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Minority Language Learners with Language Impairments:

The Case of French and English in Ontario, Canada

Mayer-Crittenden, C., Elin Thordardottir, Robillard, M., Bélanger, R., & Minor-Corriveau, M.

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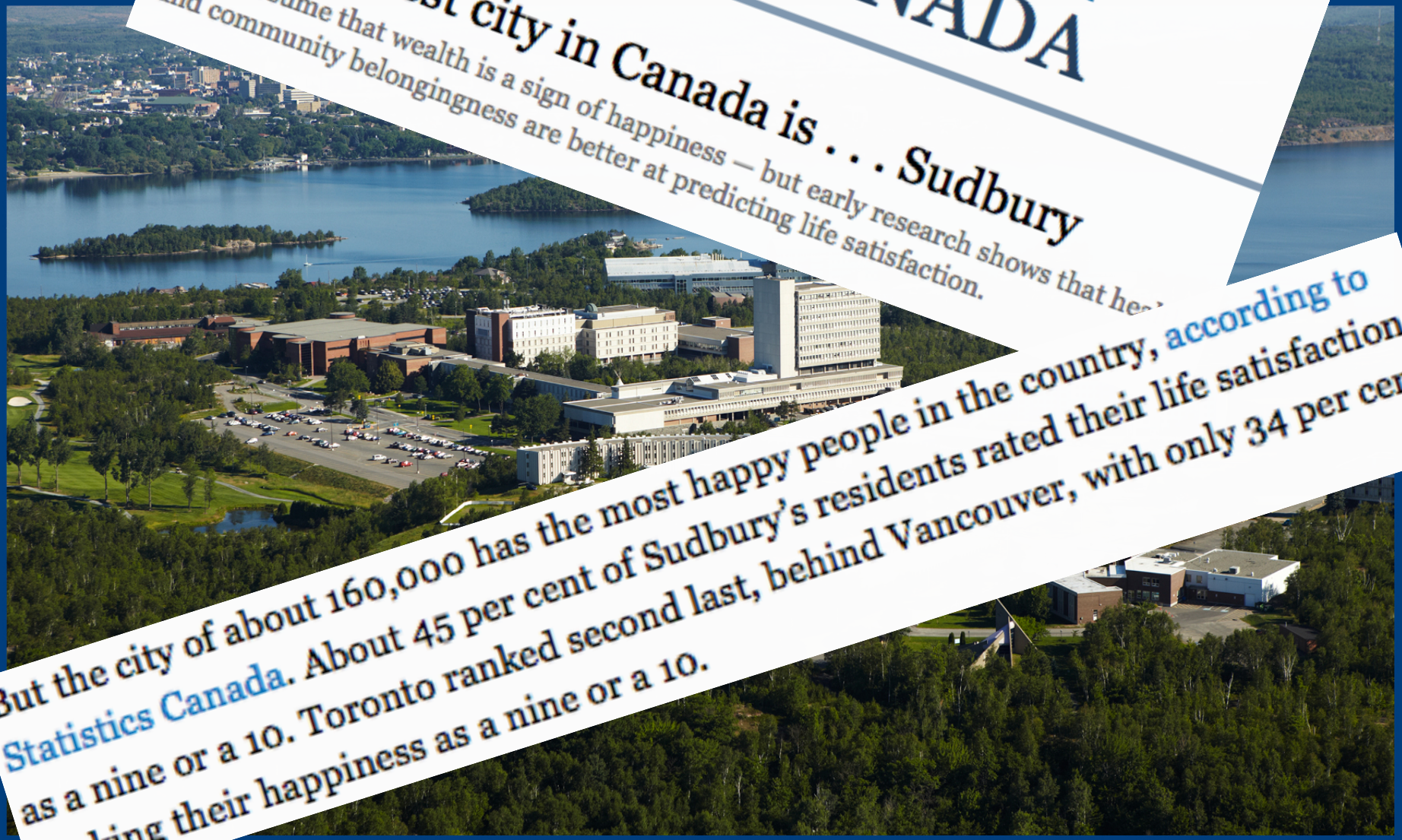

News / Canada

The happiest city in Canada is . . . Sudbury

Many assume that wealth is a sign of happiness — but early research shows that he
and community belongingness are better at predicting life satisfaction.

thestar.com
CANADA

But the city of about 160,000 has the most happy people in the country, according to Statistics Canada. About 45 per cent of Sudbury's residents rated their life satisfaction as a nine or a 10. Toronto ranked second last, behind Vancouver, with only 34 per cent ranking their happiness as a nine or a 10.

