Dual Language Learners: Common Myths & Current Evidence
Cullowhee Conference 2021
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Disclosure
Dr. Wofford has the following relevant financial relationship to disclose: she receives salary from WCU. She has no relevant non-financial relationships to disclosure.
Learner Objectives

• Identify common myths with relevant evidence about language development in dual language learners
• Identify evidence-based assessment practices for identification of speech and language difficulties in dual language learners
• Identify evidence-based intervention practices for speech and language difficulties in dual language learners

Who are we talking about?

Dual language learners (DLLs)—individuals learning two languages simultaneously from infancy

Simultaneous bilingualism— the acquisition of two languages at the same time, typically prior to the age of 3

English language learners (ELLs)—language minority students in the United States who are learning English, the majority language, for social integration and educational purposes...

Sequential bilingualism—a second language introduced after age 3, at which time some level of proficiency has been established in the primary language

Who are we talking about?

<p>| Table 1: Foreign- and U.S.-Born Populations of North Carolina and the United States, 2016 |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North Carolina</th>
<th>U.S. State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Foreign Born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>789,638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of total population</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Change over Time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% change, 2000-10</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% change, 1990-2000</td>
<td>273.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share under age 5</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share ages 5-17</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who are we talking about?

Table 2. Nativity and Low-Income Status of Children in North Carolina and the United States, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>North Carolina</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Share of Population (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children between ages 6 and 17 with</td>
<td>1,483,981</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only native-born parents</td>
<td>1,422,946</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or more foreign-born parents</td>
<td>61,035</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child is native-born</td>
<td>240,744</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child is foreign-born</td>
<td>39,371</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in low-income families</td>
<td>970,294</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only native-born parents</td>
<td>732,653</td>
<td>74.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or more foreign-born parents</td>
<td>247,641</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The definition of children in low-income families includes children under age 18 who resided with at least one parent and in families with annual incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold.
Source: MPI Data Hub, "State Immigration Data Profiles: Demographics & Social."
What if I don’t feel prepared to work with DLLs? What’s my role?

“Individuals shall engage in only those aspects of the profession that are within the scope of their professional practice and competence, considering their level of education, training, and experience.”

ASHA Principle of Ethics II, Rule A

With this in mind, clinicians must consider their own ability—including education, training, and experience—in determining the most appropriate means by which to provide services to bilingual clients. In all cases, the needs of the client are paramount.

Let’s imagine that language is like a tree...
It doesn’t stop growing. Continue to crown given sufficient input. It supports the growth of other species. It breathes life into the atmosphere and environment around it. It drops seeds that propagate ideas in other domains.

Trees act as one organism. One language helps another grow.

Rather than crowd one another out, trees branch to reinforce their network. When one tree is vulnerable, others fill in the canopy.
Inosculation is a natural phenomenon in which trunks, branches or roots of two trees grow together. It is biologically similar to grafting and such trees are referred to in forestry as gemels, from the Latin word meaning "a pair".
Learning two languages will impede a child with a disability from learning anything. OR Bilingualism is confusing!

"Of all the trees we could've hit, we got to get one that hits back." — Ron Weasley, Chamber of Secrets

Do bilingual kids with disabilities get confused? Is bilingualism too hard for kids with disabilities?

FALSE

Children with disabilities CAN be bilingual
Children with disabilities SHOULD be bilingual

Kohnert & Medira, 2009; Kay-Raining Bird, Genesee, & Verhoeven, 2016; Pella, 2016; Ya, 2013

As impairment is more severe...

...the likelihood that both languages are supported drops.

(Marinova-Todd et al, 2016)

Oftentimes a bilingual approach to services is maintained only when a teacher or SLP has an interest in other languages (Pickl, 2011)
It is most important to support the child’s English development for his or her success. If the home language slips a bit, it’s okay.

Scene: Ozma and Dorothy, You don't want any of these apples. They 'ruined' my apples aren't what they ought to be?

Apple Trees from The Wizard of Oz

It is ok to just work on English? For now?

1) The home language is essential for the child to maintain connection to family – and family support is a protective factor for academic achievement

2) Research shows that supporting both languages actually results in more overall learning – and no negative impacts on English development

FALSE

Caregivers worry about majority-language educational environment (Folta, 2016)
Socioemotional development & home-/community-level language input
(Kremer-Sadlik, 2005; Wong Fillmore, 2000)

Children who speak with heavy accents, frequently omit words, and use grammatical forms that are different from other children you work with probably have language deficits.

"I am Groot!" — Groot

Guardians of the Galaxy, Groot
Do children with accents have deficits?

