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**ANALYSIS OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOLS  
USED FOR THE DIAGNOSIS OF DYSLEXIA IN  
SPANISH AND IN ENGLISH**

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### **Abstract**

The main objective of this study is to identify, analyse and evaluate the most applied assessment tools for the diagnosis of dyslexia in Primary Education students, both in Spanish and in English, in order to understand the educational implications for students affected by this condition in bilingual schools in Spain, as a response to the growing phenomenon of bilingualism in Spanish schools. The procedure we will follow will be, first to identify and select the evaluation instruments, second their characteristics (similarities and differences) will be compared—and, third, main issues concerning the successful implementation of the evaluation of these students will be drawn.

**Keywords:** dyslexia; assessment tool; Primary Education; Spanish; English.

## **Introduction**

Concerning the belief that managing a second language is an essential requirement for every member of this globalised society, in 1996, the Spanish Ministry of Education and the British Council reached an agreement whose objective was the development of an integrated curriculum in Spanish public schools, implementing a program that initially brought bilingual education to 43 schools (Dobson, Pérez & Johnstone, 2010). As a result of this agreement, nowadays most of the schools and high schools in our country (public ones as well as private) are following a bilingual or plurilingual program: if we have a look to the particular case of Andalusia, in the school year corresponding to the 2014-2015, around 957 schools and high schools were considered as bilingual or plurilingual (Junta de Andalucía, 2014), having most of them English as their target language (L2). With this purpose, it is compulsory to teach (using the L2) the contents related with Social and Natural Sciences, having also the possibility to teach other subjects such as Physical Education, Art and Citizenship Education (Junta de Andalucía, 2014).

Considering this situation, in which the majority of the schools in Spain are combining Spanish and English for teaching linguistic and non linguistic subjects, it may be questioned what happen with those students with learning disabilities, particularly those related with the acquisition of reading and writing, a key element for our daily life and for the learning process of any language. According to the Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association (2013), a specific learning disability is that one in which the person has difficulties when learning and using academic skills, reflected on the fact that the individual's affected academic skills are significantly below those expected for his/her chronological age, and interfere with academic performance and daily life. However, for the purpose of this paper, we are going to focus our attention to one specific learning disability that is dyslexia. Our main reason is that among all the learning disabilities related with the acquisition of reading and writing, dyslexia is greatly widespread, with a percentage of around 10% of the Spanish population suffering it (PRODISLEX, 2010).

According to the International Dyslexia Association (IDA, 2002), "dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities." Among its symptoms, apart from these ones, the child experience

difficulties when more complicated language skills are demanded (such as writing an essay), problems with spoken language (expressing themselves but also understanding what other people mean when they speak) (IDA, 2017) and also, a key factor is that they have troubles when decoding words, which is the capacity to match letters to sounds (The Understood Team, 2017). But dyslexia is not only reflected on the final academic results of the student, but on the whole learning process: in those tasks which involve reading and writing, the child tends to feel fatigue, s/he experiences a loss of concentration and a high level of distraction and finally, a feeling of rejection towards these activities (DISFAM, 2017). Also, in the long-term, dyslexia can involve difficulties with “keeping track of conversations, following instructions and expressing points of view” (Dyslexia Action, 2017). However, as some people think, dyslexia is not a visual issue or a problem of intelligence: students with this learning disability can be as smart as the rest of their classmates (The Understood Team, 2017). So, this learning disability will have a negative impact in the academic performance and in the student’s life in general: in academic terms, the feeling of rejection will lead to a complete lack of motivation that could end in academic failure, and in personal terms, this will lead to a lack of confidence and a low self-esteem, essential when you are learning to communicate in a new language: then, when a child who can be dyslexic is learning a foreign language, this learning process, as complex as it is, could turn into a real frustration for the student if a suitable evaluation and intervention are not implemented.

