

Effect of Bilingualism on the Development of Cognitive Processes among Children

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Abstract

The aim of this paper was to evaluate the contentions and evidence supporting two divergent views about the existence of advantages offered by bilingualism. It also considered whether a definite conclusion was possible. A qualitative research methodology using the published evidence was adopted. The published evidence supporting or rejecting the advantages of bilingualism was collected using search terms in the Google Scholar search engine. A total number of 64 papers were collected, among which only five challenged the claimed advantages enjoyed by bilingual individuals. The papers were classified by their orientation and discussed. Based on the points derived from the evaluation of evidence, some conclusions were drawn. The overwhelming research support in favour of the existence of supposed bilingual advantage tends to suggest a conclusion in favour of that hypothesis. However, the points raised by critics, such as small sample sizes, inadequate matching of other variables, as well as defective measurements and analysis cannot be ignored as they question the very validity of the studies which support bilingual advantage. Future research needs to pay more attention to these aspects.

Keywords: advantages of bilingualism, bilingualism, bilingual acquisition, childhood bilingualism

Cite as: Alshahrani, A. (2017). Effect of Bilingualism on the Development of Cognitive Processes among Children. *Arab World English Journal*, 8 (4).

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol8no4.31>