

# Rethinking Bilingual Delay & Disorder

Elizabeth D. Peña

University of California, Irvine




# Disclosures



BILINGUAL ENGLISH-SPANISH ASSESSMENT™

**MANUAL**

 U.S. Department of Health & Human Services > National Institutes of Health

 National Institute on Deafness and  
Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)

Elizabeth D. Peña  
Vera F. Gutiérrez-Clellen  
Aquiles Iglesias  
Brian A. Goldstein  
Lisa M. Bedore



ENGLISH

RUSSIAN

CHINESE

PUNJABI

JAPANESE

ARABIC

HINDI

BENGALI

SPANISH

PORTUGUESE

THE  
MOST  
SPOKEN  
LANGUAGES  
IN THE WORLD



Vietnamese

Bengali

Tagalog

Greek

Gujarati

Hindi

Spanish

German

Panjabi

Russian

Arabic

Portuguese

Chinese

Italian

Polish

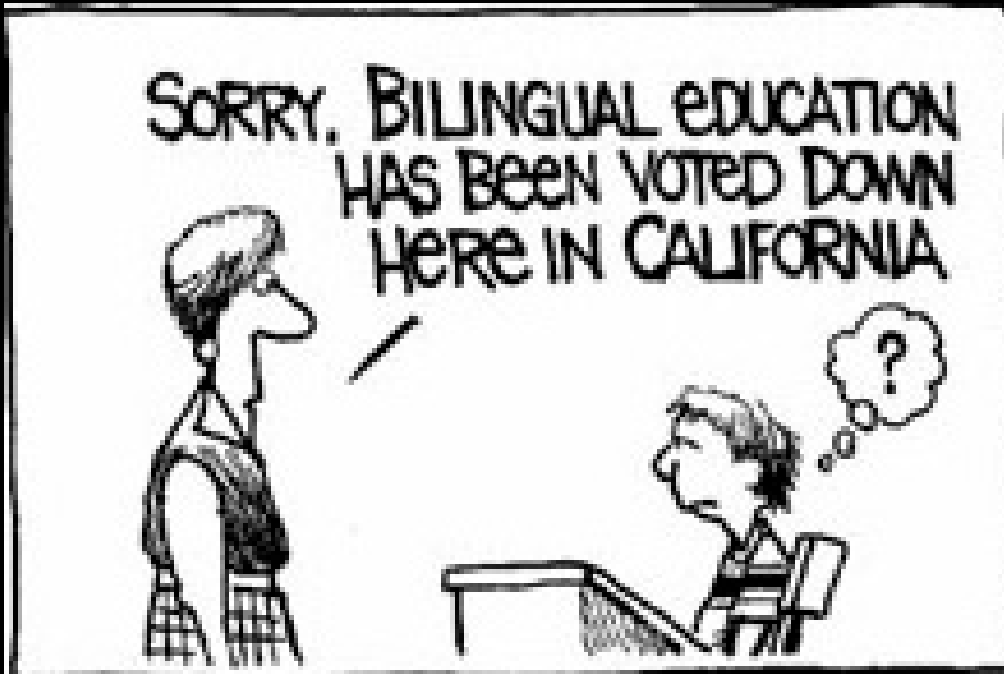
French\_Creole

Japanese

Persian

Korean

Urdu



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# THE BENEFITS OF BEING BILINGUAL





# Outline

- Are bilinguals at greater risk for DLD?
- How do we consider L1 and L2 performance in diagnostic decision-making?
- What is the nature of the “bilingual delay” (is it really a thing?)

# Outline

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- How do we consider L1 and L2 performance in diagnostic decision-making?
- What is the nature of the “bilingual delay” (is it really a thing?)

# Developmental Language Disorder

10%

Often invisible

phonology  
grammar  
vocabulary  
social skills  
learning  
memory

# DLD

- Developmental language disorder (DLD) is a language disorder that delays the mastery of language skills in children who have no hearing loss or other developmental delays

# Bilingual DLD

- Developmental language disorder (DLD) is a language disorder that delays the mastery of language skills in children who have no hearing loss or other developmental delays
- Not an effect of second language acquisition
- Affects BOTH languages

# Bilingualism & Risk for DLD?

- Weak links hypothesis– Gollan
  - Divided time in each language → lower (absolute) item frequency
- Inhibitory control– Bialystok
  - Language switching over time → cognitive advantage

AJSLP

Research Article

## **Risk for Poor Performance on a Language Screening Measure for Bilingual Preschoolers and Kindergarteners**

Elizabeth D. Peña,<sup>a</sup> Ronald B. Gillam,<sup>b</sup> Lisa M. Bedore,<sup>a</sup> and Thomas M. Bohman<sup>a</sup>

# Participants

- 1198 Latino children
  - 63-81 months (late PK, early K)
  - 54% female
- AoA English
  - 50.3% between birth-2 years
  - 49.7% 3 years or later

Ages	At Home			At School/Preschool/Day Care			
	Spanish	Both	English	Spanish	Both	English	NA
0-1	✓						✓
2-3	✓						✓
2-3	✓						✓
3-4		✓			✓		
4-5		✓			✓		
5-6		✓			✓		
6-7							
7-8							
8-9							

Time	Participants (parent, sibling, peer)	Waking Hours	Language(s)					
			Participant—Input			Child—Output		
			Spanish	Both	English	Spanish	Both	English
7a.m.	mom dad sibs	0	2	1	0	2	0	0
8a.m.		0	2	0	0	2	0	0
9a.m.		0	2	0	0	2	0	0
10a.m.		0	2	0	0	2	0	0
11a.m.	grandma	0	0	1	0	2	0	0
12p.m.		0	0	1	0	2	0	0
1p.m.		0	0	1	0	2	0	0
2p.m.	siblings & mom	0	2	1	0	2	1	0
3p.m.		0	2	1	0	2	1	0
4p.m.		0	2	0	0	2	0	0
5p.m.		0	2	0	0	2	0	0
6p.m.		0	2	0	0	2	0	0
7p.m.	aunts, uncles	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
8p.m.	family	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
9p.m.		0	0	1	0	0	1	0
10p.m.		1	2	1	0	2	1	0
11p.m.		1	2	1	0	2	1	0
		Sum Weekend Hours: (F) 15	12 + 6 = 18 (B) Sum Weekend Input Score			6 + 9 = 15 (D) Sum Weekend Output Score		

# Measures

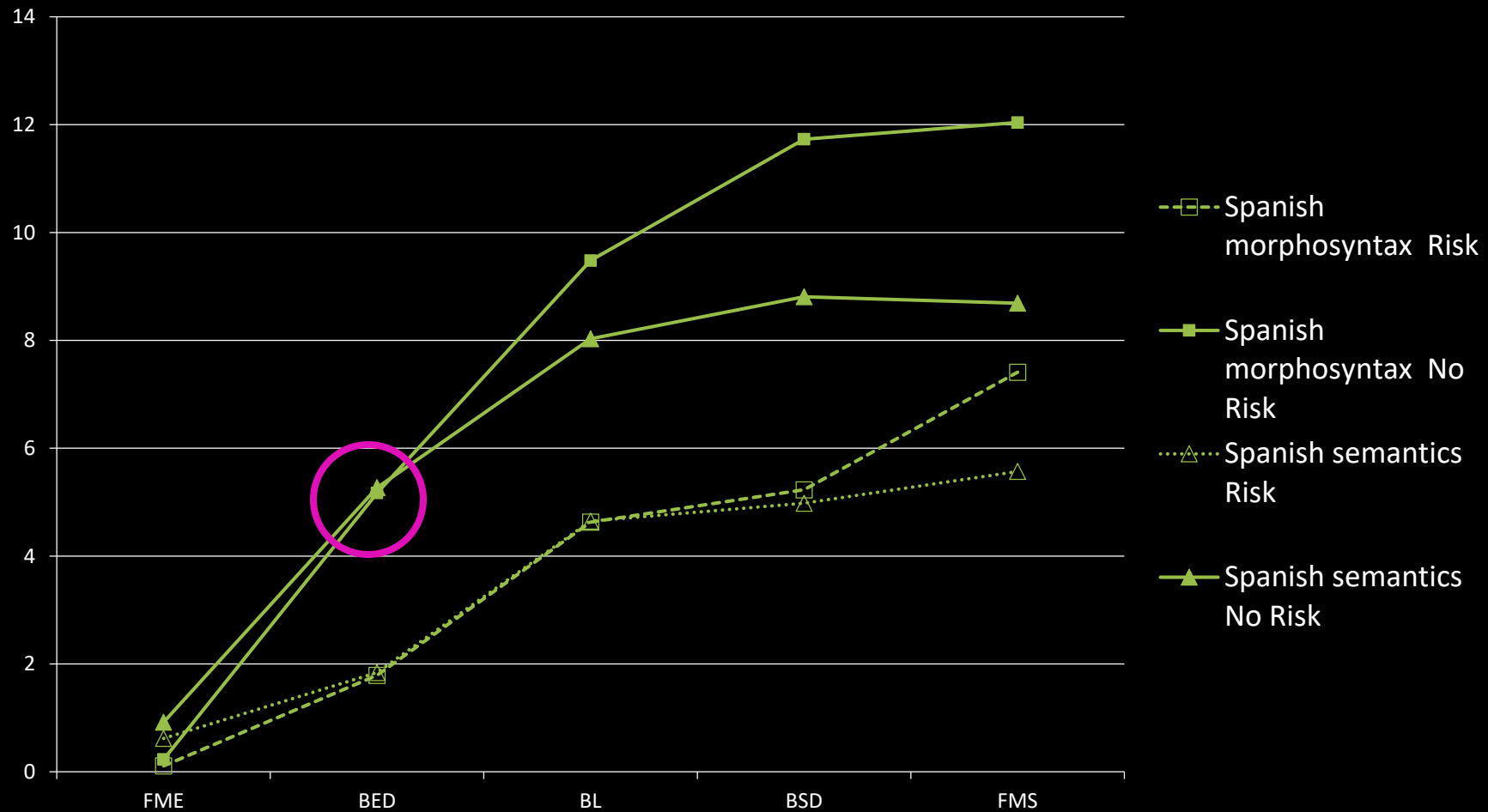
- BIOS
  - Classify by exposure
  - Bilingual English Spanish Oral Screener (BESOS)
    - Morphosyntax
    - Semantics
  - ALL tested in Spanish & English

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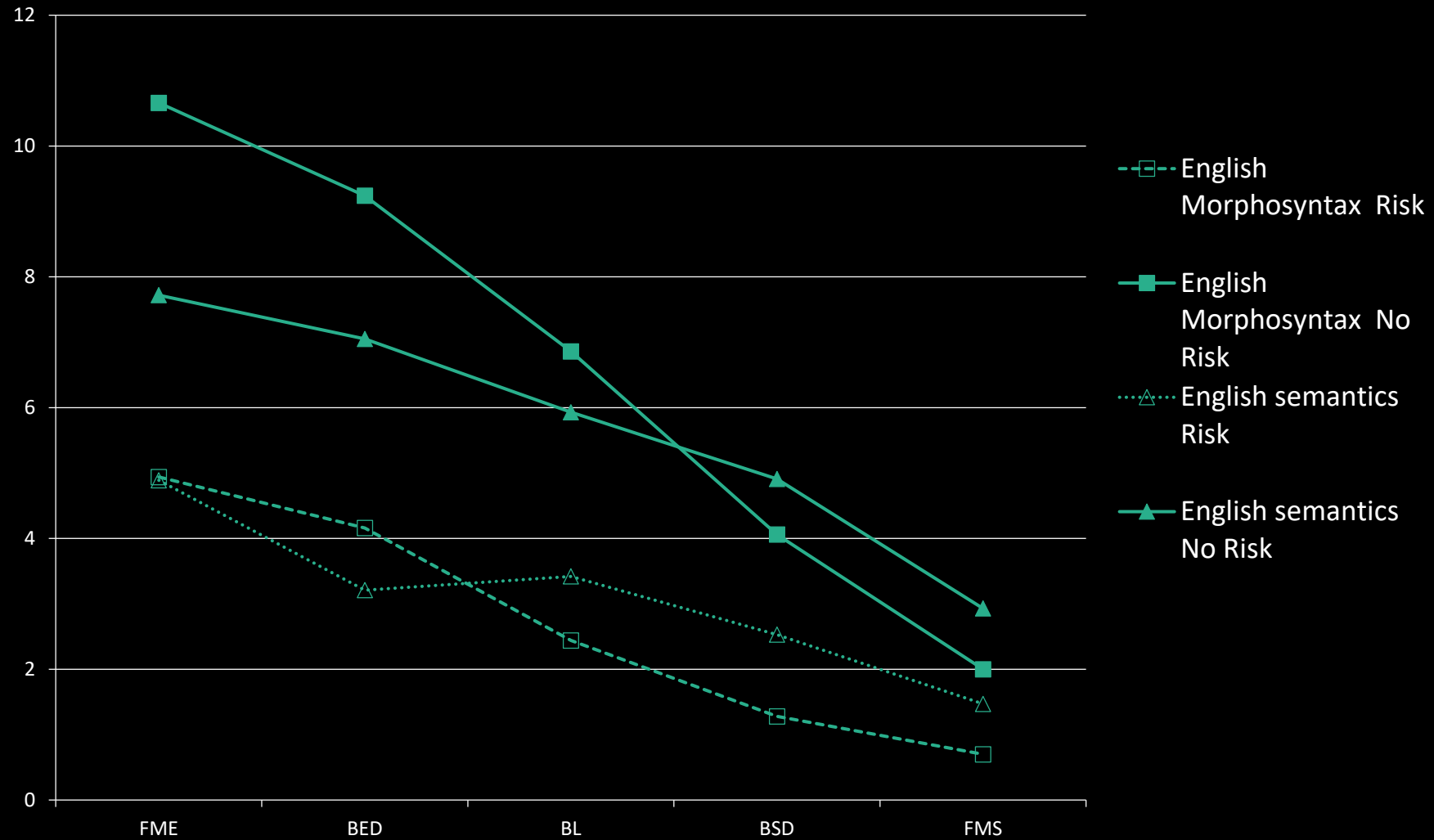
# Participants