Then, what effect could dyslexia has in students who are learning in two different languages and who are experiencing learning difficulties in their mother tongue? As can be expected, the problems that these student are having in their native language will be related to the difficulties they will have when learning a foreign language and they will be transferred to the learning process of the L2. This idea is supported by the Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis formulated by Cummins (1979, p. 27), which says that “the level of L2 competence that a bilingual child attains is partially a function of the type of competence the child has developed in L1 at the time when intensive exposure to L2 begins”; that means, when the use of some functions of the language, vocabulary and concepts in the L1 are promoted by the student linguistic environment when s/he is outside school, intensive exposure to L2 is probable to end with high levels of competence in the L2. Consequently, as Cummins explains (1979, p.28), “when some L1 skills are less well developed in certain respects”,

this will also suppose a limit on the progress and development of the L2. Thus, because in bilingual people the two languages are “interdependent”, when any condition is interfering in the learning process of the L1, this will inevitably interfere in the learning process of the L2.

However, when we talk about Spanish and English, we are talking about two languages completely different and literacy acquisition is much more challenging in opaque orthographies than in transparent orthographies: on one hand, Spanish is a transparent language in which a specific letter is associated with one specific phoneme. On the other hand, English is a less transparent language (or opaque) whose alphabet comprises 26 letters (or graphemes) but a phonemic inventory of more than 40, something that will suppose an extra difficulty for dyslexic students (Dal, 2008), an idea supported by Everatt (in Mortimore et al, 2012, p. 23), who says that “being able to read across languages depends on processing words in terms of their phoneme grapheme relationship”. For that reason, when a learning disability such as dyslexia is intended to be diagnosed in a bilingual context, it is necessary to be aware of the differences across languages, in order to avoid a confusion between a disability and a simple language difference: it is essential to know that is typical for children to have a “silent period” at the beginning of the second language acquisition process (it can last up to six months) in which their interactions consist of mainly gesturing, nodding and answering questions just with “yes” or “no” (IRIS Center, 2016); moreover, difficulties with the language should appear in both languages at the same time and these concerns must be evident in more than one setting (e.g. home, childcare...) (IRIS Center, 2016).

Now, when there is suspected a disability, we confront the difficult question of how can we properly diagnose dyslexia in bilingual students who are learning while using a second language completely different to their mother tongue, with its own characteristics, and facing difficulties that can be due to a disability or just to the typical complications derived from the foreign language learning process. As the International Dyslexia Association (2017) proposes, an evaluation for dyslexia should include “background information, tasks related with oral language skills, word recognition, decoding, spelling, phonological processing, automaticity/fluency skills, reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge”; the evaluator will give to the student a series of tests for dyslexia, and s/he will also examine some other areas in order to determine where student’s weaknesses lie, as well as the possibility that some others issues “were getting in the way of his/her learning”, such as ADHD or mental health

issues (The Understood Team, 2017). Also, it is important to know that “the profile of strengths and weaknesses of an individual with dyslexia varies with age, educational opportunity and the influence of co-occurring factors” (IDA, 2017) and parents will be asked for a family history and some questionnaires about student’s strengths and weaknesses (The Understood Team, 2017). However, as it has been said before, different languages imply different types of evaluation, and these evaluations should give a reliable answer to the distinctive features of each one of the assessed languages. As Everatt and Elbeheri (2008) suggest, these differences have a greater importance among orthographies that vary in their level of transparency, as is the case analysed in this study: for example, while in English alliteration, rhyme phonological awareness and decoding skills tasks are reliable activities for evaluating students with and without literacy deficits, this seems to be unhelpful in a more transparent language, as is the case of Spanish. Then, as can be expected, we cannot detect literacy difficulties in bilingual students using any assessment tool and without taking into account all of these facts.

After years of research, made by specialists and psychologists, we have at our disposal a huge variety of evaluation instruments used for this purpose. These instruments will be the first step of a process that will lead to the implementation of a suitable intervention for dyslexic students, meaning an additional difficulty if those students are also bilingual, since the intervention should be aimed to give response to the difficulties that derive from each language. However, not all of them have the same features and characteristics, and the selection of these evaluation tools should be especially careful in the case of a bilingual setting. Having a look to what is commonly used as an evaluation tool for dual language learners, it makes sense the importance of knowing what is going to be evaluated and with what tasks or activities, and also the nature of the language: as Youman (2017) suggests in her dissertation about the assessment of dyslexic students in Spanish speaking English language learners, using English language testing with non-native speakers could lead to biased result, over identifying these students as suffering a learning disability just due to a “negative language transfer” caused by differences among languages; and also, the adaptation of a standardized test seems to be a poor identification tool: eliminating test items or administering only some parts of the standardized test will lead to a misinterpretation of the results, since the test was not administered according to the original procedure, so these results cannot be compared to the norm group.