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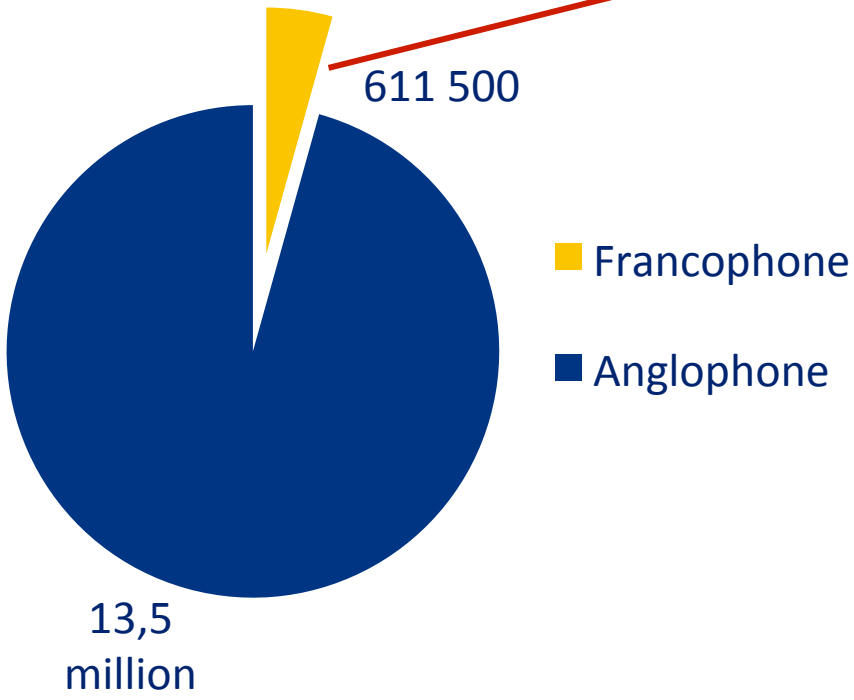
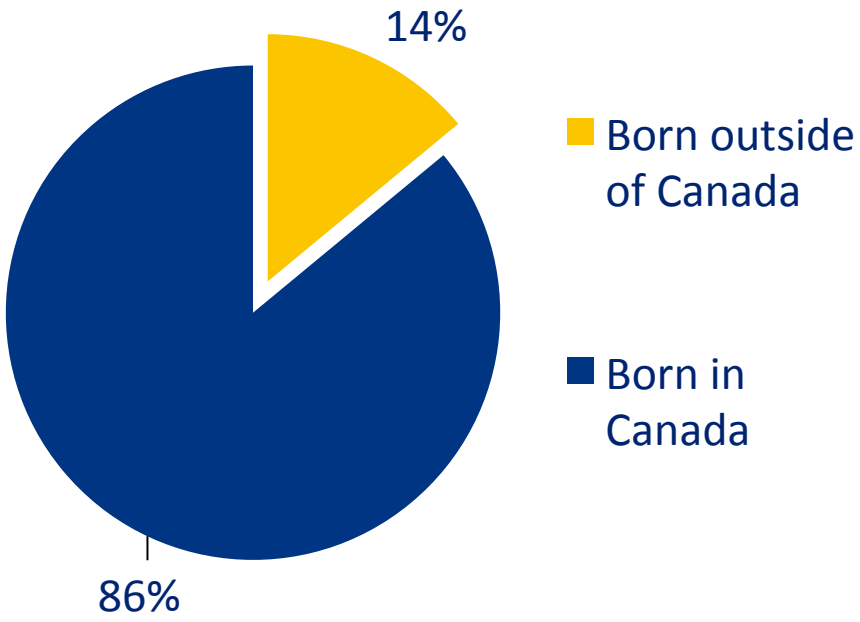
1 LINGUISTIC CONTEXT

Linguistic Context in Ontario, Canada



Statistics Canada, 2011

Of these Francophones…



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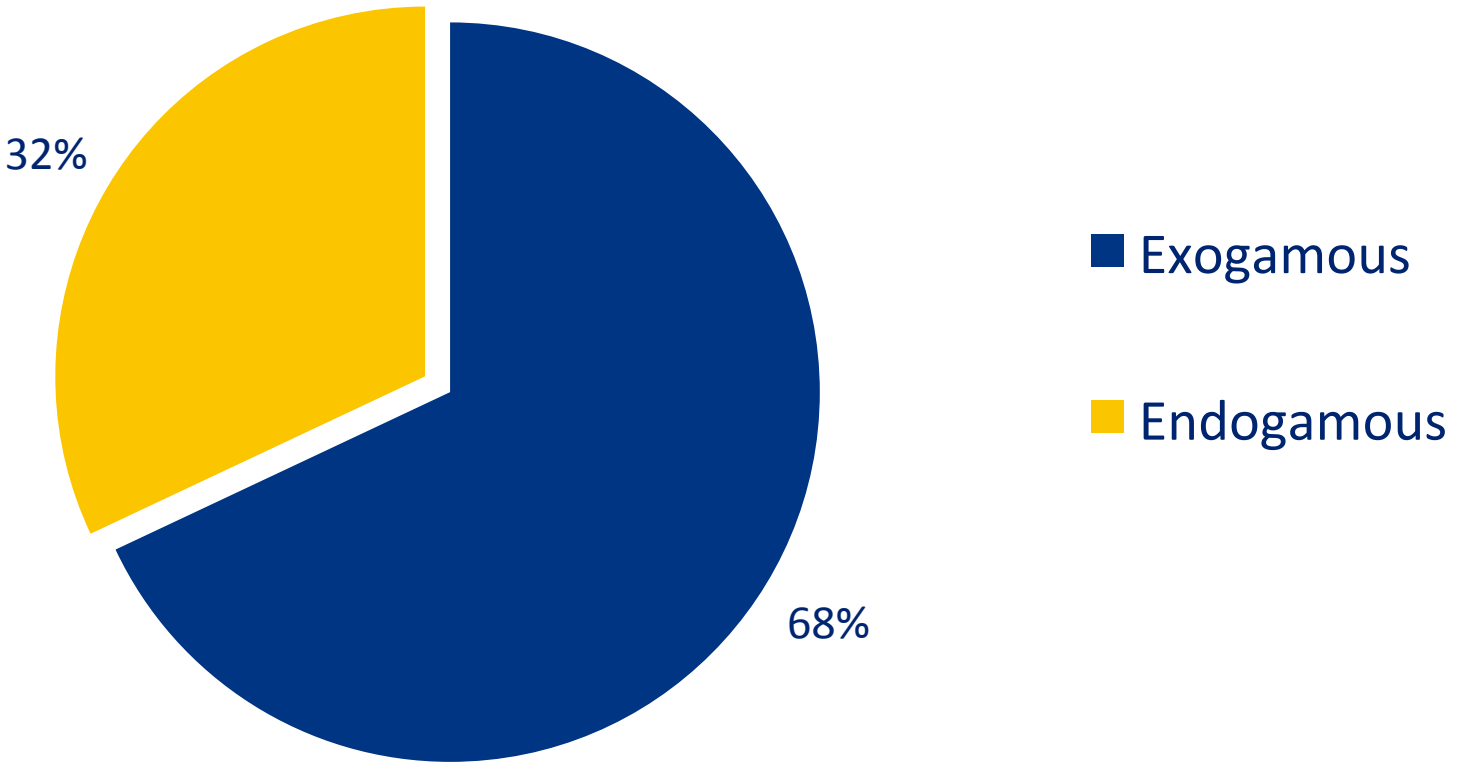
LINGUISTIC CONTEXT

