



Current Research Review:
**Discriminating Disorder from Difference Using Dynamic Assessment
with Bilingual Children**

(Hasson, Camilleri, Jones, Smith & Dodd, 2013)

Background: This study builds on recent evidence of the usefulness of dynamic assessment (DA) along with a mediated learning experience (MLE) and graduated prompting as a more appropriate method of determining the presence of language disorder (LD) in culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) children.

Hypothesis: In an attempt to create an appropriate screening tool for CLD children, the Dynamic Assessment of Preschoolers' Proficiency in Learning English (DAPPLE), the authors seek to determine if the DAPPLE is accurate in discriminating difference from disorder. They ask whether TD and LD bilingual children respond differently to learning opportunities within a dynamic assessment framework using test-teach-retest methodology.

Methodology and Participants: Researchers recruited 26 CLD preschoolers from a variety of linguistic and socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds. Twelve children were considered LD and 14 TD children were matched for age, gender and SES. Children with other significant difficulties (ASD, syndromes, etc.) were excluded. The DAPPLE consists of six tasks; two standardized (block building and drawing) and four DA procedures. The DA consisted of a fast mapping receptive and expressive naming task, phonological assessment and a picture description (syntax) task. The authors measured the preschoolers' ability to learn new vocabulary, correctly produce errored phonemes and produce syntactically correct sentences after a teaching session. They also measured the amount of prompting necessary to learn the target forms.

Conclusion: The authors found the DAPPLE did produce significant differences in the performances of the LD vs. TD children. The amount of cueing needed differentiated the two groups on the vocabulary and sentence structure tasks. The types of errors discriminated the phonology and sentence structure tasks and so did retaining ability for the newly learned vocabulary items for the semantic task.

Relevance to the field: The current study acknowledges the increasing incidence of CLD children as more countries become multicultural. The most common current assessment practice uses standardized tests, long criticized as inappropriate for CLD children, with a disclaimer. This results in over and under identification of LD CLD children with long lasting societal consequences. It is crucial that appropriate assessment of CLD children is developed. This study and others point to DA as the best method. The authors hope to further demonstrate validity for the DAPPLE through longitudinal and case studies.

Hasson, N., Camilleri, B., Jones, C., Smith, J. & Dodd, B. (2013) Discriminating Disorder from Difference Using Dynamic Assessment in Bilingual Children. *Child Language and Therapy*, 29, 57-75.