

## **BILINGUALISM: CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEACHERS OF CHILDREN WITH SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS**

Nilufar Andakulova

English teacher JSPU

### **Annotation:**

International research has recently emphasized the benefits of bilingualism at the social, cognitive, and educational levels, raising concerns about supporting bilingualism among families with children with special educational needs. The majority of recent research indicates that parents are encouraged to prevent bilingualism, to stop using their native languages, and to favor the use of the majority language or the language of teaching. However, research on bilingual language development has demonstrated that children with language and communication impairments can grow up bilingually, and their abilities in each language are not different from those of monolingual children with the same disorders.

The paper examines relevant literature to give insight on the most recent findings on bilingual language development in children with language impairments, and it suggests potential solutions to some of the challenges that teachers confront.

## **ASSESSING LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES IN BILINGUAL CHILDREN**

Since Paradis's seminal work in 2005, research on developmental language impairments in bilingual children has made tremendous advancements. Recent research has revealed that the gap between typically developing monolingual children and children with developmental language disorders is comparable to the gap between typically developing bilingual children and bilingual children with developmental language disorders (Marinis, Armon-Lotem, and Pontikas, 2017). However, research reveals that bilingual children are more likely than monolinguals to be over- or under-diagnosed (Grimm and Schults, 2014), and their language demands can be misdiagnosed as special education needs (Lisiadou, 2013). Both simultaneous and sequential bilinguals can be misdiagnosed, although measuring language ability in sequential bilinguals is more difficult because it is difficult to distinguish between normal second language acquisition and language impairment, language difficulties in children. Testing skills in the new language is unlikely to provide an accurate picture of the child's linguistic abilities, and utilizing other psychometric tests provided in a non-dominant language may also lead to misdiagnosis. The challenge in assessing sequential bilinguals is worsened by the fact that typical second language learning difficulties are similar to those seen in developmental language disorders. These include morpheme errors, a restricted expressive vocabulary, trouble forming narratives, producing sentences that are shorter or less complex than those of their classmates, and having difficulty utilizing language for social reasons and

communicating with peers. Tsimpli, Peristeri, and Andreou, 2016; Vender, Garraffa, Sorace, and Guasti, 2016; Kohnert, Windsor, and Ebert, 2009).

## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Some of the issues raised cannot be resolved in the short future. While new assessment methods for multilingual children are being developed (Armon-Lotem, de Jong, and Meir, 2015), very little is known about best practices in intervention and classroom support for these children. However, some of the issues in the clinic and classroom can be addressed by introducing some simple modifications that are manageable in the short term. Raising awareness of the benefits of bilingualism is the first step toward a better understanding of the linguistic skills and developmental paths of bilingual children with speech, language, and communication issues. Professional training should equip teachers and speech and language therapists with the knowledge they need to urge families to keep their children in school the child's native language, explore the circumstances in which the kid is learning and using the two (or more) languages, and distinguish bilingual language growth from language impairment. Furthermore, additional chances should be made available to enable workers in healthcare and education who interact with multilingual children to learn more about different languages and acquire intercultural competency.

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