Households where French is used at home



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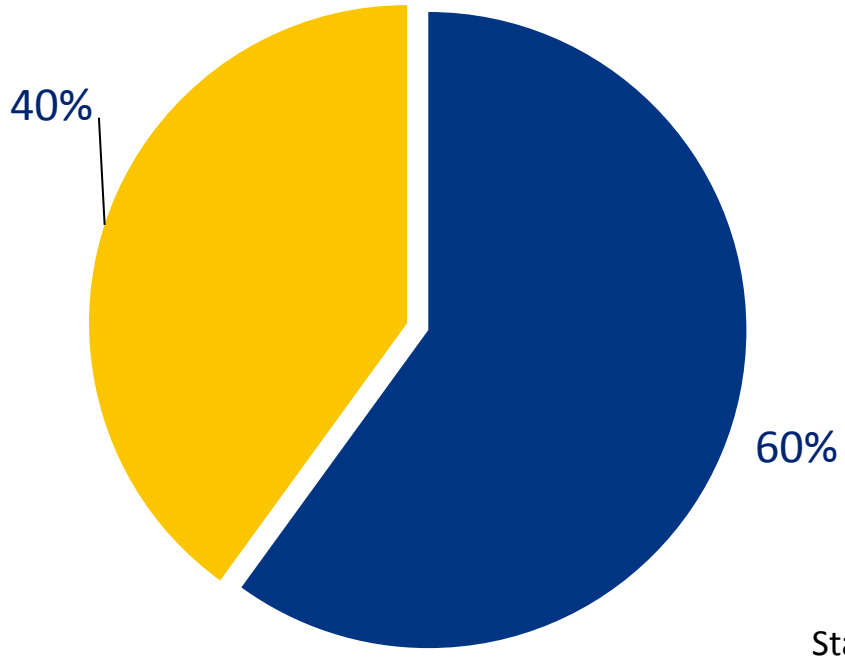
LINGUISTIC CONTEXT

Children in JK in the French public and separate school boards in the City of Greater Sudbury, Ontario and surroundings



Statistics Canada (2011), CSPGNO (2013), CSCNO (2004-2014)

1 INTRODUCTION

Laflamme & Bernier (1998), Laflamme, Corbett, & Southcott (2008) and Mayer-Crittenden et al. (2014):

- Difficult to find French monolinguals in some regions of Northern Ontario that are exposed to less than 5h/week of English.

Landry et al. (2010) and Simard & Mayer-Crittenden (2015)

- Children often speak in English in hallways and schoolyard (even if the school's language of instruction is French).

Hicky (2001) and Baker (1997)

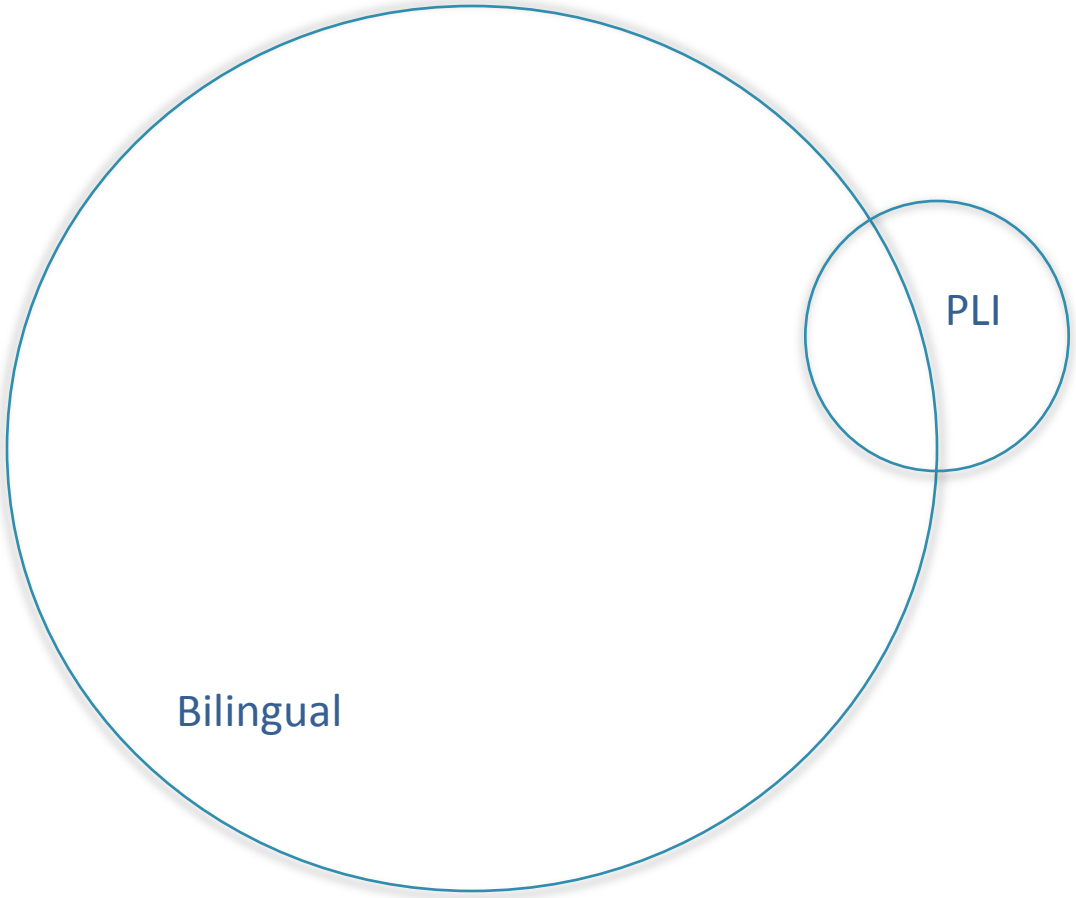
- The minority speakers tend to shift to the majority language to gain approval from their peers, even when the minority language has official support.