Having all of these issues into account and due to the fact that our educational system is deeply integrated in a bilingual context, it seems crucial to know how to properly evaluate dyslexia in both languages and which tools do we have for that purpose. The main objective of this study is to select two of these tools, according to a specific criteria, and analyse them with the aim of knowing more about the evaluation process for bilingual students who could be diagnosed with dyslexia. Moreover, it is important to be able to recognise the differences between these tools in each one of the languages and to know what aspects are assessed for each instrument, according to the characteristics of the language, in order to carry out a proper evaluation process which could integrate the home language and the target language; hence, that will allow teachers and specialists to identify the specific areas that need reinforcement and to develop a successful intervention for dyslexic students who are learning in two different languages.

## **Method**

### ***Instruments***

In this study two different assessment tools are going to be analysed, one in English (the target language) and another one in Spanish (the home language), according to their proven validity and use among the educational community and specialists.

Firstly, the English one will be the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS), “a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade” (University of Oregon, 2017). This test has been chosen for three reasons: it has been developed for different researchers with the specific purpose of identifying potential reading problems in children through all the Primary Education period, current research has proven its efficacy as a predictor with native English speakers but also with English language learners (University of Oregon, 2017) and it is recommended by the International Dyslexia Association as a screening test for dyslexia (IDA, 2017).

The 6th edition of this test was edited by Good and Kaminski (2007) from the University of Oregon, and it has been validated for benchmark testing, “a systematic process which consists on screening all students on essential skills predictive of later reading performance” (University of Oregon, 2017). The testing materials consist of grade-levels booklets, for kindergarten and for each one of the Primary Education stages, and a set of display materials. Testing “is done one on one with each student, it



takes approximately 5-10 minutes and it is recommended to use it with all the students three times per year” (University of Oregon, 2017).

The following tables specifies what measurement areas are analysed by DIBELS and the measures used for that purpose (Table 1) (University of Oregon, 2017) and the measures used in each testing according the Primary Education grade (Table 2) (University of Oregon, 2014).

Table 1  
*Measure and measurement areas of DIBELS*

Measure	Measurement area
LNF ( <i>Letter Naming Fluency</i> )	Risk indicator
PSF ( <i>Phoneme Segmentation Fluency</i> )	Phonological Awareness
WUF ( <i>Word Use Fluency</i> )	Vocabulary and Oral Language
NWF-CLS ( <i>Nonsense Word Fluency Correct Letter Sounds</i> )	Phonological Awareness
NWF-WRC ( <i>Nonsense Word Fluency Words Recoded Correctly</i> )	Phonological Awareness
DORF-WC ( <i>DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency words correct</i> )	Alphabetic Principle and Phonics Accuracy and Fluency Comprehension
DORF-A ( <i>DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency accuracy</i> )	Alphabetic Principle and Phonics Accuracy and Fluency Comprehension
RTF ( <i>Retell Fluency</i> )	Comprehension

Table 2  
*Measures used by DIBELS according to the Primary Education grade*

Grade	Measure
1 <sup>st</sup>	LNF PSF NWF - CLS NWF - WRC DORF – WC DORF – A RTF WUF
2 <sup>nd</sup>	NWF-CLS NWF-WRC DORF-WC DORF-A RTF WUF

3 <sup>rd</sup>	DORF-WC DORF-A RTF WUF
4 <sup>th</sup>	DORF-WC DORF-A RTF
5 <sup>th</sup>	DORF-WC DORF-A RTF
6 <sup>th</sup>	DORF-WC DORF-A RTF

Secondly, the Spanish test analysed will be *PROLEC- R (Batería de evaluación de los procesos lectores - revisada)*, an instrument whose objective is not only to detect the existence of possible difficulties related with the reading process, but also to identify the cognitive processes that are the responsible of these difficulties and to develop the most adequate interventions (Cuetos , Rodríguez, Ruano, Arribas, Navarrete & Irazoqui, 2009). This test has been chosen for three reasons: it can be used with children in all the Primary Education grades (from 6 to 12 years old), it has been applied in 920 children from different places in Spain and from different schools (Cuetos et al, 2009) and it is recommended by the Spanish Ministry of Education as one of the most commonly used (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, 2012).