- Divided into risk and no-risk groups
  - Risk
    - 3/4 subtests at or below 25<sup>th</sup> percentile
    - Morphosyntax Spanish
    - Morphosyntax English
    - Semantics Spanish
    - Semantics English

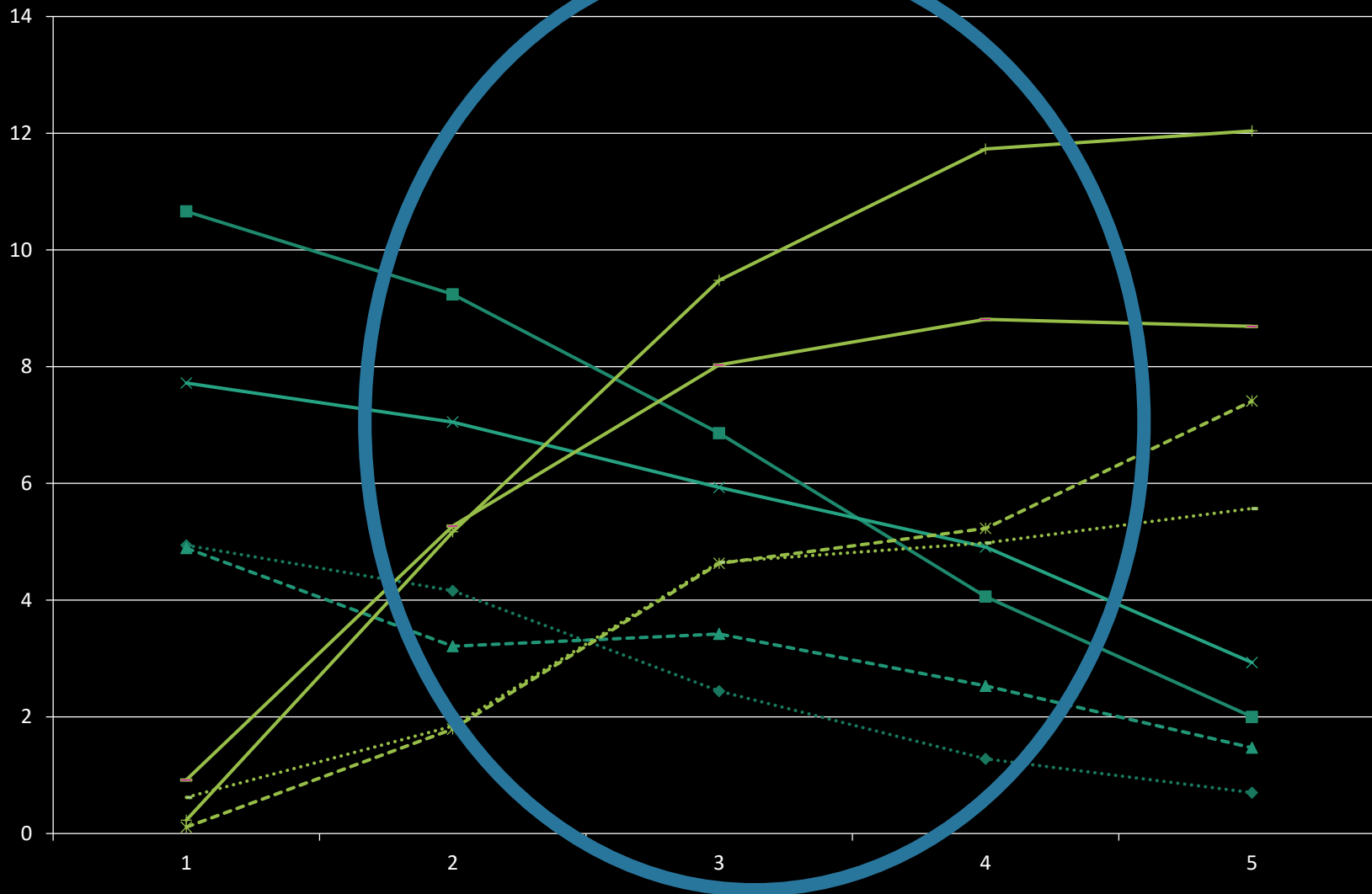
# Spanish Scores



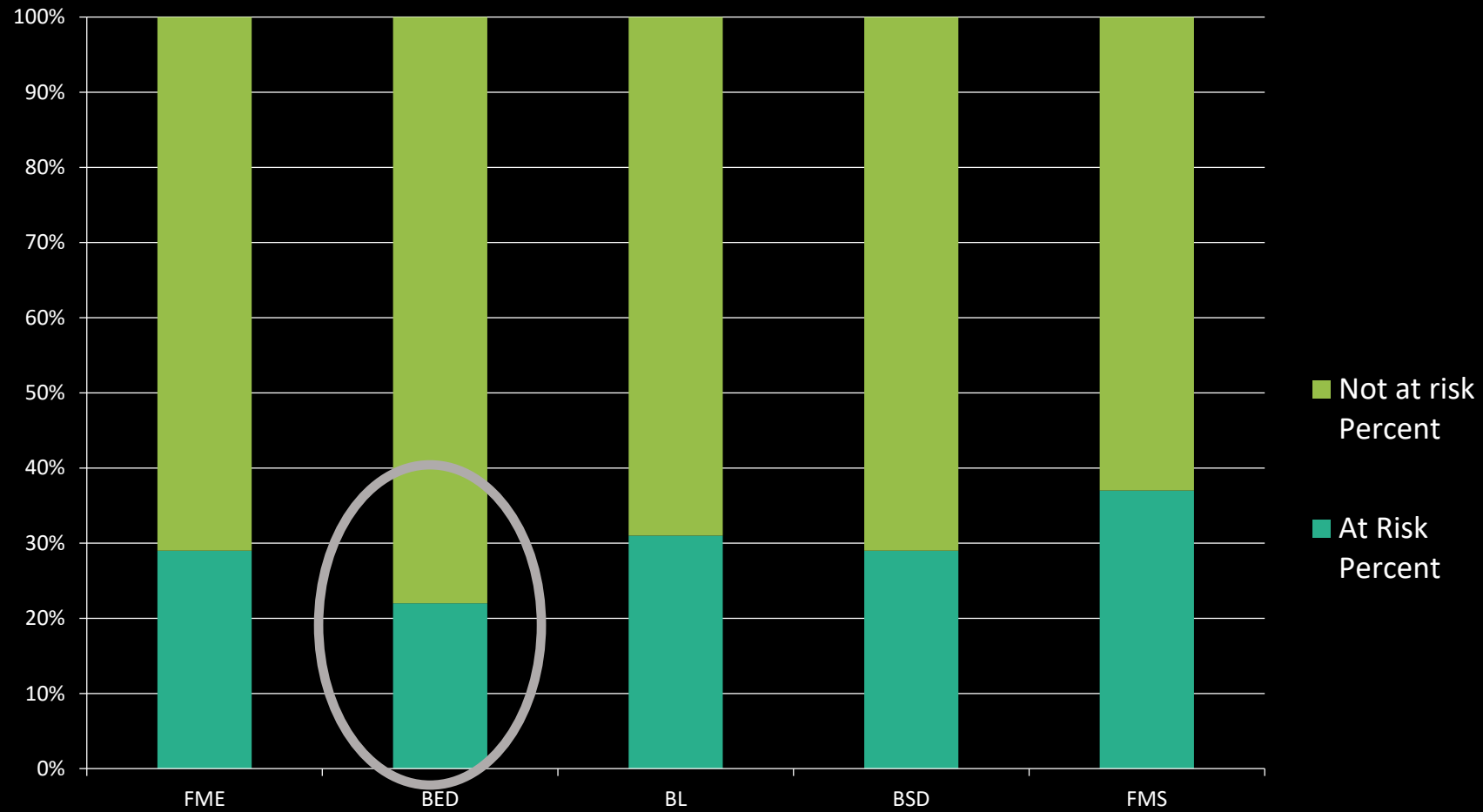
# English scores



# Spanish & English Scores



# % Risk x Language Group



# What about bilingual DLD?

## **Effects of divided input on bilingual children with language impairment**

**Elizabeth D Peña**

University of California, Irvine, USA

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The University of Texas at Austin, USA

**Prarthana Shivabasappa**

The University of Texas at Austin, USA

**Luping Niu**

The University of Texas at Austin, USA

International Journal of Bilingualism

1–17

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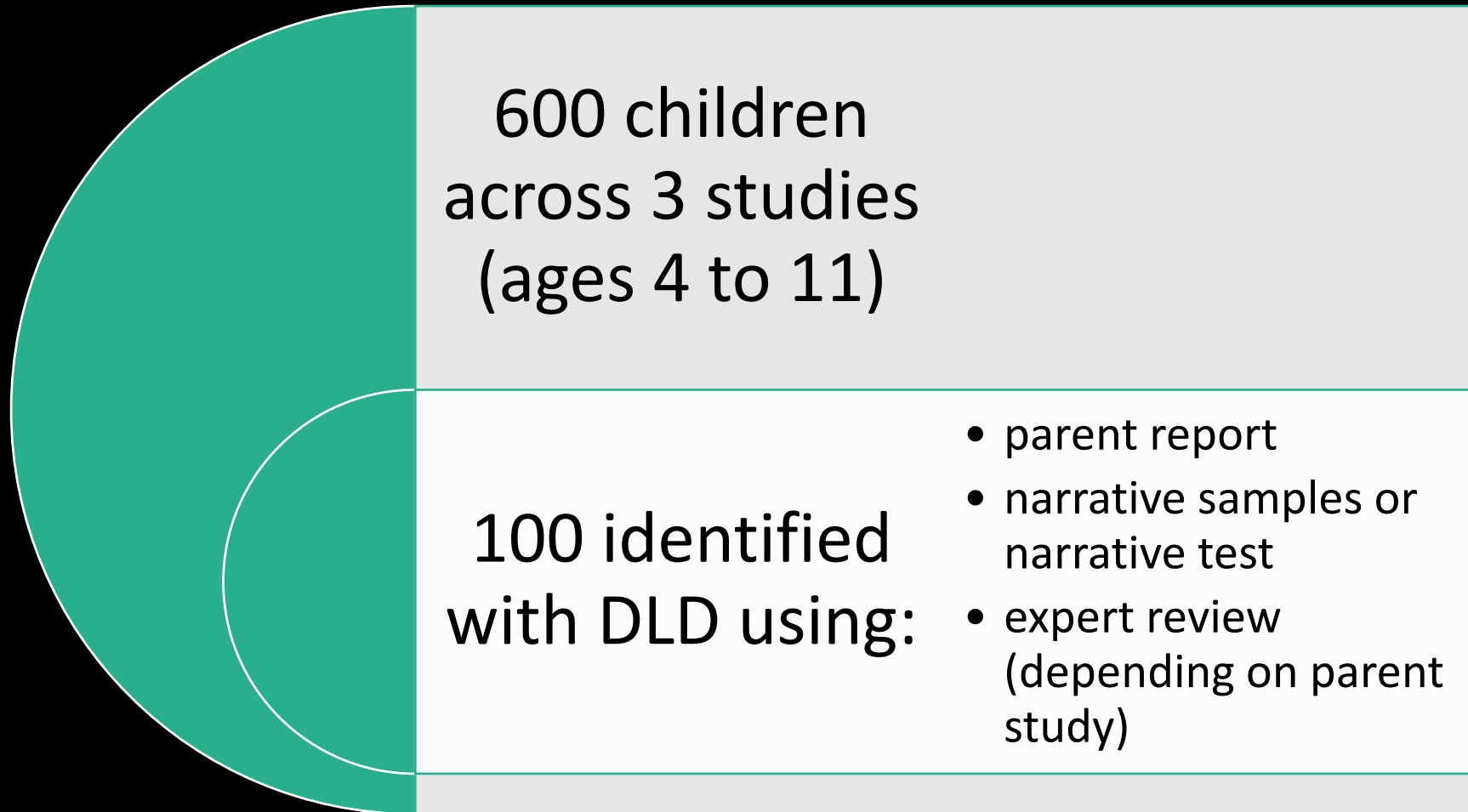
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# Participants



# Grouping (reference measures)

- Parent report
- Teacher report
- Clinical observation
- Grammaticality

**WHAT IS THE  
GOLD STANDARD?**



# Procedures

Children tested using (Index Measure):

- BESA (4 to 6;11) or BESAME (7 to 11;11)
- Morphosyntax: Spanish & English
- Semantics: Spanish & English