1 INTRODUCTION

- A policy to assist minority language learners in acquiring the language of instruction was implemented

- Many English-dominant children are pulled out of the classroom in small groups on a weekly basis in order to focus on the formal instruction of French vocabulary

Primary Language Impairement (PLI)



1 BILINGUAL LEARNERS AND CHILDREN WITH PRIMARY LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT (PLI)

Paradis et al. (2011), Grimm & Schulz (2013) and Genesee (2004)

- Bilingual children with PLI are often missed or misdiagnosed and are at a higher risk of academic failure.

Grüter (2005), Håkansson (2001) and Paradis et al. (2008)

- Difficulties and errors experienced by L2 learners without PLI and those experienced by bilingual children with PLI are very similar.

1 WHAT TOOLS ARE SPEECH-LANGUAGE-PATHOLOGISTS USING IN FRENCH MINORITY SETTINGS?

Garcia et al. (2006)

- Lack of standardized assessments in French.

CSPGNO (2004-2014) and Minor-Corriveau (2012)

- Certain SLPs create their own screening protocols in order to identify children who might need a complete assessment.

1 IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN WITH PLI IN THE ROMAN LANGUAGES

- **Morphosyntax**
  (Hamann et al., 2003; Jakubowicz, 2003; Leroy, Parisse, & Maillart, 2009; Paradis & Crago, 2001)
- **Phonology**
  (Maillart, 2007; Maillart & Parisse, 2006)
- **Sentence imitation tasks in French**
  (Elin Thordardottir et al., 2011; Maillart, Leclercq, & Quemart, 2012)

Girbau and Schwartz (2008) – *Spanish children* and Bortolini et al. (2006) – *Italian children*

- NWR is an effective clinical marker for PLI.

1 IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN WITH PLI IN THE FRENCH LANGUAGE IN A MAJORITY SETTING

Elin Thordardottir et al. (2011)

- At age 5, NWR was the **most sensitive measure**
- Sentence imitation also very sensitive measure
- Québec francophone children with PLI have difficulties that can be reflected in all linguistic/non-linguistic domains

Elin Thordardottir and Brandeker (2013)

- English-French bilingual children and monolingual children had comparable NWR scores, and were higher than children with PLI
- NWR distinguished bilingual children with/without PLI
- NWR = the **BEST** marker of PLI among 5-year-old bilingual children

1 WHAT TOOLS ARE SPEECH LANGUAGE-PATHOLOGISTS USING IN FRENCH MINORITY SETTINGS?

Mayer-Crittenden et al. (2014)

- 26 Franco-Ontarian monolingual children
- 26 French Quebec children *(Elin Thordardottir et al., 2010)*
- 48 Rench-dominant bilingual children (French-English)
- **RESULTS:**
- There were **NO** significant differences between monolingual French Quebeckers and monolingual Franco-Ontarians.
- French-dominant bilingual children in Ontario obtained **lower scores** than monolingual Quebeckers.

Should we use Quebec-based standards for Franco-Ontarians ?

1 GOALS and HYPOTHESIS

Goals

1. Whether the French and English assessment tools used by SLPs among French and English monolinguals adequately measured the linguistic and cognitive competences of French monolingual, French-dominant and English-dominant bilingual children, thus confirming the diagnosis of those who were identified as language-impaired.

2. Which tools seemed to better identify those with PLI according to their respective linguistic status.

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2 Method

PARTICIPANTS (n = 106)

Group of children	French-Monolinguals			French-dominants			English-dominants		
Age group	4.5 years (M1)	5years (M2)	5.5 years (M3)	4.5 years (FD1)	5 years (FD2)	5.5 years (FD3)	4.5 years (ED1)	5years (ED2)	5.5 years (ED3)
Number of girls	1	4	3	10	10	4	4	9	6
Number of boys	6	7	5	6	9	10	3	7	2
Age in months	53.0 (2.7)	60.1 (2.3)	67.3 (2.5)	53.4 (2.1)	59.6 (2.4)	66.5 (2.5)	53.7 (2.2)	60.4 (2.2)	69.8 (1.5)
Non verbal cognition (Leiter Brief IQ)	115.7 (13.9)	103.9 (12.4)	101.3 (11.8)	113.9 (14.8)	109.1 (16.1)	109.7 (10.3)	110.9 (15.2)	114.9 (16.6)	110.3 (11.8)
Mother's level of education in years	16.7 (1.3)	16.4 (1.1)	15.5 (1.1)	15.5 (1.8)	15.5 (1.2)	15.8 (1.1)	15.0 (1.1)	14.7 (1.8)	15.6 (1.8)

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2 Method

PARTICIPANTS (n = 20)

Group of children	Children with PLI		
Age group	4.5 years (M1)	5 years (M2)	5.5 years (M3)
Number of girls	2	4	4
Number of boys	3	5	2
Age in months	55.0 (1.0)	60.3 (2.7)	67.2 (2.9)
Number of monolinguals	0	2	1
Number of French-dominants	1	4	3
Number of English-dominants	4	3	2
Non-verbal cognition (Leiter Brief IQ)	108.8 (15.8)	105.7 (15.6)	97.7 (12.2)
Mother's level of education in years	14.2 (1.1)	16.1 (1.3)	14.0 (2.2)

2 Method

PARTICIPANTS (n = 20)

- A Dx of PLI was given if:
- the child failed to pass a screening
  - subtest of following directions and answering questions
  - expressive vocabulary measure
  - brief spontaneous language sample in the child's dominant language
  - some concerns previously raised by the teacher and/or parent.

