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# Changing Role of Multilingualism: Unnecessary Load Or Sophisticated Help in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

**Agnieszka Andrychowicz-Trojanowska**

*University of Warsaw, Poland*

## **Abstract**

Research on multilingualism concludes it is of great advantage to the person to know and speak foreign/second language(s) as well as to be in the process of learning/acquiring the language(s). Given the large number of kids growing up in multilingual settings, we should assume that a sizable percentage of ASD kids are exposed to many languages, too. Compared to the neurotypical population, little is known about the language and cognitive impacts of multilingualism in autism. Some of the opinions are based on false beliefs and myths and have nothing in common with scientific findings. We want to shortly characterise ASD and draw attention to the fact that a big group of ASD people is exposed to second/foreign language and to emphasise the role of scientific knowledge in the fight against popular beliefs and myths related to the negative influence of multilingualism on ASD population. Available research evidence clearly shows that exposure to another language is of big importance to ASDs as it increases, among others, the quality of their life; there is no scientific evidence on too much cognitive load or too many communication problems for ASDs exposed to second/foreign language. On the contrary, nowadays it is proved multilingualism is beneficial for ASDs. The research suggests that positive consequences of multilingualism are noticed across the lifespan and are related not only to having two languages available for communicative purposes, but also to improving chances for social contact, economic growth, cross-cultural understanding in addition to having two languages accessible for communication.

**Keywords:** Communication; foreign language learning; language development; lifespan; myth; second language acquisition