

THE ROLE THAT LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY VARIABLES PLAY
ON GRAMMATICALITY, MORPHOSYNTAX, AND
SEMANTIC SKILLS IN BILINGUAL CHILDREN

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, whose example of perseverance, sacrifice, patience,
support and love have encouraged me to fulfill this research.

My sisters, whose endless support facilitated this accomplishment.

I love you.

PREVIEW

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by

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PREVIEW

ABSTRACT

Purpose: A number of experiential factors contribute to bilingual development. Factors such as opportunities to hear and use language, age of first exposure, context of learning, social value of a language, education and others have been discussed in other studies. (Bedore et al 2016; Bedore et al 2012). Language questionnaires and self-reports have been used to quantify language variables and current usage of a language. The current study was part of a larger project examining diagnostic accuracy of various assessment tools for Spanish English bilingual children living in a US/Mexico border city (Curtis, Summers, Stubbemann, & Smith, 2017). The purpose of the study was to examine which language proficiency variables (age of English exposure and current input and output) would best predict language performance in young bilingual children.

Methods: Forty-four children aged 3-6 years old, participated in the study. Parent and teacher questionnaires were used to quantify age of English exposure (AoEE) and current language use. Children were administered the Bilingual English Spanish Oral Screener (BESOS) subtests and language samples to measure language performance in English and Spanish.

Results: Current input and output were correlated to more language performance variables and AoEE was only correlated to Spanish semantics and morphosyntax. None of the proficiency variables predicted grammaticality in language samples. Different levels of language input and exposure predicted performance in some morphosyntax and semantic tasks. AoEE did not predict any language performance tasks.

Discussion: Overall this study was consistent with previous findings. Current input and output are important variables as children begin to use their language and may be the best way to measure language proficiency in young children. Researchers and clinicians should always consider the way variables are determined when making recommendations.

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