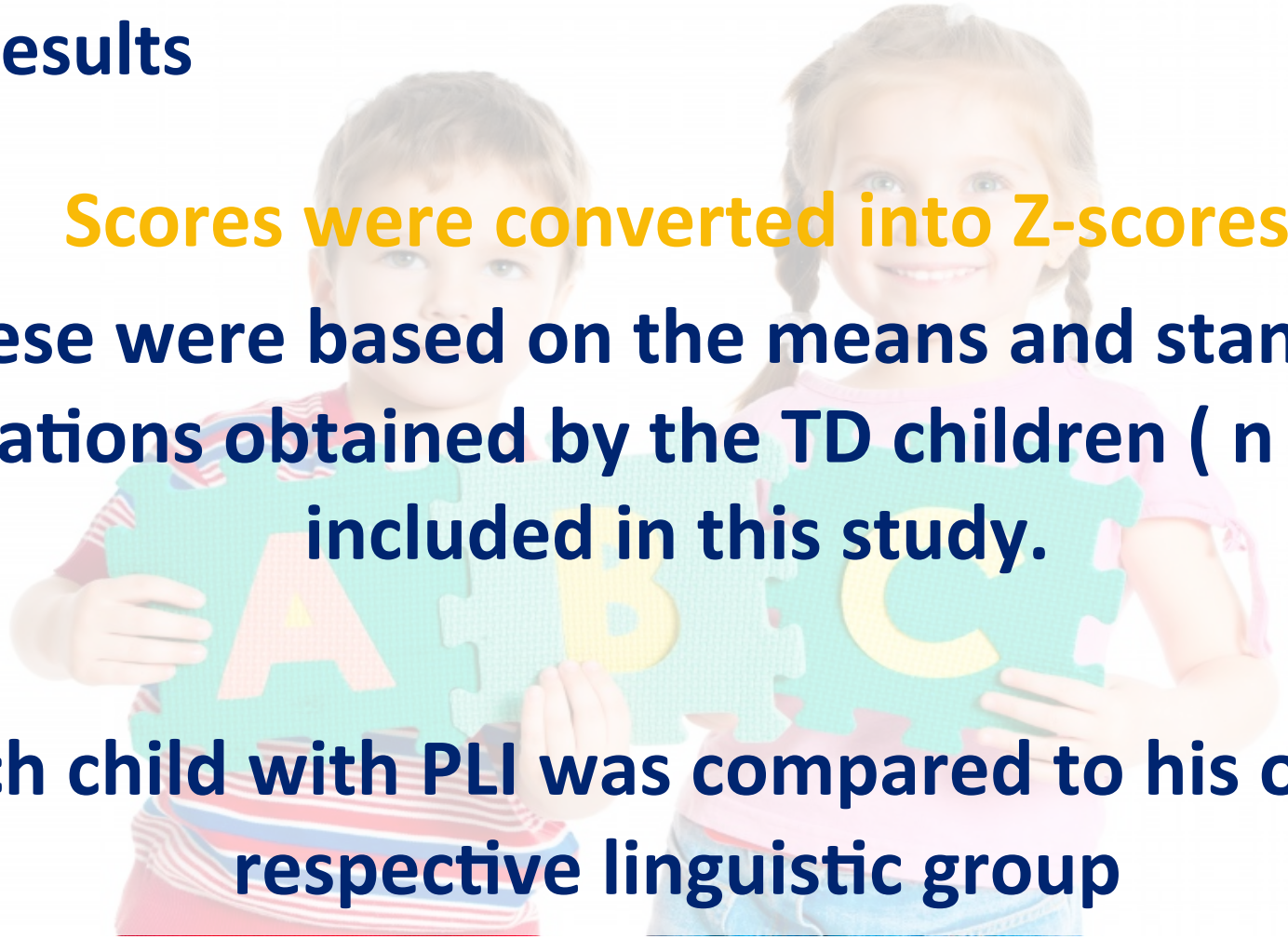
3 Procedure

- Each assessment period lasted approximately :
  - 150 minutes for the monolingual children
  - 300 minutes for the bilingual children

French and English language tests :

1. ÉVIP
2. PPVT-4
3. The Carrow test
4. Spontaneous language
5. ENNI
6. NWR
7. CNRep
8. Recalling sentences
9. *Le grand déménagement*
10. *Concepts et exécution de directives* (CELF CDN-F)
11. CELF-P2
12. RAN
13. *Répétition des nombres* (CELF CDN-F)

4 Results



Scores were converted into Z-scores

These were based on the means and standard deviations obtained by the TD children (n = 106) included in this study.

Each child with PLI was compared to his or her respective linguistic group

Mean scores in French for participants with PLI when compared to respective linguistic TD group

Participants	ÉVIP	Carrow total	Carrow CM	Carrow morph	Carrow PC	MLU words	MLUmorph	ENNI SG	ENNI FM	NWR	Sentence Imitation	RAN error	RAN time	Concept foll. Dir.	Numb.Rep-Fwd	Numb.Rep-Bkw
1 ED1	13**	38	22	14	2*	1.91***	2.46**	5	10	44.29	14.20****	9**	95*	5*	2***	0
2 ED2	35	65	32	13	20	4.19	5.53	17	12	65.71	61.90	8	152	18	3**	0*
3 ED1	10**	11***	6*	5*	0*	2.35**	2.69**	2**	11	36.10*	51.00	12****	360****	7*	4	0
4 ED2	18*	22**	10***	1**	11	3.17	3.51*	—	—	64.60	37.31*	10**	248**	4**	5	0*
5 ED1	3***	10***	4**	2**	4	—	—	2*	2****	12.90ϒ	38.10	3	167	7	5*	0
6 ED1	8**	12***	11	0***	1*	3.84	4.33	—	—	38.20*	—	—	—	7*	4	1
7 ED2	49	46	21	18	7*	4.07	5.12	17	11	71.10	62.70	0	140	19	4	2
8 ED3	35**	58***	24ϒ	28	6****	4.69	5.99	9**	9ϒ	61.80**	65.60***	0	71	17	6*	4*
9 ED3	34**	64*	33	15****	16****	3.83	4.74*	11*	9ϒ	49.60***	11.90ϒ	4	130*	10ϒ	3ϒ	0***
10 FD3	23****	52***	25ϒ	18	9	3.08*	3.84*	6****	9*	69.60	32.83ϒ	3*	139ϒ	9***	6	0***
11 FD3	39*	74	30*	26	18	3.85	4.90	14	12	53.93**	79.85	1	145ϒ	16*	5	3
12 FD2	37	52*	33	14	5**	2.99*	3.67*	14	9*	54.60**	40.30***	3	154**	21	4	3
13 FD3	17ϒ	36ϒ	30*	3ϒ	3***	2.14**	2.58**	10**	14	49.30***	47.80ϒ	1	—	10***	2ϒ	0***
14 FD2	41	51*	27	16	8*	3.26*	4.23	6**	11	56.00**	63.43	1	134*	7**	5	0**
15 FD2	30	52*	31	14	7*	3.88	4.94	15	9*	51.40**	55.20*	0	79	10**	4	1
16 FD2	36	66	32	27*	7*	3.33*	4.13*	10*	15	48.20***	50.00**	1	72	19	4	2
17 FD1	20	54	25	25	4	3.55	4.74	16	12	54.30	47.00	0	94	11	4	0
18 M3	74	82	33	22	27	4.49	6.02	15**	10***	67.10	79.10	4ϒ	146****	22	2ϒ	0**
19 M2	26****	50**	30	6****	14	3.81	4.87	5ϒ	10***	50.00***	45.50ϒ	16ϒ	70	12**	5	1