- An **accent** is referring to speech patterns (pronunciation)
- **Dialects** can include features of speech and **language** (grammar, sentence structure, sounds)

The Giving Tree, Shel Silverstein

**Bilingualism means equal proficiency in both languages.**

"I wish that I could give you something... but I have nothing left. I am an old stump. I am sorry..."

"I don't need very much now," said the boy, "just a quiet place to sit and rest. I am very tired."

"Well," said the tree, straightening herself up as much as she could, "Well, an old stump is good for sitting and resting.Come, sit down, sit down and rest."

**Is bilingualism always equal?**

- Uneven proficiencies ≠ risk indicator
- Proficiencies shift over time

"The bilingual is not two monolinguals in one person" (Grosjean, 1989)
Knowledge is **distributed** across languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monolingual Child</th>
<th>Bilingual Child</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
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- Core, Hoff, Rumiche, & Señor, 2013
- Oller, 2005
- Paradis, Genesee, & Crago, 2011

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When we test in only one language...

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Children learning English as a second language are at risk of “losing” their first language.

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Grandmother Willow, Pocahontas

“Somebmes the right path is not the easiest one.”

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Will they “lose” their L1?

Follow Up Question: Is the child in a school that has bilingual education?

Very likely that they will experience reduced L1 growth!
Because most education in the U.S. occurs in English (a significant emphasis is placed on English), ELs are at risk for losing some (or all) of their first language skills if they are not supported.

Anderson, 2005; Haynes, 2010

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English Language learners at Risk

L1 Proficiency Decreases

HIGH RISK ZONE
L2 fails to develop

Fred & Vasquez-Montilla, 1996

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Crysta: What’s a machine?
Zak: It’s a... thing.
Cutting down trees.
Crysta: That’s terrible!
Zak: Only if you live in a tree.
Crysta: I do live in a tree.
Zak: Oh.

Hexaex Tree, Fern Gully

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All children experience a period of no production when they are “absorbing” the language. Just wait and see what happens.
What is silent period?

“...acquired competence is built up via active listening” (Krashen, 1982, 2009)

What is not the silent period?

Receptive language delays in L1
Selective mutism
Hearing impairment

Silent Periods...

Not ALL children will experience a silent period.

Find out what you can about BOTH languages.

Roberts, 2014

Switching languages within the same sentence is a red flag for bilingual children.

“Treebeard” is in “The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers”

“It takes a long time to say anything in Old English.” — Treebeard
Is code-switching a retrieval problem?

Code-switching ≠ Impairment

Code-switching follows grammatical rules

(MacSwan, 2014)

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DLLs / ELLs who have disabilities can and should learn all languages spoken in their households.

It’s important for both languages to be targeted in intervention with DLLs / ELLs.

Children who speak with accents or in different dialects are not predisposed to difficulty with language.

DLLs / ELLs may show unequal proficiency in their languages.

Not all DLLs experience a silent period.

Code-switching is a normal part of dual language development.

Common Myths:

Main Takeaways

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Evidence-Based Assessment for DLLs

Use multiple methods and measures (NAEYC, 2005)

Thorough, structured caregiver report

Criterion-referenced test

Standardized testing with a bilingual SLP

Dynamic assessment method

Portfolio assessment methods

Narrative assessment methods

Modify a norm-referenced test

Include an interpreter

Develop a new test

Data triangulation

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Acknowledgement of variability in DLLs / ELs

No standardized assessment will be perfect.

Variability is an understatement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Age of Exposure to L2</th>
<th>Family Composition</th>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
<th>Number of Languages Spoken</th>
<th>Types of Languages Spoken</th>
<th>Level of Acculturation</th>
<th>Socioeconomic Status</th>
<th>Migrant Status</th>
<th>Family Beliefs About L1/L2</th>
<th>Literacy Experiences</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

What are red flags for speech and language impairment in DLLs?

Challenges in all languages
Family history of speech, language or learning disorders
Slower development compared to siblings
Persistent concerns with learning language
Challenges in interacting with peers of similar language / cultural backgrounds
Very short / simple sentences in both languages
Differences in language performance of CL similar peers

(Goldstein, 2012; Paradis, et al., 2011)

Evidence-Based Assessment for DLLs

Taking a strengths-based perspective (Lee-James & Washington, 2018)
Use a structured parent interview (Paradis et al., 2010)

Obtain information about language exposure
You can use structured interview forms!

Obtain information on cultural background
You can take the time to get to know the family!
Really, you can! It will help more than anything...
Dynamic Assessment

*Interactivity ➤ Minimizing ➤ Transcendence ➤ Application ➤ Competence*

**TEST** ➤ **TEACH** ➤ **RETEST**

Focuses on processing rather than language-specific knowledge

(Péña, Iglesias, & Lidz, 2003)

Language Sampling

Use spontaneous language sampling with bilingual children; culturally-appropriate normative data is available (Gutiérrez-Clellen et al., 2009; Restrepo, 1998)

“Mediated Learning Experience”

How much support was required?

