Distinguishing Bilingual Children from Monolinguals with SLI: Profile Effects on the ENNI
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Background
- Bilingual children with TLD often perform below monolingual age peers on standardized tests, with over-identification of SLI in bilinguals a potential outcome (Crutchley et al., 1997; Oller & Eilers, 2002; Paradis, 2005; Thordardottir et al. 2006)
- For basic reading skills and vocabulary size, bilinguals catch up asynchronously to monolingual peers: "profile effects" (Oller et al., 2007)
- The purpose of this study was to investigate possible profile effects in bilingual children's oral narrative abilities and mean length of utterance as compared to monolinguals with TLD and SLI

Research Questions
- Would bilingual children approach monolingual norms asynchronously for narrative abilities and mean length of utterance?
- Would bilingual children's performance patterns parallel monolingual children with TLD, parallel those with SLI, or be distinct from both?

Summary and Conclusions
- Both ANOVA and linear discriminant function analyses showed that the bilingual children had an uneven profile vis-à-vis monolinguals for narrative abilities and mean length of utterance, even after nearly 3 years' exposure to English
- Bilingual children can catch up more quickly for narrative abilities (story grammar) possibly because this is a cognitive/linguistic interface skill, and can be shared with the L1; in contrast, grammatical complexity (MLCU) is more English-language specific
- Over-identification of bilingual children with TLD as SLI is a potential risk, even after nearly 3 years' exposure to English
- There is a need for bilingual norms for standardized tests because profile effects suggest that waiting for them to catch up in synchrony is not appropriate

Participants
- BLTD: 23 English L2 children (L1s = various)
  - Time 1: age = 66 months; 9 months of English
  - Time 2: age = 88 months; 34 months of English
- MTD: 43 English monolingual children with TLD
  - Time 1: age = 66 months (N = 23)
  - Time 2: age = 88 months (N = 20)
- MSLI: 43 English monolingual children with SLI
  - Time 1: age = 66 months (N = 23)
  - Time 2: age = 88 months (N = 20)

Edmonton Narrative Norms Instrument
- Story Grammar (SG) (e.g., setting, characters, events, internal plot, outcome)
- Mean Length of Communication Unit (MLCU)

Group classification results from linear discriminant function analysis

References