Mean scores in English for participants with PLI when compared to respective linguistic TD group

Table 4

Mean scores for linguistic and cognitive skills in English for participants with PLI. The asterisks and gamma indicate the distance from the mean performance of the groups in terms of z-scores. Each participant was compared to his respective linguistic group according to age. See section 2.1.2 for description of age groups section 3. for test abbreviations.

Participants	PPVT raw	CELF P2 SS	CELF P2 WS	CELF P2 EV	CELF P2 CFD	CELF P2 RS	CELF P2 BC	CELF P2 WC Exp.	CELF P2 WC Rec.	CELF P2 RS Cont.	CELF P2 RS Cont. No Order	MLUw	MLUm	RAN error	RAN time	NWR	NWR phon.
1 ED1	58	11	8****	11*	7*	1**	13	9	9	2***	13.20***	3.74	3.37	9	127	5	79.93
2 ED2	85	19	17	19	14	12*	18	1****	1γγ	6*	75.50	4.21	3.89	11**	166	8	74.59
3 ED1	91	14	13*	15	10	8*	17	11	11	6*	52.83	3.32	2.97	3	103*	1*	59.94
4 ED2	79*	13*	15*	18	7**	19	15	6*	6**	9	82.10	6.33	5.64	0	182	13	71.50
5 ED1	63	11	14	12*	6*	13	15	6	6	8	78.30	4.05	3.64	3	167	14	73.20
6 ED1	81	16	17	28	12	16	17	16	16	9	78.30	4.65	4.17	0	171	8	75.97
7 ED2	79*	17	16	17*	11	9**	16	16	16	5	89.62	4.13	3.73	0	144	12	76.24
8 ED3	75**	17	18	24	11***	22*	18	9γ	9γ	10	95.30	5.49	4.84	0	64	4γ	69.89γ
9 ED3	72***	15***	13****	18**	12**	7γ	18γ	7γ	7γ	4γ	5.66γ	—	—	5	227γ	11*	75.14γ
10 FD3	77	17	15*	17	9γ	17	15γ	7***	7	7γ	45.20γ	3.94	3.53	1	109	9	81.77
11 FD3	71*	17	19	23	16	22	17	13	13	8	87.70	—	—	1	181**	14	38.12γ
12 FD2	93	9****	18	18	8**	24	17	10	10	10	56.66*	—	—	0	180*	9	52.76****
13 FD3	59***	5γ	13**	16*	7γ	6****	15γ	7***	7	3γ	53.70γ	4.54	4.17	0	95	3**	57.73****

* denotes a score below 1 standard deviation (SD) and above 1.5 SD (< – 1 ≥ – 1.5 SD); ** a score below 1.5 SD and above 2 SD (< – 1.5 ≥ – 2 SD); *** a score below 2 SD and above 2.5 SD (< – 2 ≥ – 2.5 SD); **** a score below 2.5 SD and above 3 SD (< – 2.5 ≥ – 3 SD); γ a score below 3 SD (< – 3 SD).

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4 Cut-off point to identify the tests that provide the most accurate decision in identifying PLI

BILINGUAL CHILDREN

- -1 SD relative to other groups of children with the same linguistic status on a minimum of 2 subtests

Tests/Subtests that are the most often BELOW the cut-off point:

For French-language tests

- Carrow (TACL-R)
- ÉVIP (PPVT)
- ENNI FM and SG (Narrative)
- Sentence Imitation
- Following Directions
- NWR*

For English-language tests

CELF-P2:

- Following Directions
- Sentence Imitation
- Word Structure
- Word Classes Expressive
- Repetition of Sentences in Context

The results of this study concur with those obtained by Elin Thordardottir et al. (2011) for the markers of PLI in French (ranging from – 1.5 SD to more than – 3 SD) :

- Recalling sentences
- NWR
- Following directions

The tests on which the children with PLI had the least success in our study :

- Carrow Composite (TACL-R)
- Carrow Elaborated Phrases and Sentences
- ENNI Story Grammar (Narrative)

4 Results

English-language tasks

- 9 English-dominant children with PLI
- 6 out of 9 children identified as having PLI
- Misdiagnosis?