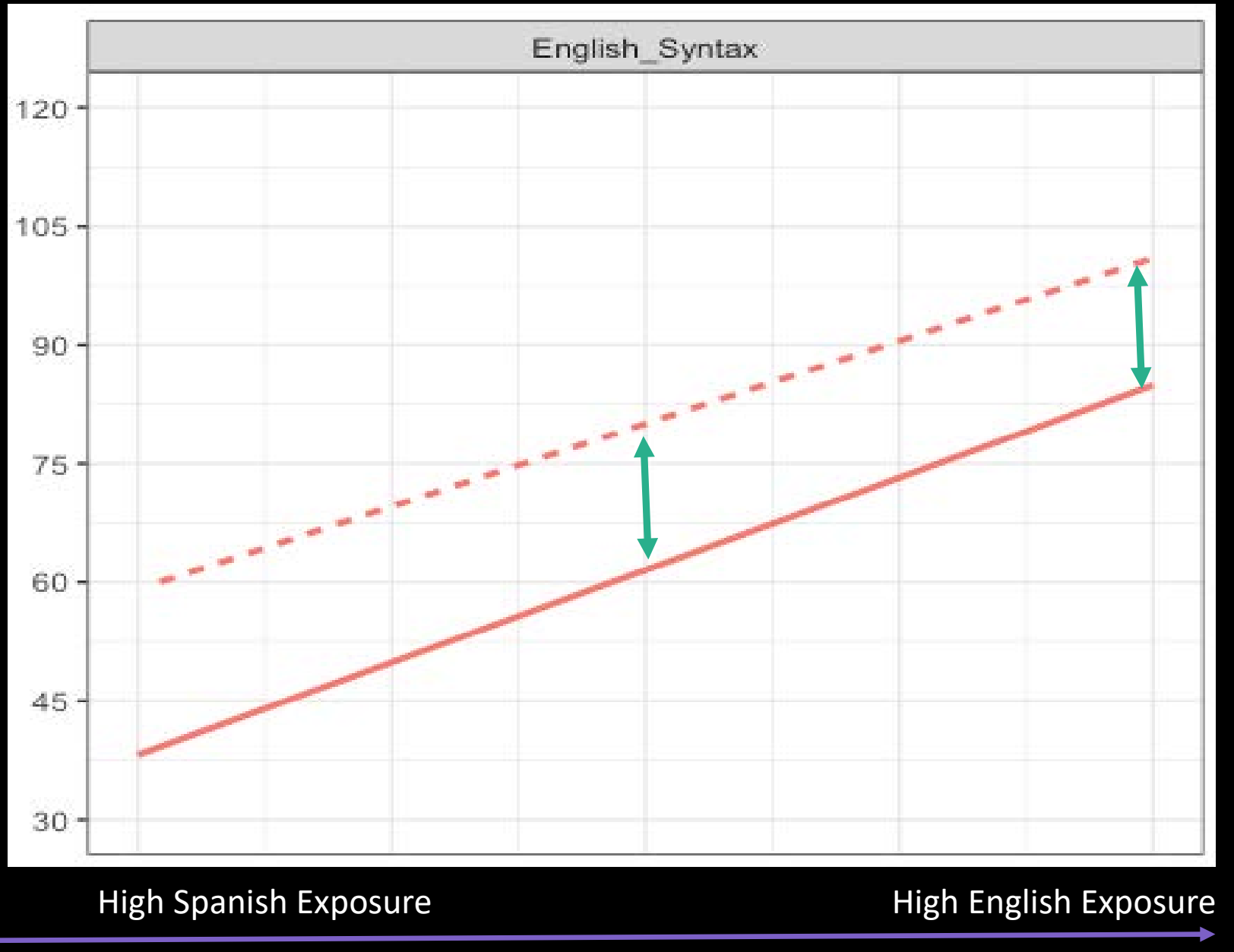
Parent interview:

- Bilingual Input Output Survey (BIOS)

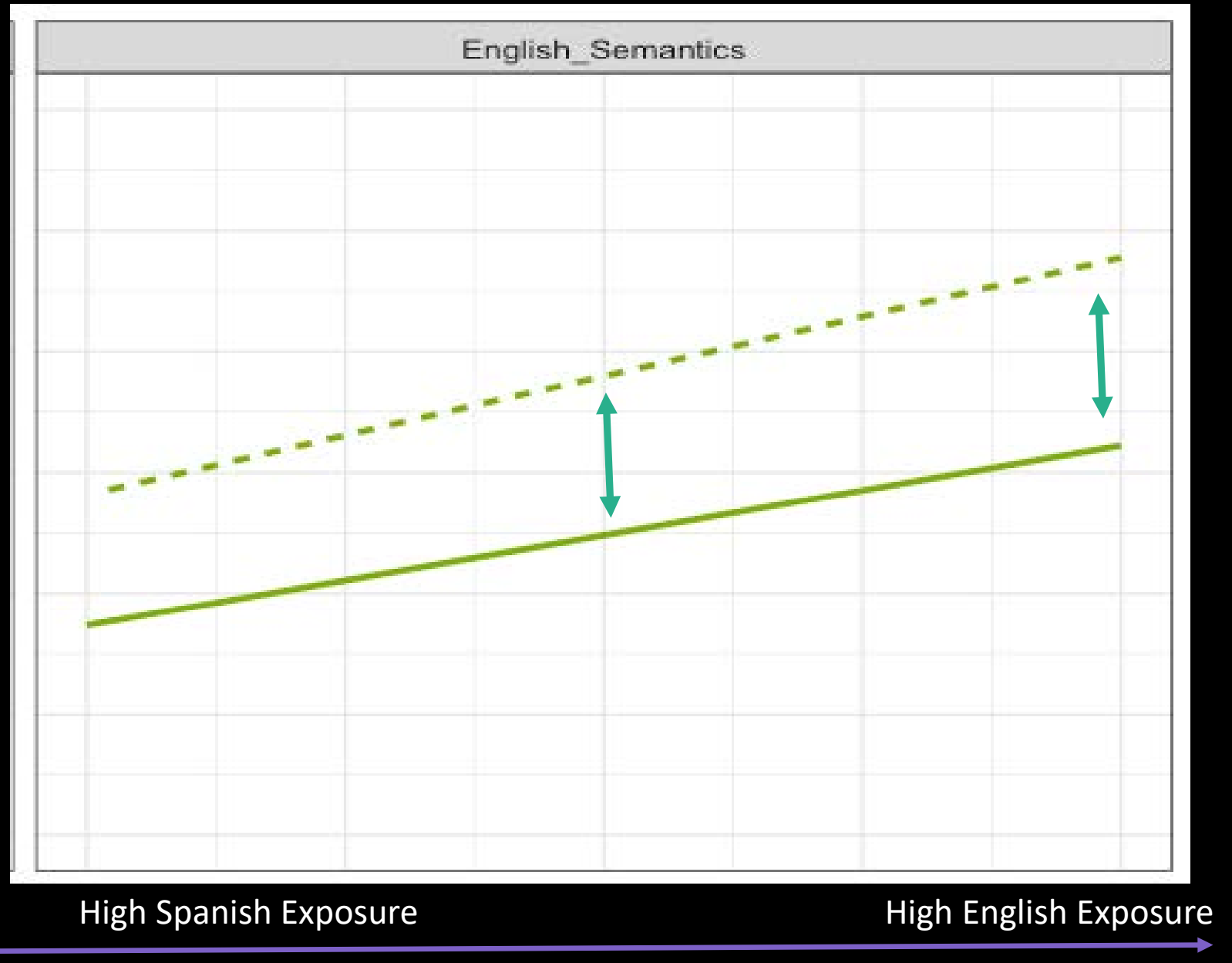
# Results

	Typically Developing		Developmental Language Disorder	
	M	SD	M	SD
English Semantics	86.53	20.02	64.80	16.73
Spanish Semantics	94.63	18.88	65.37	19.38
English Morphosyntax	77.54	22.26	53.12	20.29
Spanish Morphosyntax	88.76	20.83	54.31	19.47

# Results



# Results



# Conclusions so far...

- Bilingualism does not increase risk for DLD
  - Distributed knowledge
- Bilinguals with DLD are not more impaired than monolinguals with DLD
  - Monolingualism does not cure bilingual DLD
- Slight advantage for those who have been bilingual longer
  - Inhibitory control

# Clinical implications...

- Encourage families to maintain their home language
- Don't tell parents to stop using their home language

# Overview

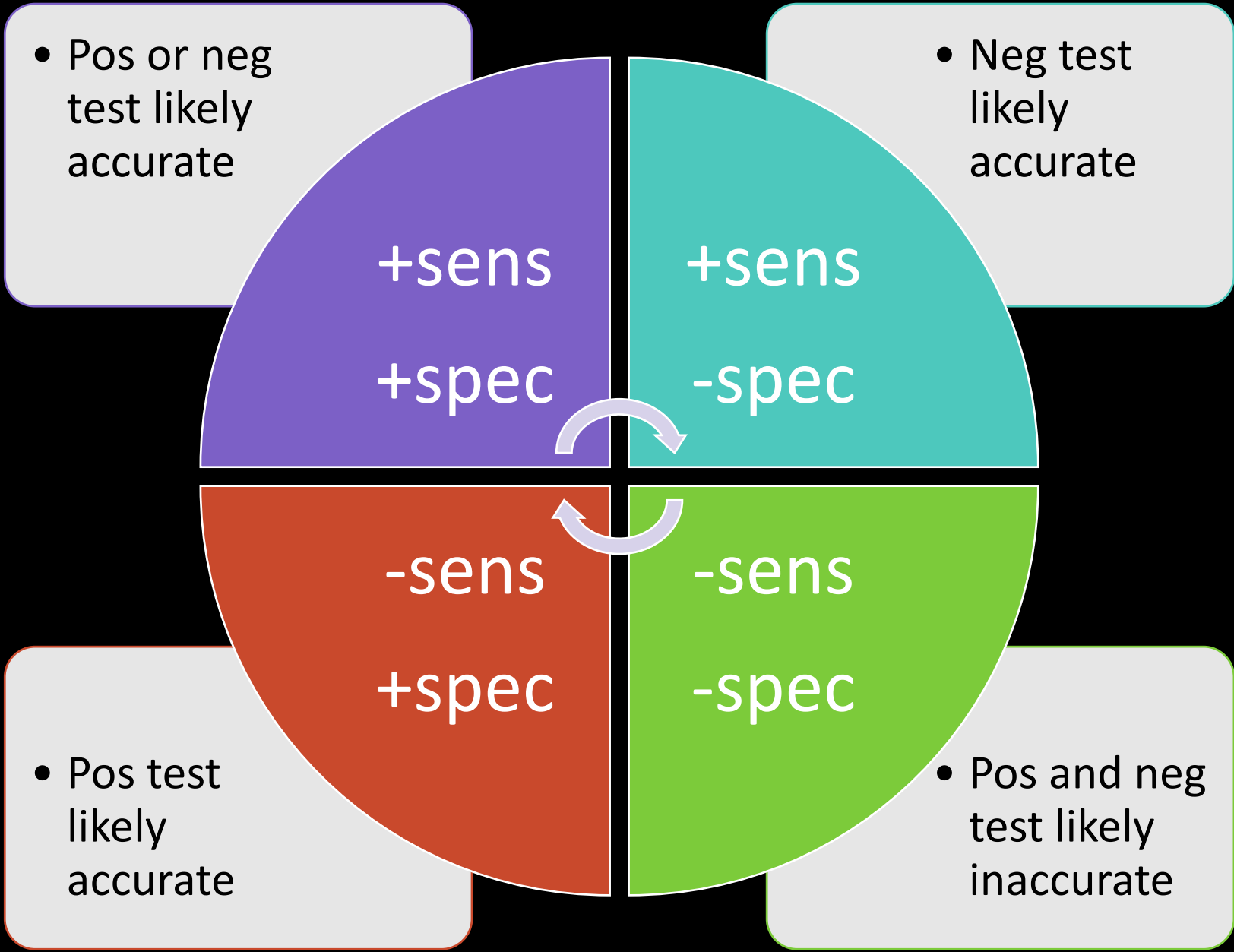
- Are bilinguals at greater risk for DLD?
- How do we consider L1 and L2 performance in diagnostic decision-making?
- What is the nature of the “bilingual delay” (is it really a thing?)

# Challenges in Assessment

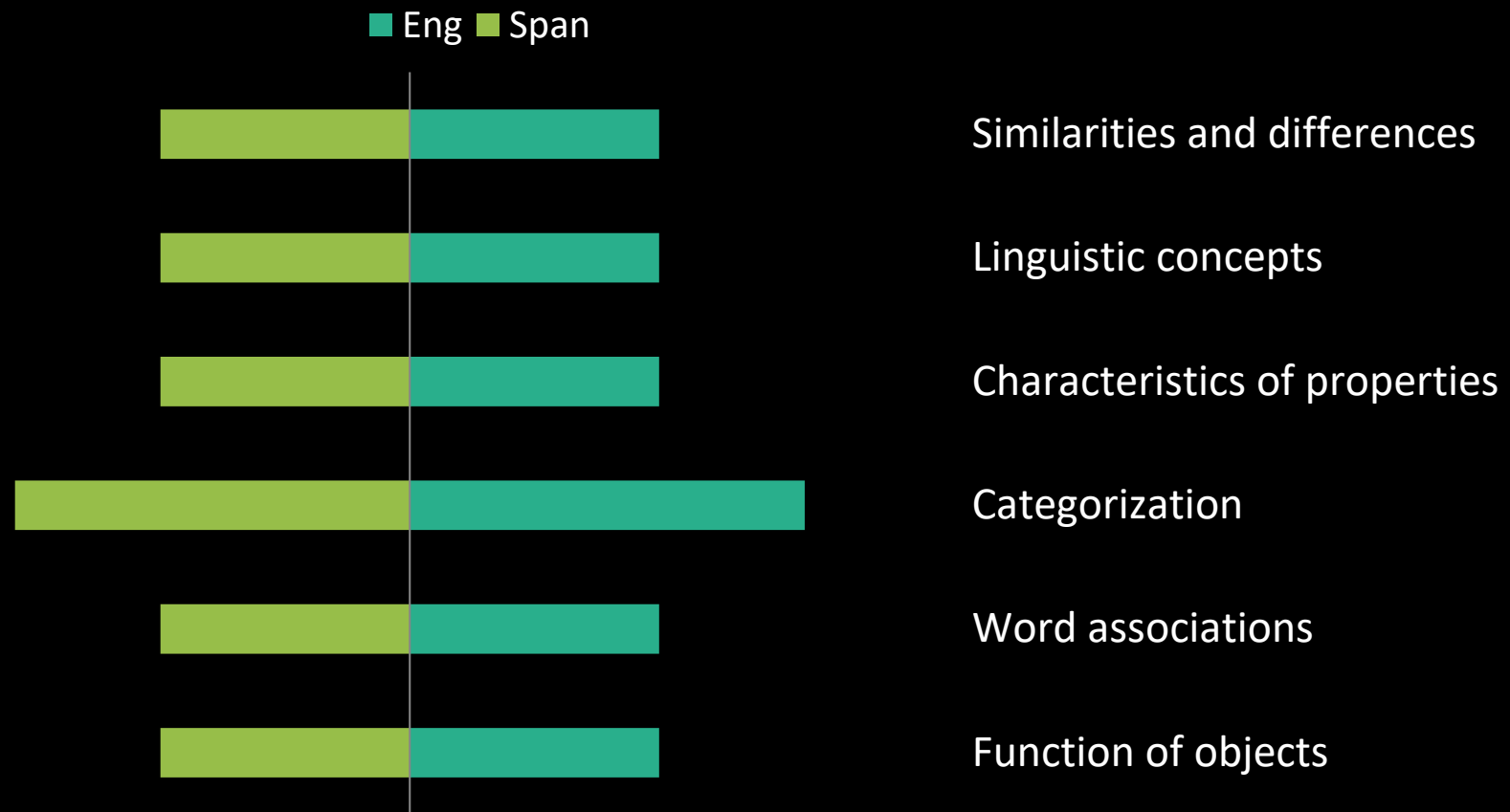
- Second language learning looks like DLD
- First language loss looks like DLD
- Language Dominance
  - Age of first English exposure
  - Percent of current exposure
- Test domain (by language experience)