The last edition of this test was developed by Cuetos, Rodríguez, Ruano y Arribas (2014) and testing is also done one on one with each student; however, it can last from 20 minutes to 40 minutes, depending on the grade in which the child is studying at the moment of the test (Cuetos et al, 2009). The materials are a manual, a notebook of stimulus and a notebook for notes, and the battery is composed by 9 main indexes which explore the main reading processes, since the most simple ones to the most complex, 10 secondary indexes, which go into detail about the interpretation of the previous results, and 5 indexes of normal ability (Cuetos et al, 2014).

The following tables specify the name of the different tasks and the area these tasks analyse (Table 3) and the measures used according to the student's grade (Table 4) (Cuetos et al, 2014):

Table 3  
*Tasks and the area analysed by each task*

Task	Area
NL - <i>Nombre o sonido de las letras</i> (Name or sound of the letters)	<i>Identificación de letras</i> (Identification of letters)
ID - <i>Igual – Diferente</i> (Equal – Different)	
LP - <i>Lectura de palabras</i> (Words' reading)	<i>Procesos léxicos</i> (Lexical processes)
LS - <i>Lectura de pseudopalabras</i> (Pseudo words' reading)	
EG - <i>Estructuras gramaticales</i> (Grammatical structures)	<i>Procesos gramaticales</i> (Grammatical processes)
SP - <i>Signos de puntuación</i> (Punctuation marks)	
CO - <i>Comprensión de oraciones</i> (Comprehension of sentences)	<i>Procesos semánticos</i> (Semantic processes)
CT - <i>Comprensión de textos</i> (Comprehension of texts)	
CR - <i>Comprensión oral</i> (Oral comprehension)	

Table 4  
*Measures used by PROLEC-R according to the Primary Education grade*

Grade	Measure
1 <sup>st</sup>	NL
	ID
	LP
	LS
	EG
	SP
	CO
	CT
	CR
2 <sup>nd</sup>	NL
	ID
	LP
	LS
	EG
	SP
	CO
	CT
	CR
3 <sup>rd</sup>	NL
	ID
	LP
	LS
	EG
	SP
	CO
	CT
	CR
NL	

	ID
	LP
4 <sup>th</sup>	LS
	EG
	SP
	CO
	CT
	CR
	NL
	ID
	LP
5 <sup>th</sup>	LS
	EG
	SP
	CO
	CT
	CR
	NL
	ID
	LP
6 <sup>th</sup>	LS
	EG
	SP
	CO
	CT
	CR

***Procedure***

For the selection of the instruments used for the purpose of this study, it has been followed a procedure based on the search in different databases, web pages, books ... and the analysis of the results obtained in this search.

The first step was to know what instruments are being used for the diagnosis of dyslexia in Primary Education. In order to guarantee an appropriate and reliable selection of the evaluation instruments applied in both languages, we took into consideration the recommendations and suggestions made by international and national dyslexia associations, with the purpose of filtering the great amount of information that can be obtained in this type of research. In the International Dyslexia Association webpage (2017), several instruments in English were suggested (e.g. Predictive Assessment of Reading (PAR), Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) or Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI)), and in the ASANDIS webpage (Asociación Andaluza de Dislexia) we had access to a paper written by the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (2012) about attention to dyslexic students, in which we found some suggestions about assessment tools in Spanish which are

commonly used (e.g. LEE. Test de Lectura y Escritura en Español, Test PROLEC-R or Test para la detección de la dislexia en niños (DST-J))

The second step was to analyse the information previously obtained. Thus, the different assessment tools that were suggested were analysed following a specific and simple criteria which was designed according to the objectives of this study: the assessment tool should offer the possibility of being applied in every stage of the Primary Education (from 6 to 12 years old) in order to carry out a complete analysis and an evaluation that could be implemented in the whole period without restrictions. Moreover, the selected test should offer specific and clear information about the characteristics of the test, the aspects which were assessed, the different tasks and how to evaluate the final results derived from these tasks.

