

**Critical Review:**  
**Does progress in therapy depend on the language of instruction?**

Tina Saxon, M.Cl.Sc (SLP) Candidate  
University of Western Ontario: School of Communication Sciences and Disorders

This critical review examines the outcomes of therapy depending on the language of instruction with bilingual children who demonstrate articulation, language, and phonological disorders. Although the research to date is not conclusive, the literature overall *suggests* that intervention for language disorders of language-minority children should be provided in the language(s) spoken in the home while the child is still in the process of learning ESL at school. On the contrary, literature for articulation disorders *suggests* that intervention in English only would generalize to the other languages since the impairment is considered to be solely an impairment of phonetic planning (Holm & Dodd, 2001). Relative to phonological disorders, the literature *suggests* that if therapy targets the deficit underlying speech disorder,

(bilingualism\*) AND (intervention\*) AND (speech therapy\*) AND (language\*) AND (bilingual\*)

The search was limited to articles written in English with no specific date requirement. Other relevant articles were located using articles identified by the



sort are uncommon and thus require further research (Holm et al., 1999).

The main conclusion drawn from both case studies conducted by Holm and Dodd (1997 & 1999) is that bilingual children with a speech disorder have difficulties in both of their languages. The same *type* of disorder is also present in both languages, even though their specific errors may be dissimilar. Therefore, the deficits underlying each speech disorder are not language-specific. Instead, they have an impact on all the child's languages (Holm et al., 2001).

### **Strengths & Limitations of the Studies**



Bruck, M. (1984). Early bilingualism and language acquisition. In M. Paradis & Y. Lebrun (Eds.), *Early bilingualism and child development* (pp. 69-94). Lisse, Holland: Swets & Zeitlinger B.V.