# Classification Accuracy

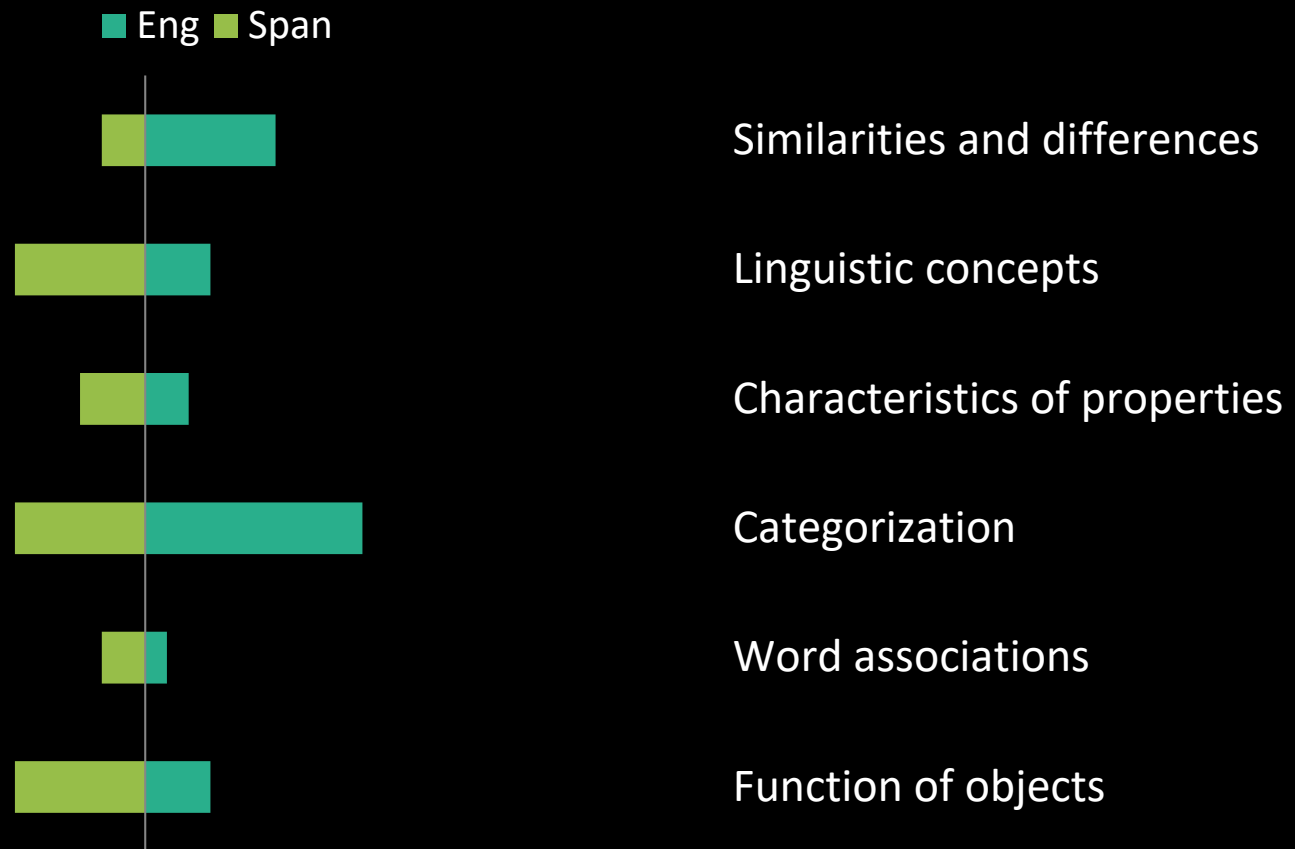
- For diagnostic decisions:
  - 80% sensitivity
  - 80% specificity
- For screening
  - 80% sensitivity or better
  - 70% specificity (can be more variable)



