

What makes a good bilingual speech & language evaluation?

Bilingual assessment is not simply assessing in two languages. There are a number of important considerations to keep in mind when working with bilingual clients. Appropriate bilingual assessment for bilingual requires adherence to some key principles. A good bilingual evaluation will provide a high level of detail, and is not reliant on standardized test scores.

Pre-evaluation Information

Pre-evaluation data should always be included as part of a bilingual speech and language evaluation. In addition to typical information collected before evaluation, bilingual evaluations should include things such as percent of exposure to each language, number of years of exposure, and current academic and social language skills. A parent/caregiver and teacher interview should be used to gather this information.

Performance in Both Languages

The evaluation should provide a detailed description of performance in both languages, not just one. Speech and language evaluations are intended to determine the degree to which an individual has a delay/disorder, not their English proficiency. An assessment that only takes into account one language is not sufficient. Information related to expressive and receptive languages skills in each of the client's languages is essential.

Language Sample

A language sample analysis should be conducted with bilingual clients, in order provide an accurate picture of language production skills. A language sample should demonstrate morphosyntactic skills in both languages. For many clients, code-mixed should be taken into consideration during language sample collection.

Dynamic Assessment

Dynamic assessment tasks are a very effective way of assessing bilingual clients, as they show how a client learns information, rather than simply measuring how much information they already know. Tasks, such as fast-mapping, assess a client's ability to learn and retain novel information.

Standardized Testing?

Standardized tests are intended to be used for the population on which they were normed. Most English standardized tests do not include bilingual individuals in their normative samples. Bilingual individuals may score lower of these tests, even if they are typically developing. Using these tests on bilingual clients is not appropriate. If a standardized test is administered outside of the population for which it was intended **the scores should not be reported.**