Once these criteria were taken into account, we proceed to determine the level of popularity and use of these assessment tools, in order to select and make a comparison between the two most applied evaluation instruments, as a way of ensuring the reliability of the study. We searched in different books and handbooks about dyslexia (in English and in Spanish), and also in scientific articles about this issue (using several scientific databases such as the Web of Knowledge) and we paid attention to the suggestions made by these materials in terms of evaluation and diagnosis of dyslexia in students. Thus, we contrasted and compared the information previously obtained by the different association's web pages and the information obtained by our research in books and scientific databases as a mean of establishing which ones were the most popular assessment tools.

Finally, and after all this research and comparison process, we selected the two instruments previously mentioned (DIBELS and PROLEC – R) because they meet all the different criterion which has been considered as essential for the purpose of this study, so the selected test are the most appropriated tools for the achievement of the objectives of this study.

## **Results**

The following table (Table 5) shows the results of the comparison made between both assessment tools in general terms, derived from the application norms and handbook of each one of the tools. While the purpose of the test and the materials are very similar in both instruments, a difference between both tests that can be observed is in the design of the test: DIBELS is composed by 6 individual grade-level booklets for

each Primary Education grade, but PROLEC-R is composed just for one whole test for every student. About length, the implementation of PROLEC-R takes more time than DIBELS implementation, but both of them are aimed to be used with students individually. Also, DIBELS suggest the application of this test three times per year, while PROLEC-R does not mention anything about that. Moreover, in terms of “areas analysed by each test”, there are some important differences that will be deeply discussed in the section *Discussion* of this paper. Finally, in terms of the evaluation of the results, DIBELS uses a system of benchmark assessment, in which each measure has an established goal (or “benchmark”) that is used as a reference for the evaluation of the score obtained by the student: for instance, in 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade, in the DORF-WC task, the benchmark is 72+ at the beginning of the year, 89+ in the middle of the year and 110+ at the end of the year); PROLEC-R, for its part, uses a system of numerical values for the main indexes and for the secondary indexes (which vary depending on the Primary Education Grade of the evaluated student and correspond to the amount of correct answers given by the student), which are correlated with a final result: for example, in 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, in the NL task, in the main indexes, a student will be graded as having a severe difficulty (*DD*) if his/her score is between 0 and 22.

Table 5  
*General characteristics of DIBELS and PROLEC-R*

	<b>DIBELS</b>	<b>PROLEC - R</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	To help teachers and schools to determine the students’ level of performance on early literacy and early reading skills	To diagnose learning difficulties related with the reading process and the cognitive processes which are responsible of these difficulties
<b>Design of the test</b>	Individual grade-level booklets	A whole test
<b>Application</b>	It is administered three times each year (at the beginning of the year, in the middle of the year and at the end of the year)	It does not specify any application rule
<b>Scope of application</b>	From kindergarten to 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	From 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade to 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade
<b>Materials</b>	It includes two parts: the student response form and student stimulus materials	It includes a manual, a notebook of stimulus and a notebook for notes
<b>Length</b>	Each test takes about one minute (5 – 10 minutes per student in general).	Variable; 20 minutes with students from 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade and 40 minutes with students from 1 <sup>st</sup> to 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade

<b>Areas analysed by the test</b>	Phonological awareness, alphabetic principles, phonics, accuracy, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, oral language.	Identification of letters, lexical processes (reading), grammatical processes (grammatical structures and punctuation mark), comprehension (sentences, text and oral)
<b>Implementation</b>	Individual	Individual
<b>Evaluation of the results</b>	Benchmark assessment: each measure used by the test has an empirically established goal (also known as “benchmark”) that is modified across time in order to ensure a continuous progress in students	Cut off points used for the diagnosis of the existence of a mild difficulty ( <i>D</i> ) or severe ( <i>DD</i> ) in the processes represented by the main indexes and the secondary precision indexes, for determining reading speed (from very slow - <i>muy lenta</i> - to very fast - <i>muy rápida</i> -) in the secondary speed indexes and the reading level (low, medium or high – <i>bajo, medio o alto</i> -) in students with a normal reading ability.

Sources: Good & Kaminski (2007)

Cuetos et al. (2014)

### Discussion

According to the results derived from the analysis and comparison of the two evaluation tools, several questions can be answered in terms of the characteristics of both tests and the specificities of each one of the languages when dyslexia appears.

