

# Differentiating Lang Diff from Lang Dis.doc

## Differentiating Language Differences from Language Disabilities

LANGUAGE AREAS	DIFFERENCE	POSSIBLE DISABILITY/ CONCERNS
<p><b>Pragmatics:</b> The rules governing social interactions (e.g., turn taking, maintaining topic of conversation).</p>	<p>Social responses to language are based on cultural background (e.g., comfort level in asking or responding to questions).</p> <p>Pauses between turns or overlaps in conversation are similar to those of peers with the same linguistic and cultural background.</p>	<p>Social use of language or lack thereof is inappropriate (e.g., topic of lesson is rocks and the student continues to discuss events that occurred at home without saying how they relate to rocks).</p>
<p><b>Syntax:</b> The rules governing the order, grammar, and form of phrases or sentences</p>	<p>Grammatical errors due to native language influences (e.g., student may omit initial verb in a question — “<i>You like cake?</i>” (omission of <i>Do</i>)).</p> <p>Word order in L1 may differ from that of English (e.g., in Arabic, sentences are ordered verb-subject-object while Urdu sentences are ordered subject-object-verb).</p>	<p>Grammatical structures continue to be inappropriate in both languages even after extensive instruction (e.g., student cannot produce the past tense in either Spanish or English indicating difficulty with grammatical tenses).</p>
<p><b>Semantics:</b> The rules pertaining to both the underlying and the surface meaning of phrases and sentences</p>	<p>A student whose native language is Korean may have difficulty using pronouns, as they do not exist in his/her native language.</p> <p>A student may use words from L1 in productions in L2 because of his unfamiliarity with the vocabulary in L2 (e.g., “<i>The car is muy rapido.</i>” In this case, the student knows the concept as well as the needed structure but cannot remember the vocabulary).</p>	<p>Student demonstrates limited phrasing and vocabulary in both languages (e.g., his/her sentences in both languages demonstrate limited or no use of adjectives and adverbs and both languages are marked by a short length of utterance).</p>
<p><b>Morphology:</b> The rules concerning the construction of words from meaningful units</p>	<p>Native speakers of Russian may not use articles as they do not exist in that language. A student whose native language is Spanish may omit the possessive (‘s’) when producing an utterance in English (e.g., “<i>Joe crayon broke</i>” or he will say “<i>the</i></p>	<p>Student’s productions in both languages demonstrate a lack of the possessive form indicating that he/she has not acquired this morphologic structure by the appropriate age. Again, both languages may be marked by a short length of utterance.</p>

	<i>crayon of Joe broke,</i> ” applying a structure that is influenced by the rules of his/her L1. He/she still demonstrates understanding of the morphologic structure for possession, but is demonstrating errors in structure that are directly influenced by his/her L1.)	
<b>Fluency:</b> Flowing speech that is not marked by excessive interruptions, interjections, and/or repetitions	Student’s language does exhibit more interruptions, interjections, and/or repetitions for his/her age, but there are no physical concomitants marking the speech (physical strain or repeated physical actions), and the student does not seem to exhibit a consciousness of his/her dysfluency. Students learning L2 may exhibit interruptions, interjections, and repetitions as they are searching for words while speaking.	Major reliance on gestures rather than speech to communicate in both L1 and L2, even after lengthy exposure to English. The student exhibits not only interruptions, interjections, and/or repetitions, but also demonstrates physical concomitants that accompany these behaviors such as facial grimacing, leg stomping, or blinking that indicates physical struggle in producing speech. In addition, these students may demonstrate recognition of their dysfluency and try to avoid specific sounds or words. These behaviors will occur in both languages.
<b>Phonology:</b> The rules for combination of sounds in a language	Student may omit specific sound combinations or have difficulty producing certain sounds in the L2 that do not exist in the phonology of the L1 (e.g., student may have difficulty producing the /r/ /l/, /f/, /ch/, or /th/ in L2, or a Tagalog speaker might say “ <i>past</i> ” instead of “ <i>fast</i> ” or add a vowel before words that begin with clusters — “ <i>I go to eschool.</i> ”)	Students will demonstrate a delay in the development of the age appropriate sounds in both languages (e.g., a student may consistently have difficulty producing vowels in both language or by middle school the student will still demonstrate initial consonant deletion in both languages).

Developed by Sarita C. Samora and Idalia Lopez-Diaz. (Source: New York State Education Department, 2010. *Response to Intervention: Guidance for New York State School Districts*. 35-36. Adapted and printed with permission.)