French-language tasks

- 8 French-dominant and 3 monolingual children with PLI
- All of the French-dominant and monolingual children with PLI were correctly identified

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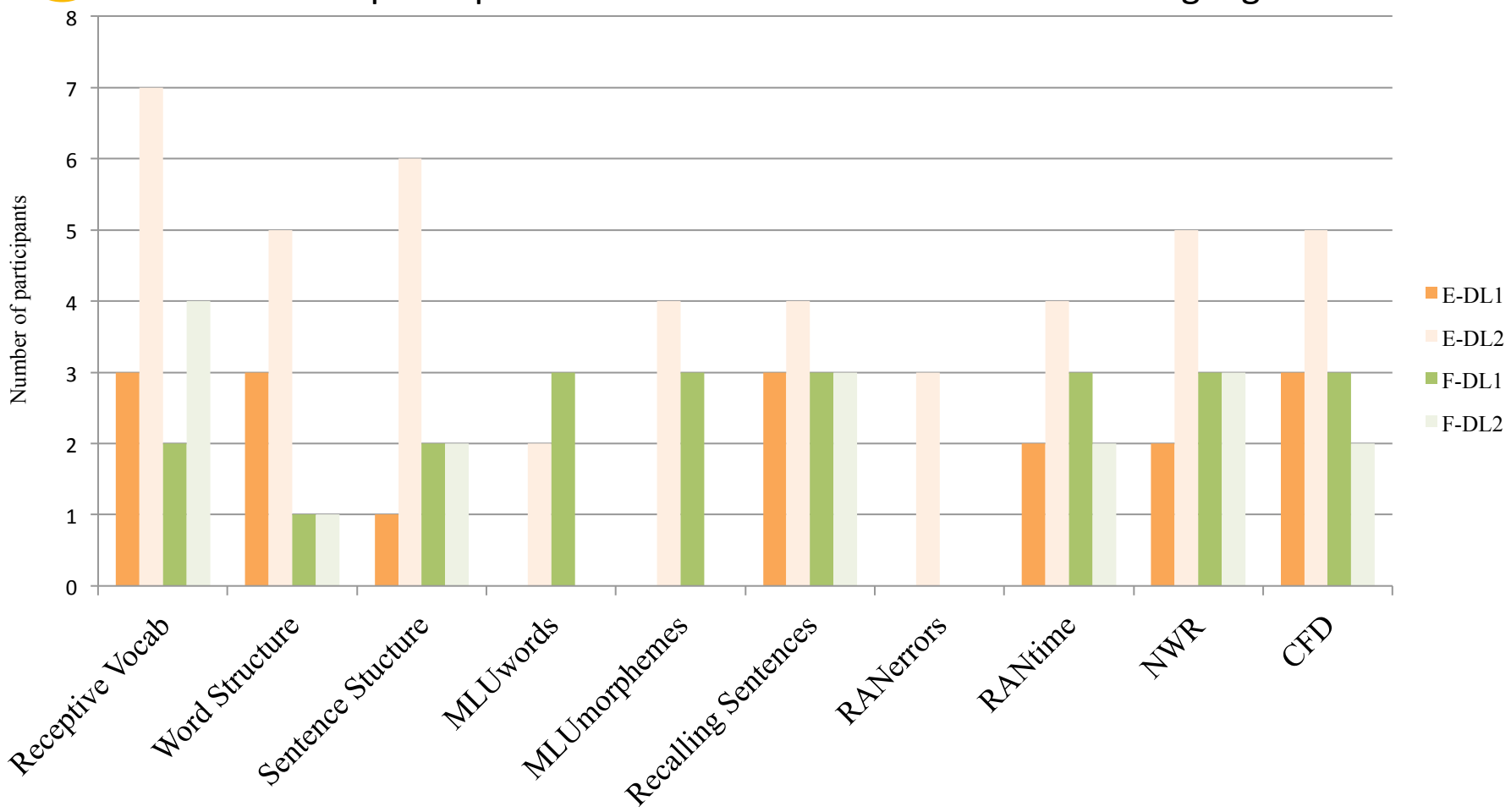

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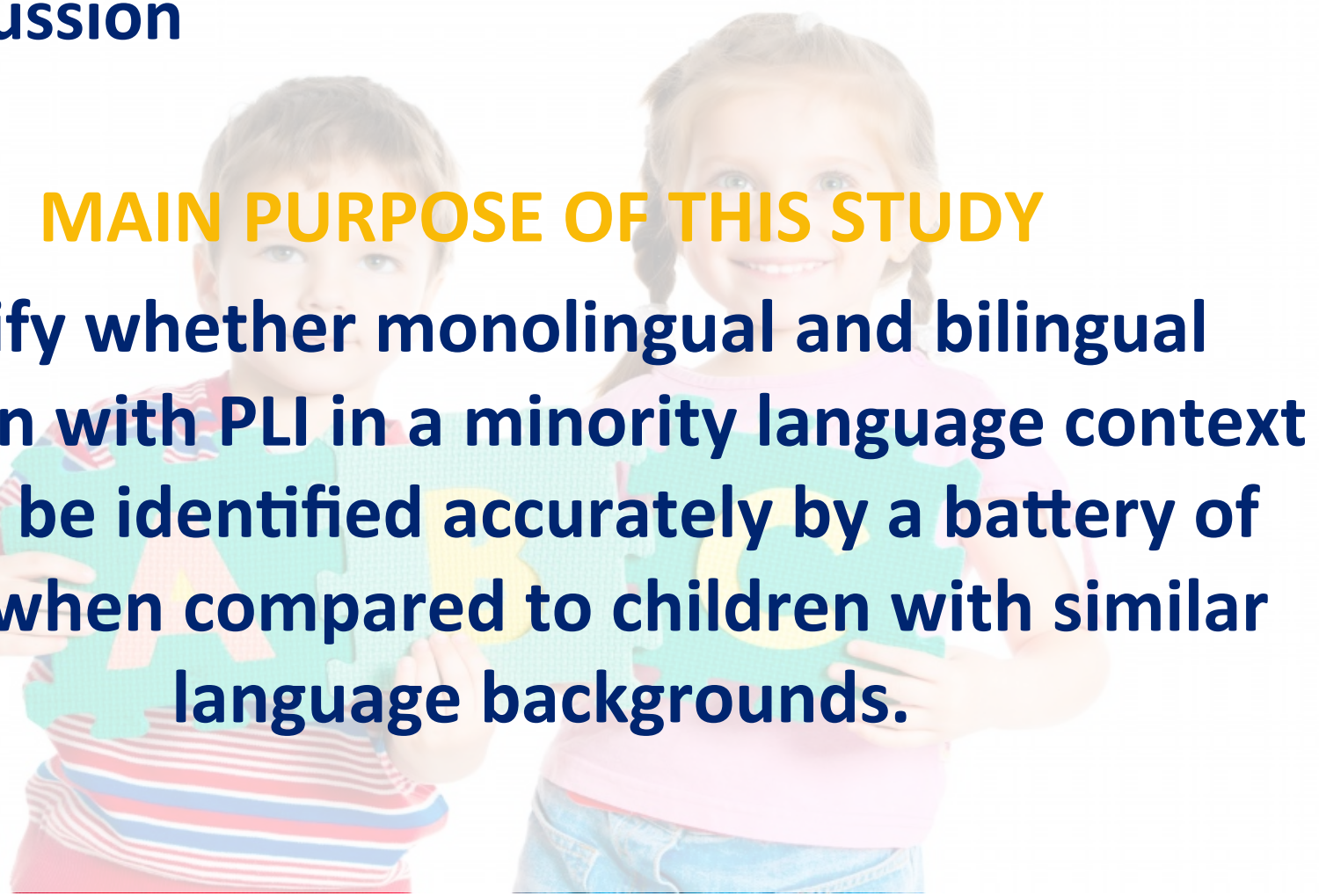
English-dominant with PLI