Intentionality ➤ Meaning ➤ Transcendence ➤ Application ➤ Competence

Examples of measures derived from LS:

- Mean Length of Utterance (MLU)
- Type-Token Ratio (TTR)
- Number of different words (NDW)
- Developmental Sentence Scoring (DSS)
- Clausal density
- Use of subordinate clauses

Contexts that you can sample:

- Free play
- Conversation/dialogue
- Narration
- Expository speech

Gather information about literacy!

Consider L1 literacy skills

Remember that strong L1 language and literacy skills can support L2 language and literacy

(García, 2003; Tabors & Snow, 2001)

Transfer of L1 literacy skills to L2 literacy may not always be automatic, but there is support in:

- Phonological awareness
- Syntactic awareness
- Knowledge of linguistic genres
- Meaning-making strategies

(Durgunoglu, 2002; López & Greenfield, 2003; Paradis & Housen, 2003)
Converging evidence in the assessment process...

...of difficulty in both languages  ...of difficulty in English only

Language disorder is present within language difference

Language difference, not disorder

Provide supports in both languages

Language difference, not disorder

Data Triangulation

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Evidence-Based Intervention for DLLs

Determine your approach

Use a variety of modalities

Collaborate to incorporate L1

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Birth to five
Support caregivers who are providing language input
Taking a bilingual approach
Lay a foundation for language growth
Representation matters!
Evidence-Based Intervention for DLLs

Somewhere to start...
Consider goals that apply to children regardless of home language
• using word combinations
• answer simple WH’s
• retell stories in logical order using complete sentences

Determine Your Approach: Bilingual Approach

Semantic Skills
categorize, compare/contrast, summarize, cognate words

Morphosyntactic Skills
regular plurals, general verb tenses, auxiliary/copula use

Pragmatic Skills
responding to name, appropriate turn-taking

Articulation/Phonological Skills
speech sounds common to both languages

School Age
Support caregivers who are providing language AND teachers who are providing instruction
Taking cross-linguistic approach when appropriate
Lay a foundation for language and literacy
Representation matters!
Determine Your Approach: Cross-Linguistic Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic Skills in English</th>
<th>Morphosyntactic Skills in English</th>
<th>Articulation/Phonological Skills in English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unique morphological endings, idioms, &quot;non-translatables&quot;</td>
<td>Irregular plurals, irregular past tense, possessive s</td>
<td>Speech sounds unique to English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique morphological endings, idioms, &quot;non-translatables&quot;</td>
<td>Gender and number agreement, subjunctive mood</td>
<td>Speech sounds unique to Spanish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Articulation/Phonological Skills in Spanish
- Speech sounds unique to Spanish

(Kohnert, 2010; Goldstein, 2015)

Use a Variety of Modalities

Teach intensively across several days using a variety of activities and modalities (What Works Clearinghouse, 2014)

- Provide student-friendly definitions
- Reinforce using examples, non-examples, concrete representations
- Ask questions for students to show their understanding
- Facilitate structured discussions
- Target academic words in writing activities
- Increase exposure to and experiences with the word.
Collaborate to incorporate L1

For bilingual SLPs:
- Try alternating language approaches (Thordardottir, Weismer, & Smith, 1997)
- Explicitly talk about ways to bridge between languages

For monolingual SLPs:
- Collaborate with family members to draw in home language support
- Leverage family “banks of knowledge”
- Learn key words in child’s L1 and culture
- Collaborate with peers
- Promote bilingualism, biculturalism, biliteracy
- What you know about good language therapy still applies!


Milestones
- Spanish ML and BL Milestones
  - https://www.asha.org/events/convention/handouts/2006/1865_contreras_yvonne/
  - https://sites.google.com/site/spanishspeechlanguage/developmental-norms

TarHeel Reader
- https://tarheelreader.org/

Habla DLL webpage
- https://www.habladll.org/

Portland State University MultICSD
- https://sites.google.com/pdx.edu/multicsd/home

Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades (2007 - WWC)

Habla DLL webpage
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- https://sites.google.com/site/spanishspeechlanguage/developmental-norms

SALT software (Spanish scripts + audio)
- https://www.saltsoftware.com/resources/elicaids/frogstories

Bilingualistics (Dynamic Assessment)
- https://bilingualistics.com/dynamic-assessment/
There's nothing wrong with having a tree as a friend. – Bob Ross