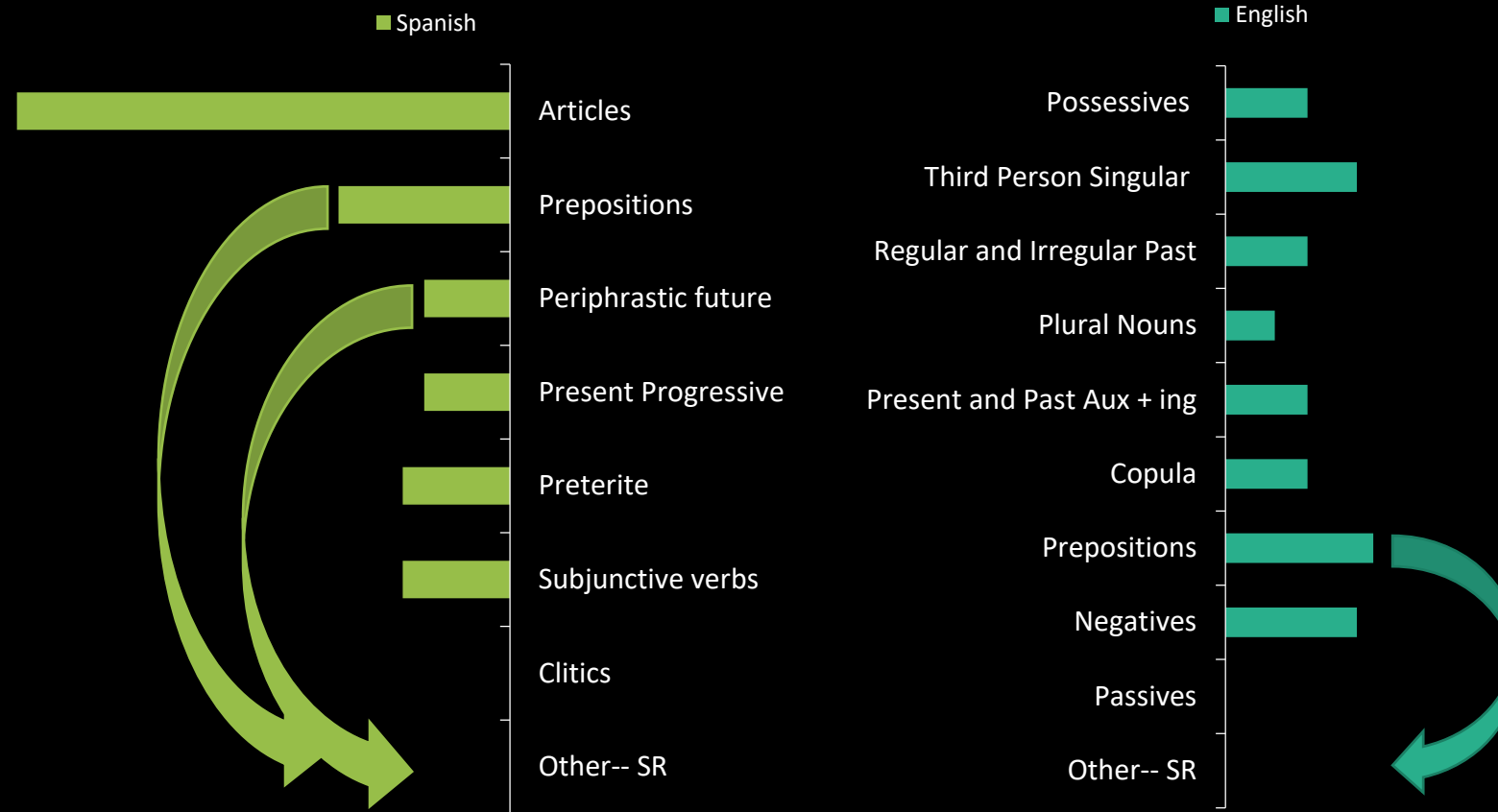
# Semantics



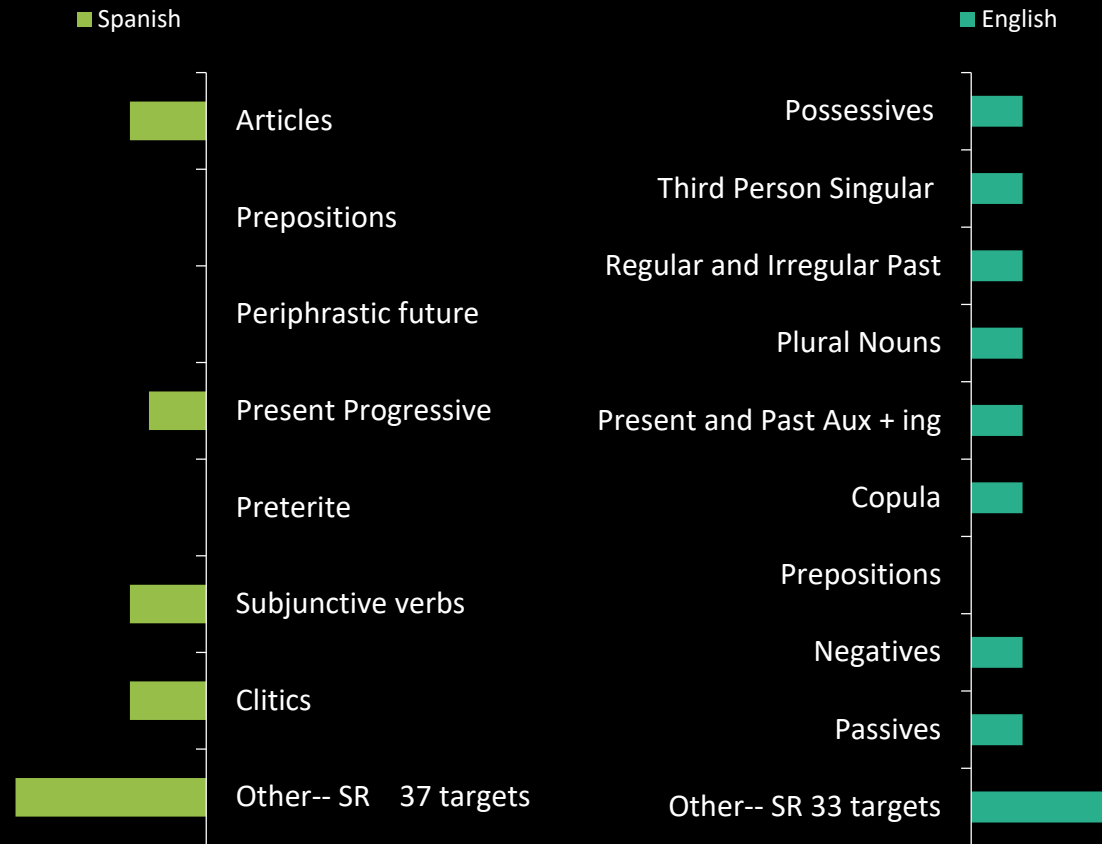
# Semantics



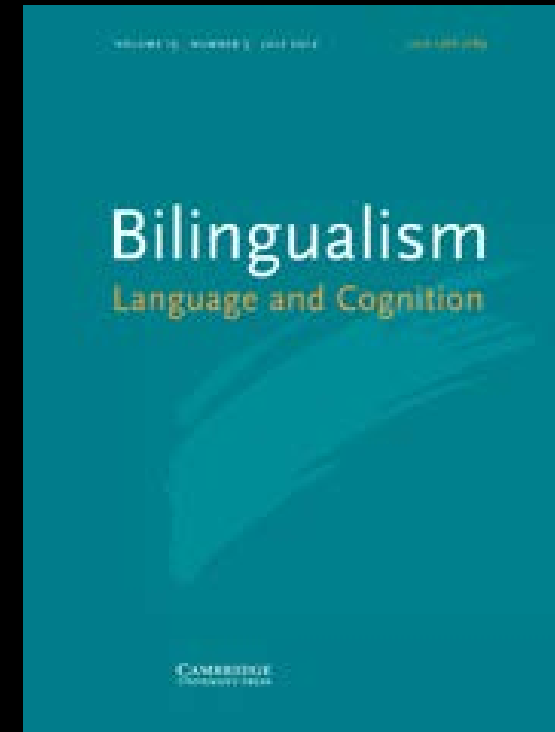
# Morphosyntax



# Morphosyntax



# Language Dominance



## **The measure matters: Language dominance profiles across measures in Spanish–English bilingual children**

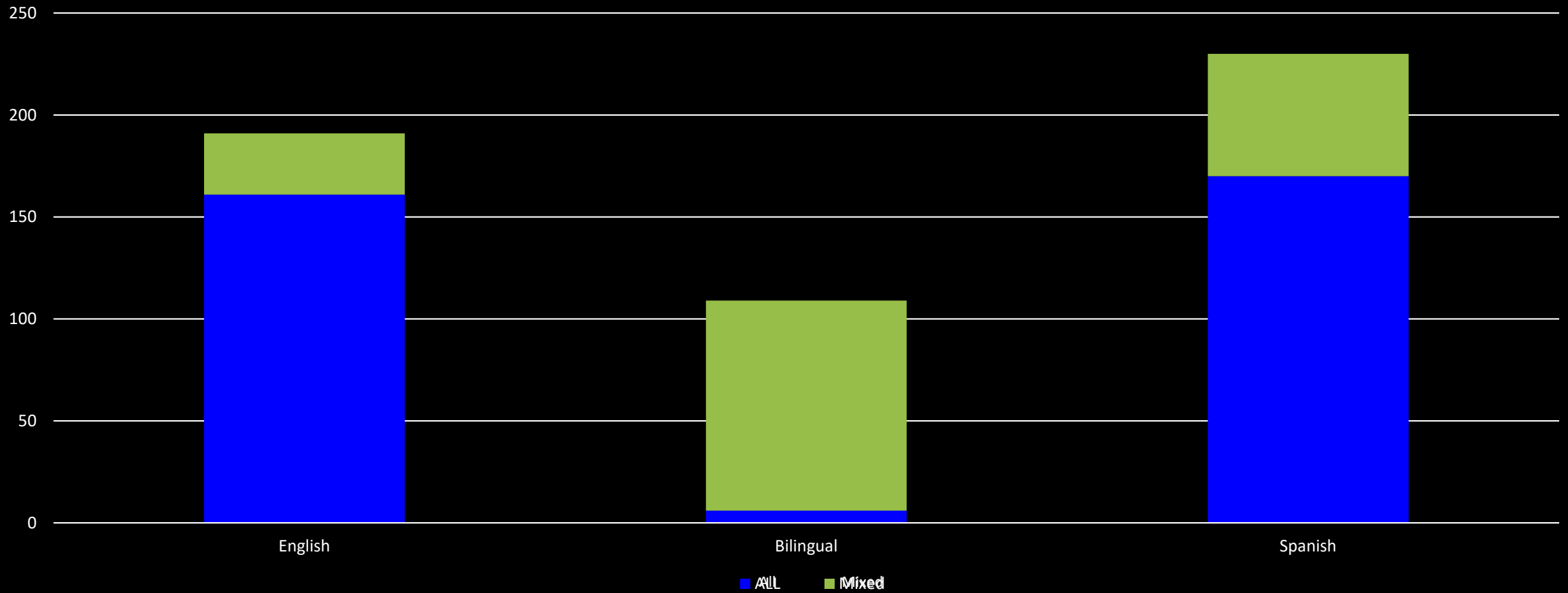
LISA M. BEDORE, ELIZABETH D. PEÑA, CONNIE L. SUMMERS, KARIN M. BOERGER, MARIA D. RESENDIZ, KAI GREENE, THOMAS M. BOHMAN and RONALD B. GILLAM

# Language Dominance

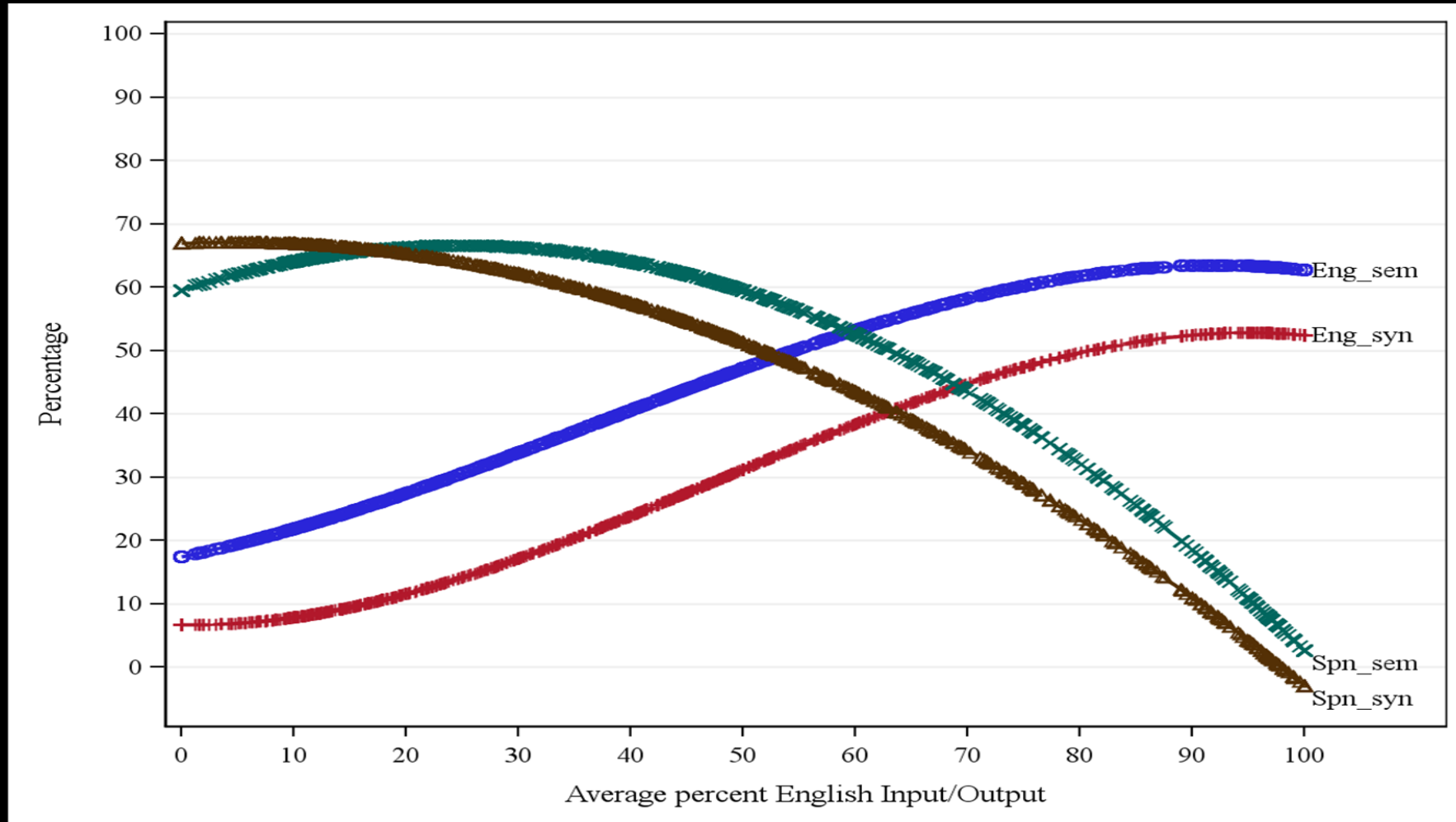
		Dominance Morphosyntax			Total
		E	B	S	
Dominance Semantics	E	253	5	7	265
	B	39	18	23	80
	S	11	10	239	260
Total		303	33	269	605

# Dominance

## Exposure and Performance



# How much exposure to test in one language?



70%

# Language of Testing

BIOS-Home Language Profile: Enter and circle Averaged Input/Output to determine testing language(s).										
SPANISH	0%–10%	11%–20%	21%–30%	31%–40%	41%–50%	51%–60%	61%–70%	71%–80%	81%–90%	91%–100%
SIO: Obtained %					X					
EIO: Obtained %					X					
ENGLISH	91%–100%	81%–90%	71%–80%	61%–70%	51%–60%	41%–50%	31%–40%	21%–30%	11%–20%	0%–10%
	Test in English			Test in Both			Test in Spanish			

BIOS-School Language Profile: Enter and circle Averaged Input/Output to determine testing language(s).										
SPANISH	0%–10%	11%–20%	21%–30%	31%–40%	41%–50%	51%–60%	61%–70%	71%–80%	81%–90%	91%–100%
SIO: Obtained %							X			
EIO: Obtained %							X			
ENGLISH	91%–100%	81%–90%	71%–80%	61%–70%	51%–60%	41%–50%	31%–40%	21%–30%	11%–20%	0%–10%
	Test in English			Test in Both			Test in Spanish			

# Two Languages to Test Bilinguals?

- Bilinguals do not perform like monolinguals
- Bilinguals do not perform similarly in both of their languages

## Research Report

Assessment of language impairment in bilingual children using semantic tasks: two languages classify better than one

Elizabeth D. Peña, Lisa M. Bedore and Ellen S. Kester



ELSEVIER



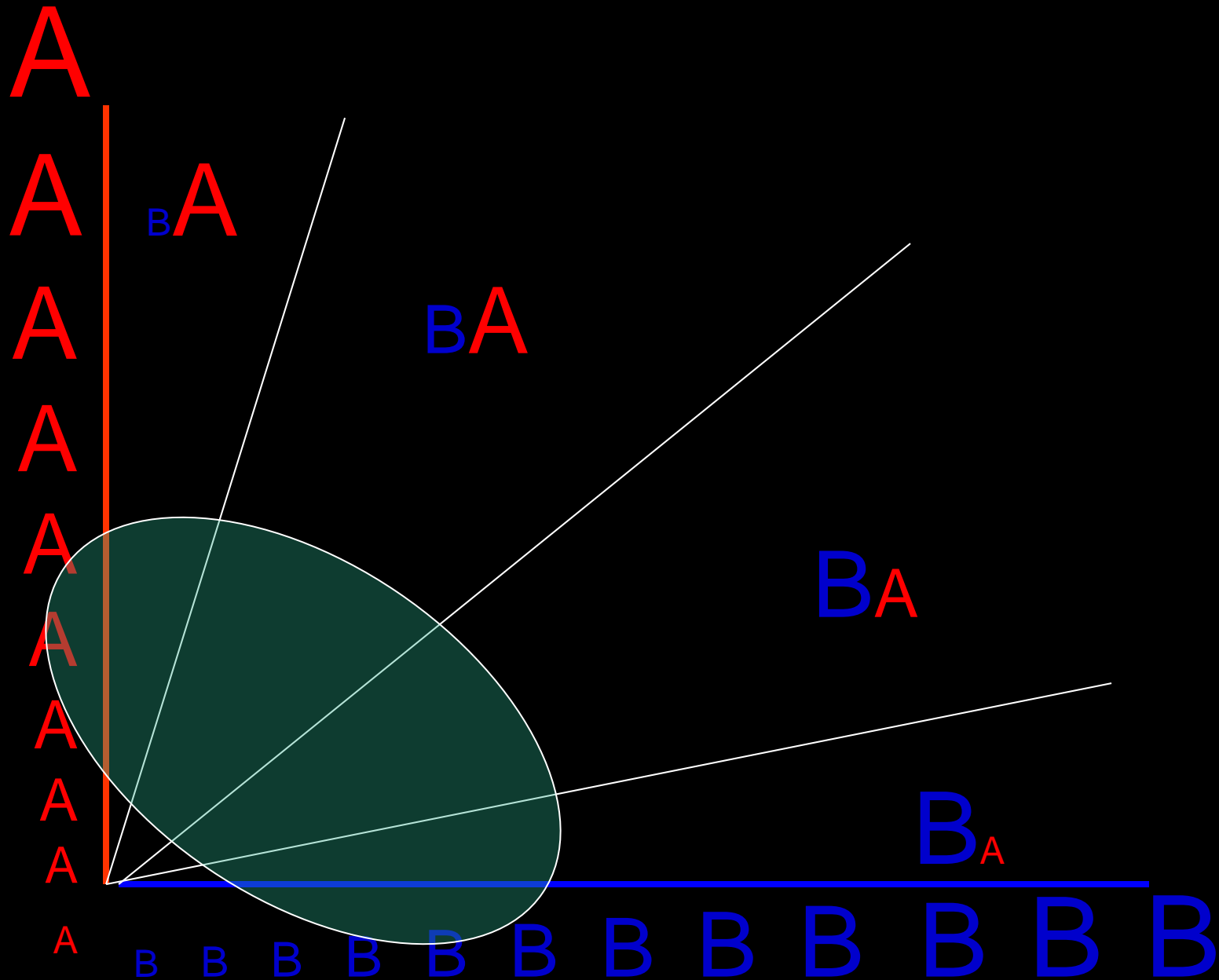
Discriminant accuracy of a semantics measure with Latino English-speaking, Spanish-speaking, and English-Spanish bilingual children



Elizabeth D. Peña<sup>a,\*</sup>, Lisa M. Bedore<sup>a</sup>, Ellen S. Kester<sup>b</sup>

A A<sub>B</sub> A<sub>B</sub> A<sub>B</sub>A<sub>B</sub>A<sub>B</sub>A<sub>B</sub> B<sub>A</sub> B<sub>A</sub> B<sub>A</sub> B<sub>A</sub> B B B

Valdes & Figueroa (1994)



Pena, Bedore & Kester (2003)

# Best Results when we test in BOTH

*International Journal of* Language &  
Communication  
Disorders



INT J LANG COMMUN DISORD, MARCH–APRIL 2016,  
VOL. 51, NO. 2, 192–202

## Research Report

Assessment of language impairment in bilingual children using semantic tasks: two languages classify better than one

Elizabeth D. Peña, Lisa M. Bedore and Ellen S. Kester

AJSLP

Research Article

## Utility of a Language Screening Measure for Predicting Risk for Language Impairment in Bilinguals

Mirza J. Lugo-Neris,<sup>a</sup> Elizabeth D. Peña,<sup>a</sup> Lisa M. Bedore,<sup>a</sup> and Ronald B. Gillam<sup>b</sup>

