

Modelling holistic clinical assessment of linguistically diverse speech, and an example

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Diversity considerations are of paramount significance in the clinical assessment and treatment of speech disorders in bilingual children and adults who speak a less common language (and/or its dialects) (e.g., Babatsouli, 2021, International Expert Panel on Multilingual Children's Speech, 2012). While comprehensive assessment is essential for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) populations (e.g., Mulgrew et al., 2022, Pascoe and Singh, 2023, Teoh et al., 2018), this is clinically challenging due to the indeterminacy entailed in the process and incumbrances in access to resources. This paper outlines key considerations necessary for holistic, ecological, and dynamic assessments of speech disorders internationally, focusing on Greek as the dominant speech in bilingual children and adults. The work advances a clinical assessment of speech in CLD contexts internationally that espouses the ecological systems approach (e.g., Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2007). Pertinent literature is reviewed that provides the relevant theoretical backdrop for the proposed clinical ecosystemic protocol (e.g., Kay-Raining Bird et al., 2026) and relevant resources highlighted include SLP mediation, the interlanguage blueprint (Babatsouli, 2022), Leap-Q (Marian et al., 2007), GreekSpeak (Nicolaidis et al., 2015), the disorder within dialect framework (Oetting, 2018), standardized testing procedures (Babatsouli, 2019; McLeod et al., 2012), dynamic assessment (e.g., Glaspey et al., 2022), etc. The Greek language is utilized as an example, aiming to underscore knowledge, tools, and other resources on clinically relevant aspects of dialectal, interlanguage (adult L2), and child multilingual (L2/L3) variation in child and adult speakers who are dominant in Greek, but also speak a second language (like English) in the context of simultaneous or sequential bilingualism (e.g., Paradis, 2011). The paper scripts a primary assessment model for clinical use by speech-language pathologists internationally. The resulting protocol for use in clinical practicum is outlined which comprises a specific Action Plan and is exemplified by a Case Scenario. The demonstrated ecosystemic paradigm for clinical assessment of speech disorder presented here addresses the need for nonlinear, multi-level assessment of variable language exposure and use, being sensitive to individual speaker specificities, the sociolinguistic environment, also employing people-first, culturally sensitive, and dynamic strategies in clinical assessment. Lastly, the proposed stance simplifies disambiguation tasks regarding the difference disorder dichotomy for CLD populations, further enhancing existing clinical procedures.

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