

Painting a Picture of Developmental Language Disorder in Language Minority Bilingual Children

Bonifacci, P., Atti, E., Casamenti, M., Piani, B., Porrelli, M., & Mari, R. (2020). Which measures better discriminate language minority bilingual children with and without developmental language disorder? A study testing a combined protocol of first and second language assessment. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 63(6), 1898-1915.

Language minority bilingual children (LMBC) use a language at home that varies from the language they encounter in other environments, such as school.

While LMBC are not always at increased risk for **developmental language disorders (DLDs)**, they are more likely to be misdiagnosed than their non-LMBC peers.

The article offers helpful advice to educators seeking to differentiate between LMBC students with and without DLD.

Tips for Assessment

Consider Both Languages

Evaluating bilingual children in both their primary and secondary languages offers a more complete picture of language development and may be key to spotting DLD.

Use Multiple Tests

Using multiple tests that measure different aspects of language may be better than any single test at distinguishing bilingual children with DLD from typically developing peers.

Include Parents

Asking parents to report on their child's skills in their home language may improve identification of DLD beyond assessing the student directly.

Key Comparisons

Bilingual children with DLD may struggle more than non-DLD peers with...

Narratives

Communicating information in a story format

Nonword Repetition

Repeating back nonsense words they have just heard

Morphology

The knowledge of word parts that have meaning, such as affixes, root, and base words

Vocabulary

Knowing what words mean and how to say and use them correctly