# Participants (BESA field test)

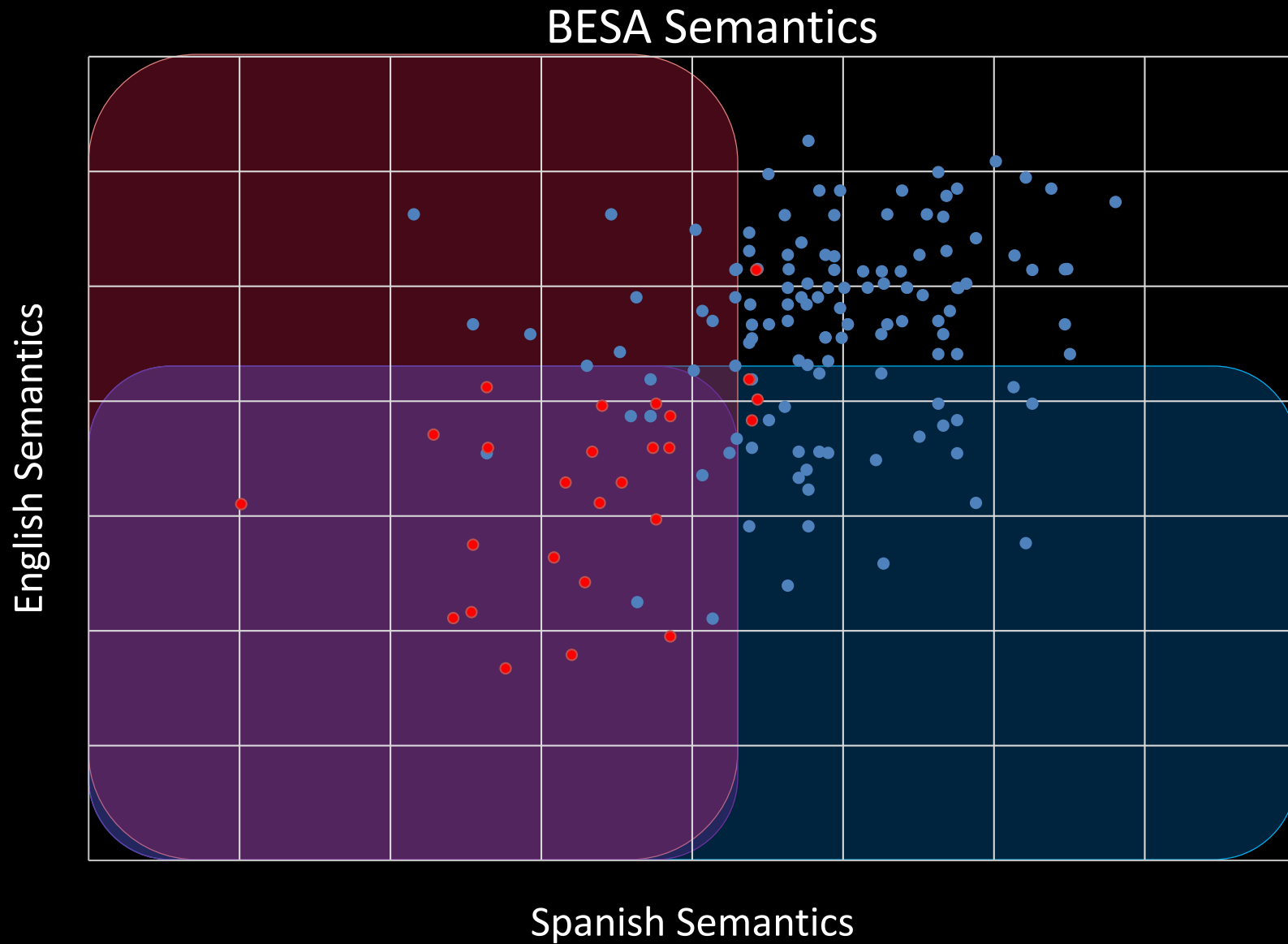
		FME	BSE	FMS	All
<b>LI</b>	4	19	34	19	72
	5	23	25	13	61
	6	6	23	4	33
		48	82	36	166
<b>TD</b>	4	47	44	37	130
	5	53	106	70	227
	6	43	105	56	201
		143	255	163	561

# Procedure

- Children tested in Spanish, English or both
- Ability testing: language samples, parent/teacher questionnaire, clinical concern
- Bilingual input-output based on parent/teacher questionnaire
- Bilingual English Spanish Assessment– BESA Semantics

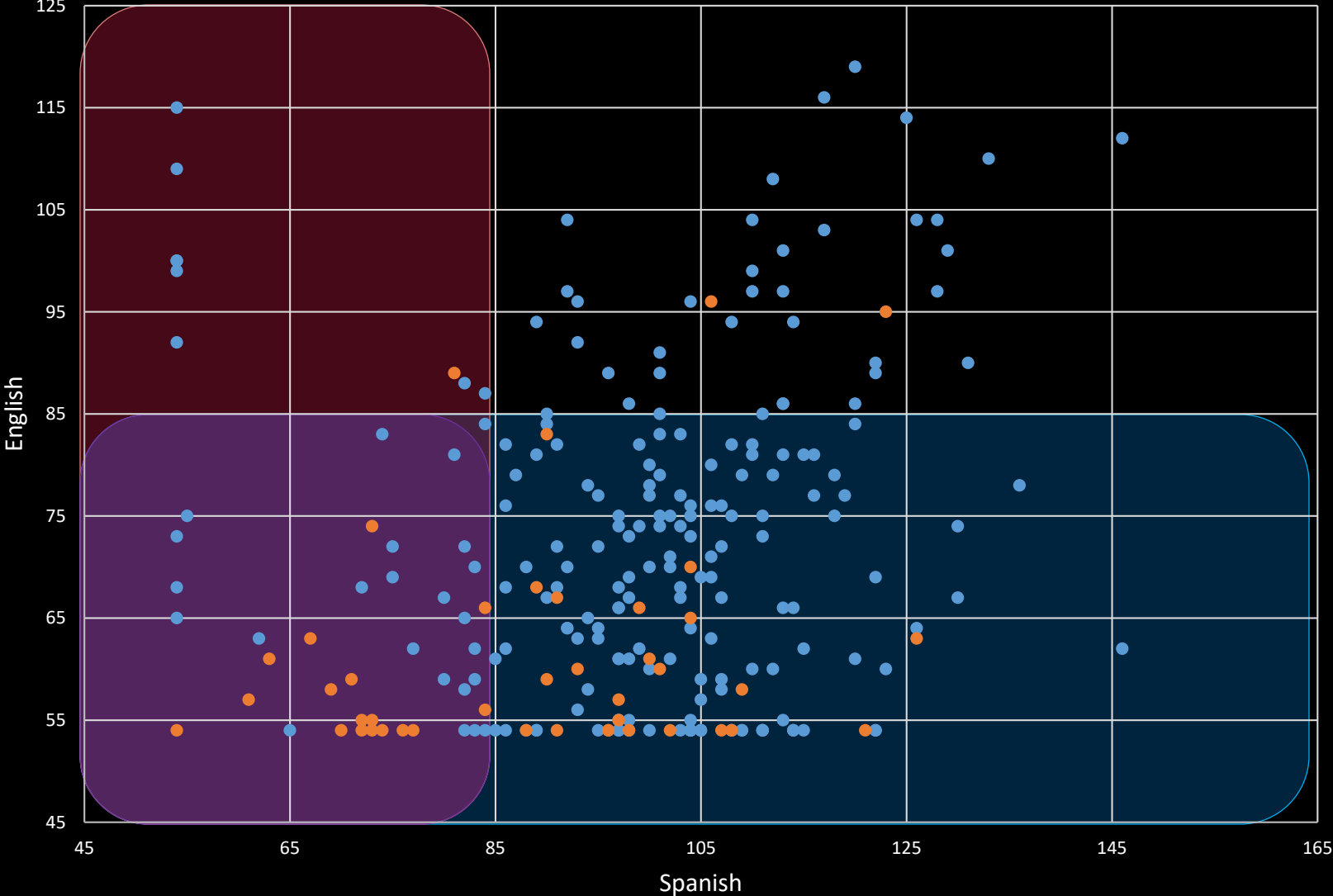
	Age	Sensitivity (LI as LI)	Specificity (TD as TD)	+ likelihood ratio	- likelihood ratio
English Semantics	4	81.0%	73.1%	3.01	0.26
	5	90.0%	63.3%	2.45	0.16
	6	52.6%	85.7%	4.09	0.48
Spanish Semantics	4	70.0%	83.3%	4.19	0.36
	5	93.8%	77.8%	4.25	0.08
	6	87.5%	86.8%	6.63	0.14

	Age	Sensitivity (LI as LI)	Specificity (TD as TD)	+ likelihood ratio	- likelihood ratio
English Semantics	4	81.0%	73.1%	3.01	0.26
	5	90.0%	63.3%	2.45	0.16
	6	52.6%	85.7%	4.09	0.48
Spanish Semantics	4	70.0%	83.3%	4.19	0.36
	5	93.8%	77.8%	4.25	0.08
	6	87.5%	86.8%	6.63	0.14
English & Spanish Semantics	4	85.7%	100.0%	infinite	0.12
	5	90.9%	84.0%	5.68	0.11
	6	91.7%	85.7%	6.41	0.10

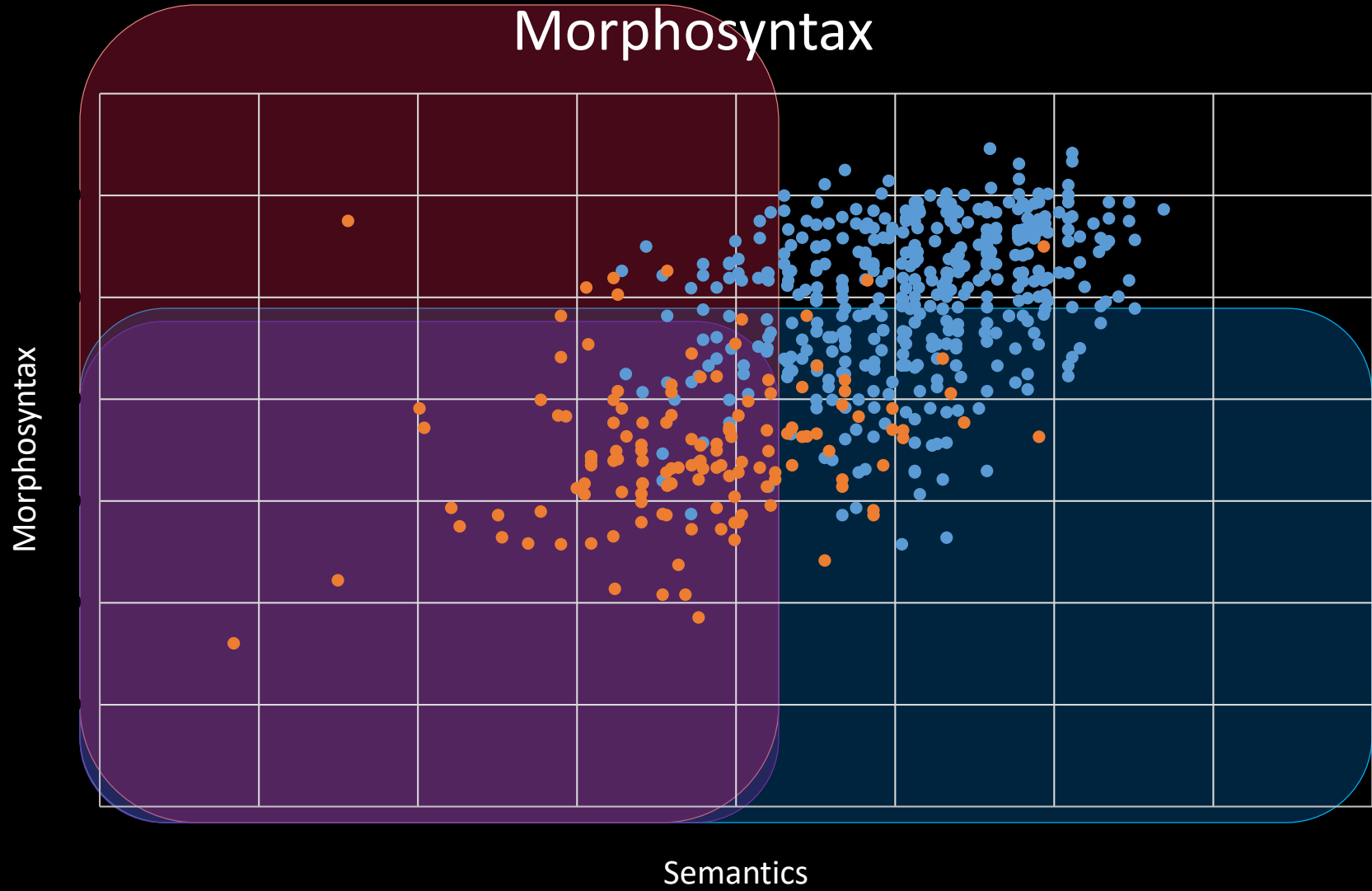




# EOWPVT





# Composite Scores: Semantics & Morphosyntax



# Composites across Domains & Language

- Semantics
- Morphosyntax
- Narratives

## Identifying Developmental Language Disorder in School Age Bilinguals: Semantics, Grammar, and Narratives

Elizabeth D. Peña <sup>a</sup>, Lisa M Bedore <sup>b</sup>, Mirza J. Lugo-Neris<sup>c</sup>, and Nahar Albudoor<sup>c</sup>

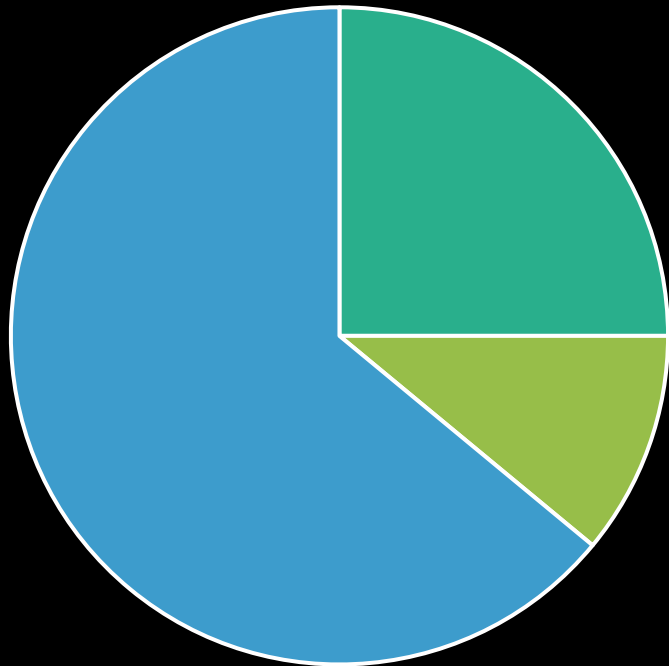


# Participants

Second Grade		Fourth Grade	
<b>TD</b>	<b>DLD</b>	<b>TD</b>	<b>DLD</b>
<b>n = 92</b>	<b>n = 19</b>	<b>n = 57</b>	<b>n = 7</b>

