and studies cognitive adjustability, bilingualism, and ADHD. In this article, the relationship of the authors to the material seems quite distant. Even though, they are both experts on the subject, they seem to want to persuade the audiences by citing other many studies along with a few of their works. The audiences that the authors directly aim at are for language teachers because this article was published in a 2007 issue of Mosaic: A Journal for Language Teachers. It is also possible that other indirect audiences of this article would also be bilingual parents, college students who are majoring in psycholinguistic, people who are interested in learning a new language, school’s owners, or even people who are afraid of dementia when they are getting older. To emphasize to the readers that bilingualism can reduce the severity of ADHD, improve cognitive skills and memory, and may delay dementia during aging, the authors use two different rhetorical techniques, which are the emotional and logical appeals.

First of all, being bilingual may reduce the severity of ADHD. After showing us that bilingualism has effects on brain development, Wodniecka and Cepeda use Pathos, they write “ we speculate that becoming proficient in a second language might either help children already diagnosed with ADHD develop improved ability to control their actions or reduce the chances of developing ADHD.” This is an emotional appeal to the parents of ADHD children, or the parents who are afraid their children might be developing ADHD. The authors give hope to the parents by showing that becoming a bilingual, the brain will be stimulated twice of a monolingual. Therefore, bilingualism has a chance to reduce the development of ADHD in children.

Secondly, bilingualism can improve cognitive skills and memory. The authors support these claims by using the appeal to reason and evidence. For the first example, after introducing us to the history of the studies of bilingualism, the authors write “ bilingual children outperformed monolinguals on the majority of tasks, measuring both verbal and non-verbal skills.” This claim is supported by the study of Peal and Lambert (1962) who explained that bilingual children are superior at idea organization and cognitive flexibility, which also supported by another research by Kessler and Quinn (1980; 1987), who found a benefit of bilingual on problem solving and creativity exercises. All these claims and evidences are solid because they show not only one but two researches that support the claim of bilingualism improve cognitive skills.

Moreover, another example of Logos that Wodniecka and Cepeda use is in the middle of the article. After showing us that bilinguals outperform monolinguals on most of the tasks, the authors write “ bilinguals outperform monolinguals on memory tests.” This is supported by a study from Wodniecka, Craik, and Bialystok (2007) claiming that bilinguals are more successful than their peers at remembering a series of knowledge, or the source from which they learn the material. Also, it is said that older bilinguals show the same levels of memory as younger monolinguals. This means that being bilingual may help reduce age-related memory deterioration. The evidences show that being bilingual can help people to have a better memory.

Finally, being a bilingual may affect your brain development. By using another logical appeal, after exploring the benefits of bilingualism on cognitive skills, Wodniecka and Cepeda say “ knowing and using multiple languages, on an everyday basis, might delay some aspects of inevitable cognitive decline related to aging.” This is supported by a research by Bialystok, Craik, and Freedman (2007). It suggests that bilingualism has a big benefit to brain development. It protects against the beginning of dementia. The research investigates the entries of patients who are advised to memory clinic with cognitive complaints. The results show that the average age at which the symptoms of mental decay happen in the monolingual group is 71. 4-years-old, and in the bilingual group is 75. 5-years-old. Bialystok et al. (2007) also points out that some factors such as education, lifestyle, and social engagement can affect biological changes. These changes can increase the reorganization of brain networks, which may increase working memory strength, thereby making the brain to better tolerate the process of dementia accumulated in the brain. As you can see that all the evidences show that being bilingual can affect brain development, it can delay the onset of dementia during aging just as the authors claim.

Through the rhetorical appeals, Wodniecka and Cepeda’s article is effective at persuading its readers because of its strong use of logical and emotional appeals to people’s desire to better their children or their education, reduce ADHD severity, and prevent dementia from happening too soon. The weak point is that the authors fail to address Ethos in the article. There is nowhere that shows the relevant of the authors or the experiences of them. After weighing the strengths and weakness though, it still suggests that bilingualism can reduce the severity of ADHD, improve cognitive skills and memory, and may delay dementia during aging. Considering more and more people are bilinguals or have started to be one, it is recommended that schools should apply bilingual education at an early age and carry it on throughout grade levels. Adults who want to start learning another language could also practice outside the classroom also.

## Work Cited

Wodniecka, Zofia, Nicholas J. Cepeda. “ Beyond the Classroom: Bilingualism, Cognitive Skills, and Health.” Mosaic: A Journal for Language Teachers 9. 3 (2007): 3-8. Print