



Current Research Review:

Clinical Implications for Working With Nonmainstream Dialect Speakers: A Focus on Two Filipino Kindergartners

(Hamilton, Angulo-Jiménez, Taylo, & DeThorne, 2018)

Background: The lack of appropriate assessment procedures for Nonmainstream American English (NMAE) dialect speakers has been increasingly documented over the years. One reason for this is the scarcity of literature documenting different NMAE dialects. The current study focuses on documenting the features of Philippine English (PE) in childhood.

Purpose: To document and increase awareness of the features of PE as well as draw attention to the complexities of working with nonmainstream speakers of English.

Methodology and Participants: Two Filipino kindergarten-age boys from PE-speaking families participated in the study. Their speech was examined for linguistic features using ethnographic data collection methods: the DELV-Screening test, one speech-language sample, 16 half-hour classroom observations, one semistructured interview of the teacher and each of the participants' parents, and one home video of child-parent interactions per family.

Conclusion: Both participants showed features consistent with the language they heard at home. There were variations from Mainstream American English (MAE) in grammar and phonology that were consistent with documented features of PE in adult speakers. However, there was also idiosyncratic variation in phonology and grammar that may be the result of interactions between each child's background, developmental processes and acquisition of MAE. The variation between the two boys emphasized the need for SLPs to recognize that heterogeneity also exists within dialect communities.

Relevance to the field: Two clinical implications are identified: the need to validate the concept of and support Mainstream American English Learners (MAEL) in the classroom and the recognition of variance as not necessarily indicating a disorder within a dialect community. In addition, standardized assessments, even those intended for dialect speakers (e.g., DELV) are of little value in assessing NMAE speakers. This study confirms the necessity of observational data across multiple contexts and the completion of ethnographic interviews with family members in order to understand students' cultural-linguistic profiles. Researchers recommend the following: supporting home language use while teaching expectations for mainstream language, introducing colleagues to MAELs as a type of ELL, avoiding terminology implying correction and appropriateness (e.g. "incorrect tense"), naming the dialects found in schools, and using resources for learning about dialects (such as continuing education courses, published research, the child's family).



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