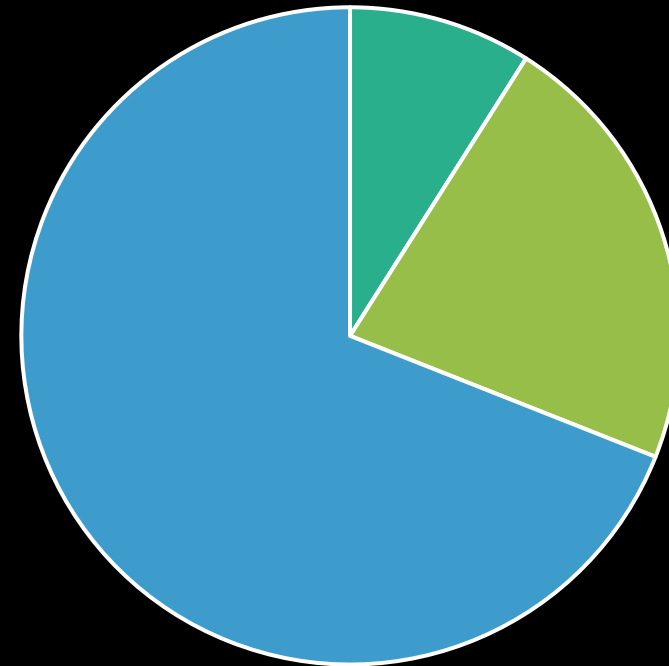
# Mixed Dominance is Common

2nd Grade



Spanish English Mixed

4th Grade



Spanish English Mixed

# Results

2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade Measures	Structure Matrix	89% sensitivity 89% specificity
BESA-ME Morphosyntax	0.988	
TNL	0.550	
BESA-ME Semantics	0.529	

# Results

4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Measures	Structure Matrix
BESA-ME Morphosyntax	0.839
BESA-ME Semantics	0.702
TNL	0.615

77% sensitivity  
86% specificity

# Clinical Implications...

- Reliable assessment in one language if exposure > 70%
- Mixed dominance is common
- Test in two languages for diagnostic accuracy

# Overview

- Are bilinguals at greater risk for DLD?
- How do we consider L1 and L2 performance in diagnostic decision-making?
- What is the nature of the “bilingual delay” (is it really a thing?)

# Commonly Accepted

- Bilingual children demonstrate a delay in **both** their languages

Where does this come from?

# Bilinguals performed consistently low on:

- Measures of IQ
- Academic Measures
- Language Measure

Code switching as  
linguistic confusion  
(Saer, 1923)

Bilingualism as a  
“social plague”  
(Epstein, 1905)

“a hardship devoid of  
apparent advantage”  
(Yoshioka, 1929, p. 476).

- “This might be considered evidence that the use of a foreign language in the home is one of the chief factors in producing mental retardation as measured by intelligence tests”  
(Goodenough, 1926, p. 393)

# Divided Input

- High variation
  - When children learn L1 and L2
  - Proportion of input/output in each language
  - What they learn in each language → content x context

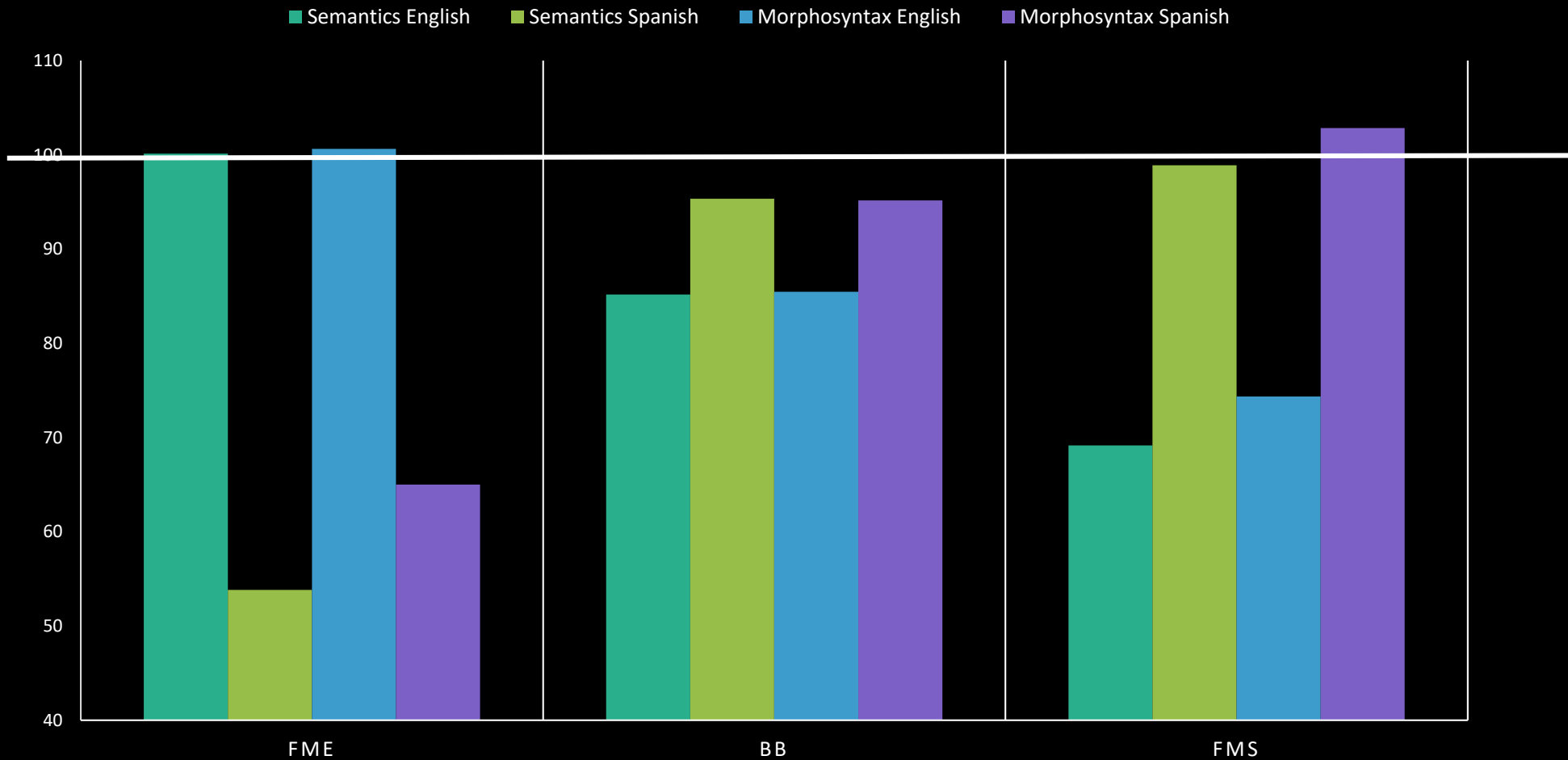
# Rethinking the bilingual delay



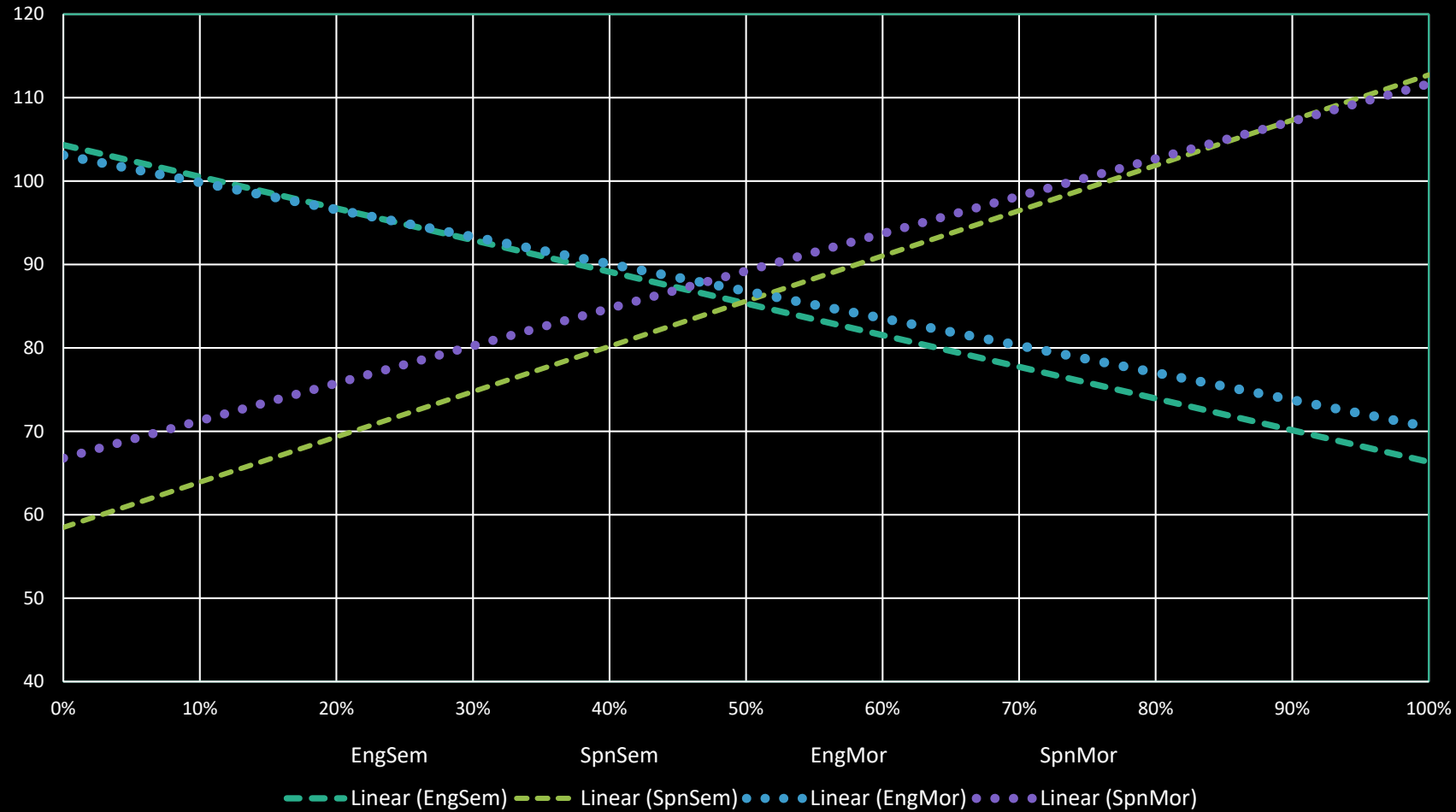
# Participants

- 1595 preschool age children in database
  - Excluded 79 who scored below -1.5 SD across the board
  - Excluded 180 with missing data
- 1336 typically developing with complete data
  - BIOS
  - Semantics
    - Spanish & English
  - Morphosyntax
    - Spanish & English
- 3 groups:
  - FME, BB, FMS

# Bilingual & Functional Monolingual Language Scores



# Scores in each language x exposure



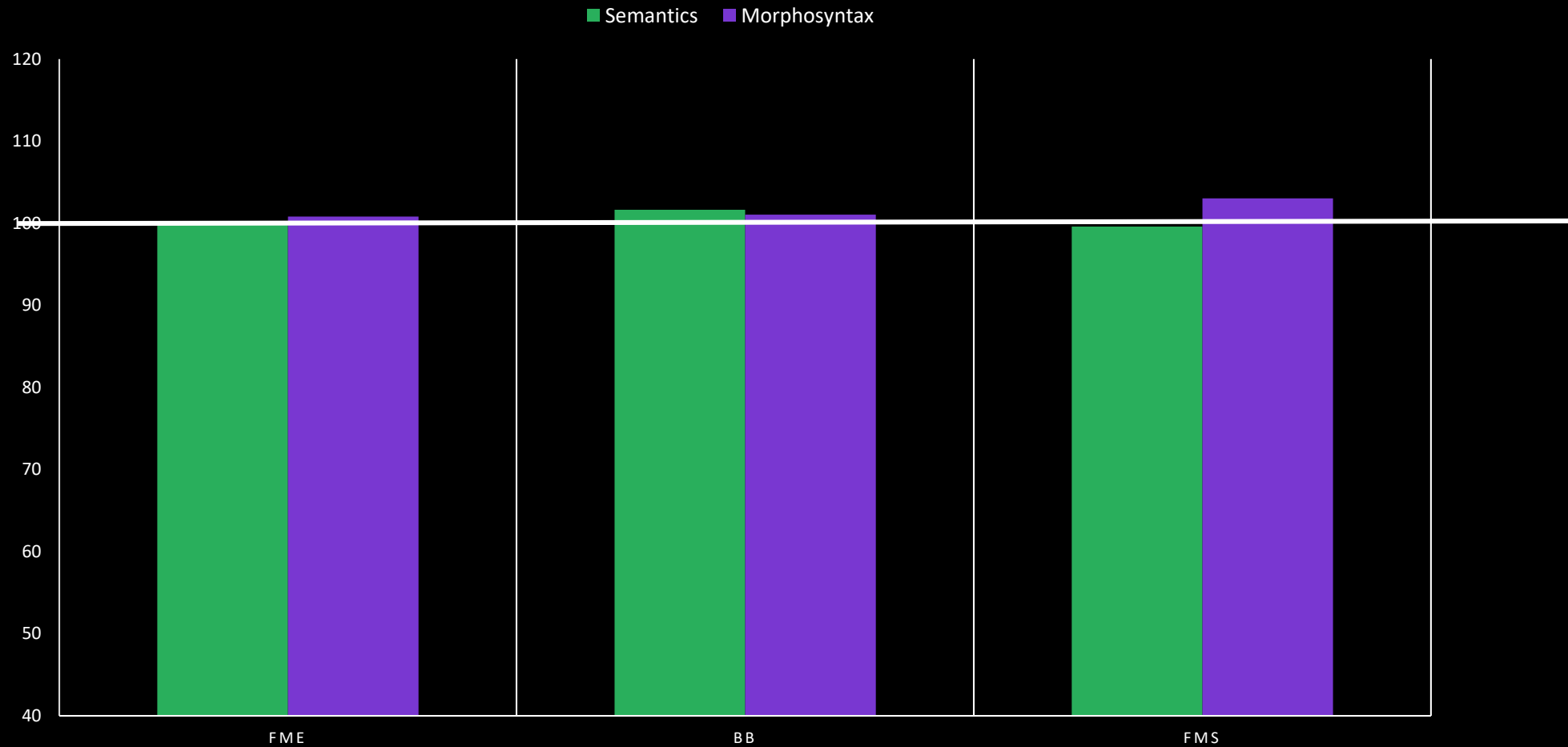
# Individual Scores x Language

English Functional Monolinguals	English	Spanish
	91.90	71.96
109.13	71.96	
98.79	68.85	
112.58	68.57	
95.35	68.57	
122.92	68.57	
109.13	68.57	
98.79	68.57	
74.67	68.57	
102.24	68.57	
102.24	68.57	
102.24	68.57	
81.56	68.57	
112.58	68.57	