- Achieved **higher scores** in their L1 than L2 across all tests

French-dominant children with PLI

- Scored **similarly in both** languages
- At times, scored **higher in English** (L2) than in French

5 Discussion



MAIN PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

Verify whether monolingual and bilingual children with PLI in a minority language context could be identified accurately by a battery of tests when compared to children with similar language backgrounds.

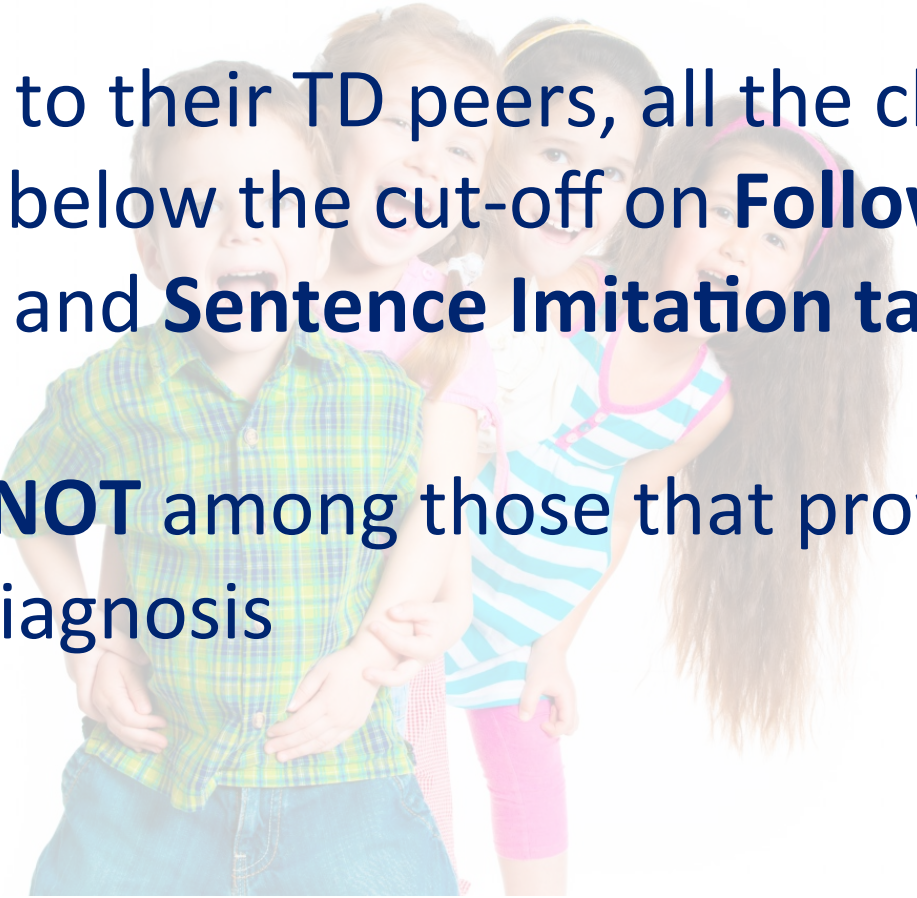
5

All of the French-monolingual and French-dominant children were identified correctly.

- The scores obtained by the English-dominant children present a number of problems:
- 6 of 9 English-dominant participants were identified
  - We could not confirm the presence of PLI for 3 english-dominant participants.

- Later confirmed by school board SLP that these kids were in fact misdiagnosed
- English-dominant children enrolled in French schools are often reluctant to converse in English during speech and language screenings, even when their French skills are limited; not getting a true picture of their abilities

5



- Compared to their TD peers, all the children with PLI scored below the cut-off on **Following Directions** and **Sentence Imitation tasks.**

- NWR was **NOT** among those that provided an accurate diagnosis

5

These contradicting results may be due to the children's language-learning environment or to the age at which the French language was first introduced.

Language-learning environment

- Increased metalinguistic awareness skills as a result of formal instruction in L2?

Age of acquisition of the minority language

- In most studies, the L2 is the majority language
- Simultaneous vs sequential bilingualism

6 Conclusion

- The battery of French-language tests used with **French-monolingual children** and **French-dominant children** in this study allowed us to identify children who had PLI:
  - Receptive measure of morphology and syntaxe
  - Receptive vocabulary measure
  - Narrative task
  - Recalling sentences
  - Following directions
  - NWR

6

Our results matched those found in previous studies for the **English-dominant children**:

- bilingual children who have PLI experience difficulties either in all of the linguistic components of a language or in one or a few components only such **as following directions** and **recalling sentences.**

This study provided…

- Information on the language profiles of monolingual and bilingual children identified as having PLI who are learning a minority language.
- Data that could be helpful in creating bilingual norms for these various groups of children based on their linguistic status.

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