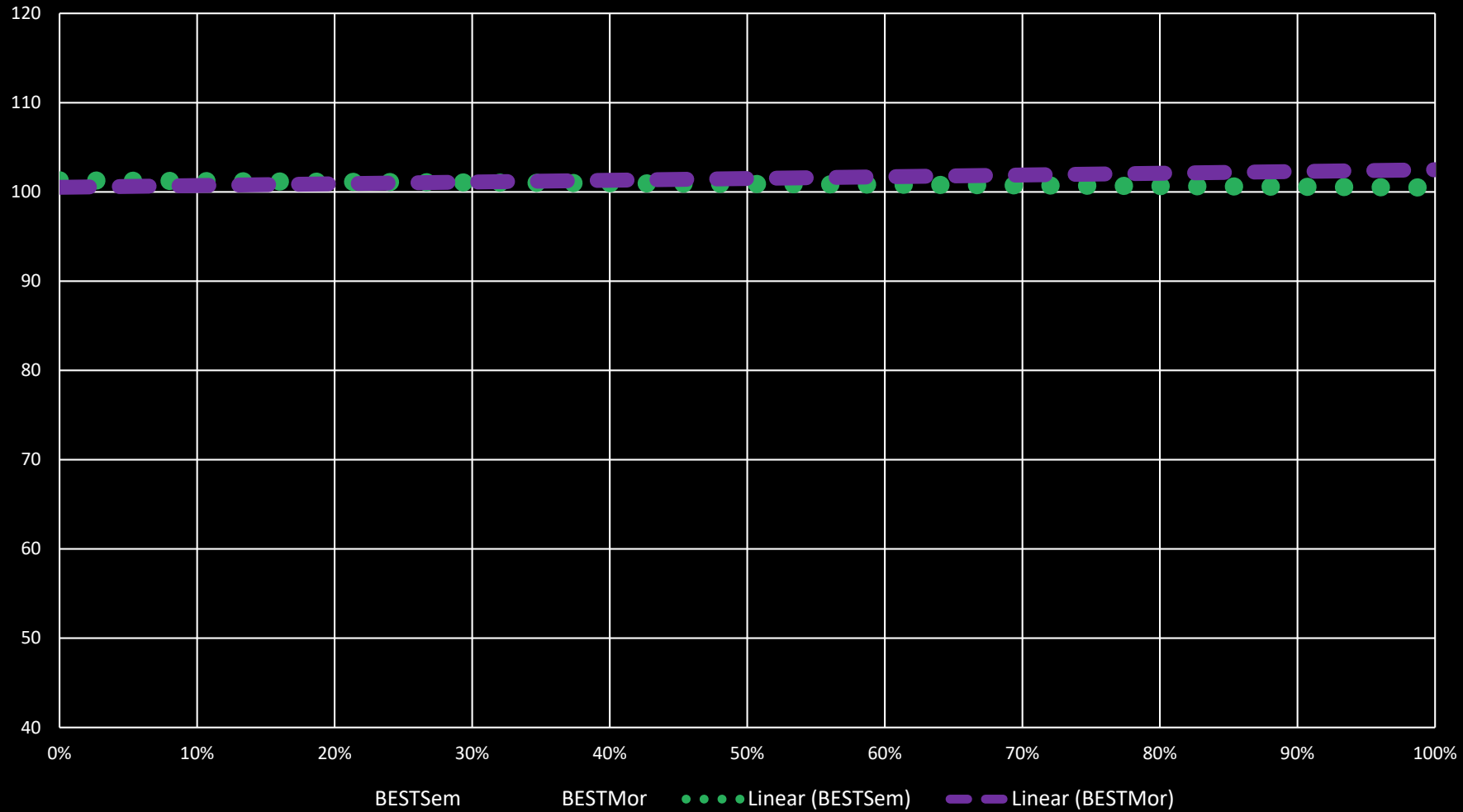
Balanced Bilinguals	English	Spanish
	65.71	94.27
101.58	94.27	
87.23	94.27	
85.01	92.35	
112.58	65.28	
71.22	65.28	
102.24	65.28	
105.16	60.31	
44.86	109.81	
71.22	105.95	
69.30	94.27	
71.22	90.23	
71.22	72.41	
80.06	113.13	

Spanish Functional Monolinguals	English	Spanish
	65.71	109.36
71.22	108.06	
78.11	105.95	
65.71	105.58	
71.22	104.49	
74.67	100.93	
74.67	99.15	
65.71	98.04	
78.11	97.36	
71.22	95.75	
71.22	95.75	
78.11	90.23	
88.45	90.23	
71.22	88.96	

# Bilingual & Functional Monolingual Best Language Scores



# Best Score x Exposure



# BALANCED EXPOSURE

English

Spanish

-150

-100

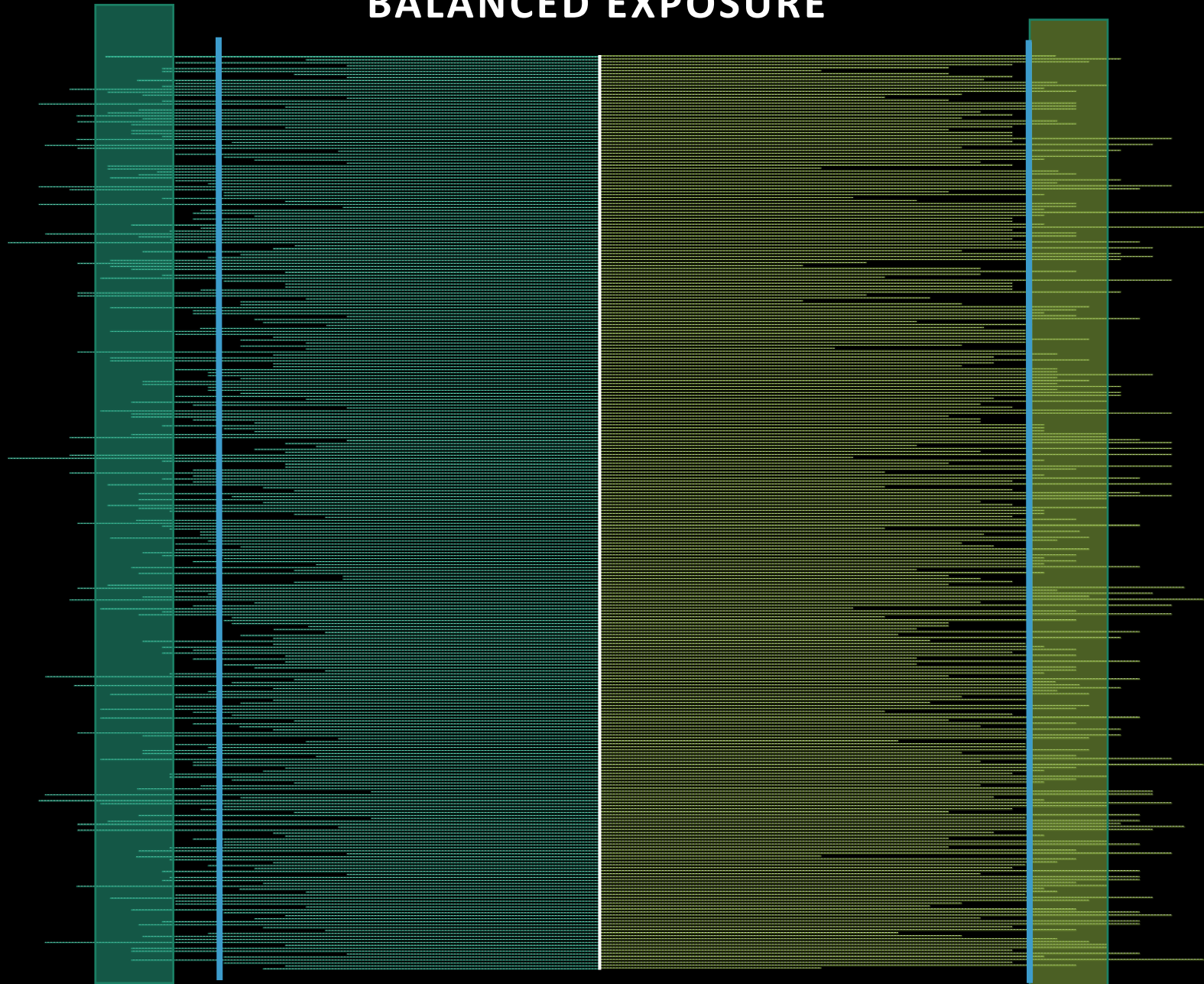
-50

0

50

100

150



# BALANCED EXPOSURE

English

Spanish

-150

-100

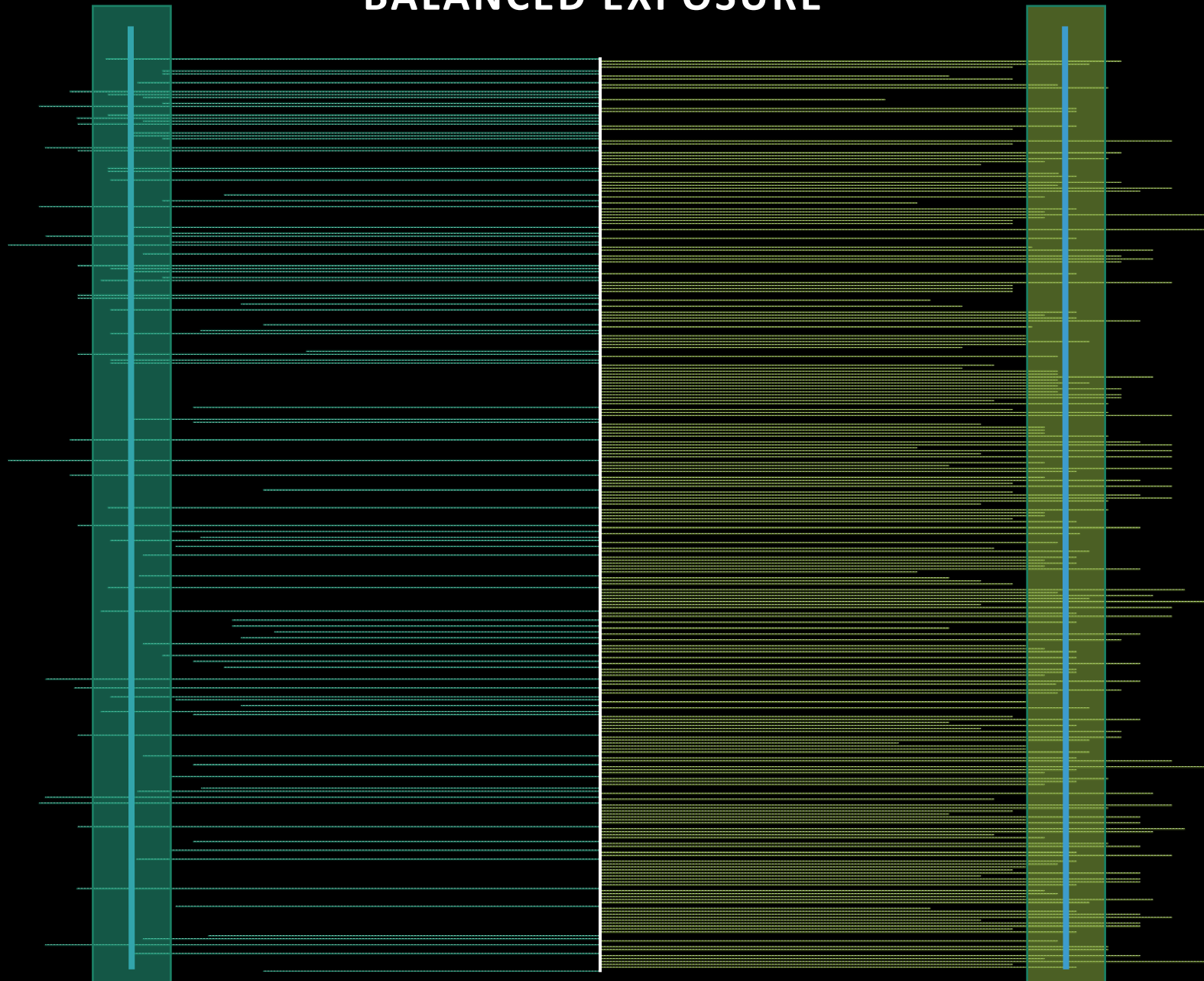
-50

0

50

100

150



So, do bilinguals in fact  
show delays in both  
languages?

**MURPHY**

**BUSTED**

Bilinguals are WNL in at  
least one language

# Conclusions

- Bilingualism is NOT an added risk for DLD (and could be an advantage)
- Clinical diagnostic accuracy can be obtained by combining both languages
- The bilingual delay is a myth

# Clinical Implications...

- Use tools that have good sensitivity and specificity (standardized or not)
- Look at best language for clinical decision making
- Question assumptions about the bilingual delay

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 @HABLALab

[2languages2worlds.wordpress.com](https://2languages2worlds.wordpress.com)

[hablalab.wordpress.com](https://hablalab.wordpress.com)

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