The first question was related with the interdependence across languages. Although we are talking about two orthographies that have very little in common, experts claim that dyslexia must be present in both languages at the same time; this is the only way we have for avoiding mistakes related with the over diagnosis of dyslexia. Then, this learning disability cannot be understood only in one of the languages, and the assessment should be carried out in both languages (not only in one of them), creating a relation between the results of the evaluation in Spanish and the evaluation in English and helping to recognise what is a disability and what is only a difficulty related with language differences.

The second question was related with the characteristics that each evaluation tool should have. As we have already mentioned, a task whose results are useful for the evaluation process in Spanish could be unhelpful in an evaluation carried out in English, not because it is wrong designed, but because each task must respond to the features of

each language. The general characteristics that every assessment tool must have have been already defined by dyslexia associations and specialists in this topic; however, the specific differences between languages should be reflected in these tools. Obviously, we cannot pretend to detect dyslexia in a second language using an evaluation tool designed to predict this disability in student's mother tongue: because of the differences between orthographies, an adaptation or translation of a Spanish test seems to be unhelpful since it has not been taken into account the features of the English language. All of these facts lead us to another question: which tasks are useful for predicting dyslexia in each one of the languages?

In order to answer the previous question, this study has analysed two of the most used assessment tools, one in Spanish and another one in English. On one hand, we have found that, in English, tasks related with alphabetic principle and phonics, accuracy and fluency, and comprehension have a great importance in the assessment process, because they are analysed in every grade of the Primary Education period; undoubtedly, being accurate, fluent and having a good comprehension level are key factors during the development of the linguistic abilities, and phonics become especially important in a language such as the English one, in which the amount of phonemes is substantially bigger than the amount of graphemes: in English, an important reason why children have difficulties decoding is because they usually struggle with a basic skill called phonemic awareness, a skill necessary for "hearing and playing with the smallest units of sounds (phonemes) in words and syllables" (Osewalt, 2017). That is the reason why phonics, which consists of "connecting letters with sounds, breaking words into sounds, and blending sounds into words" (Osewalt, 2017) is a key aspect that has to be evaluated if we want to detect dyslexia in English. On the other hand, in Spanish, we find that the focus of attention in this evaluation process is the comprehension (of oral language, texts and sentences) and the word reading process, which is defined as an essential aspect in the development of reading abilities. In terms of differences between both evaluation tools, we can say that they are pretty similar in general aspects, except the ones related with the design of the test and the timing. While the English test is designed as a group of very short tasks, divided according to the student's grade, that take no more than 10 minutes per student, PROLEC-R is designed as a whole test that will take around 20 – 40 minutes (depending on the student's grade). This difference, together with the fact that DIBELS suggest the application of the test three times per year for every student and PROLEC-R does not specifically mention anything about



that, makes obvious that both instruments strongly differs on their conception of the “application of the test”: thus, the English tool emphasizes the idea of quick and short tasks that are assiduously repeated while the Spanish tool understands the test as a whole that it does not have to be continuously repeated, unless a disability is suspected. Moreover, we have to notice the little differences between them: for example, in PROLEC-R (2014) in the task related with “Name or sound of the letters”, the consonant *h* is missing because it is soundless, and also *k* and *w* because of their low frequency in Spanish; however, these consonants cannot be missed in an English test: so, again, it is undeniable the importance of using a specific test, developed according to the particular features of Spanish and English, for each one of the languages that are going to be assessed.

Finally, the fourth question of this study was related with the application of these tests. Taking into account the importance of learning a foreign language in our current society, that bilingualism is a growing phenomenon, and also the fact that in our schools English seems to be a difficult and a not very motivational subject for some students (and even frustrating in a more specific case, such as the case of a dyslexic student), we have concluded that these tests should be applied with certain regularity, in order to detect a suspected disability as soon as possible, not only in students’ mother tongue, but also in the target language, if we have in mind that they are learning in a bilingual context; in that sense, teachers and specialists could keep track of the development of their students in a more continuous and reliable way. Also, in the case of PROLEC-R and DIBELS, the fact that students’ results on both test are defined by a numerical value (which is compared with a benchmark or cut off point, depending on the age of the student), will allow us to establish a more concrete relation between the results in the Spanish and in the English test.

Despite the obvious similarities that these test can have and the fact that the learning processes of the two languages are intertwined, it is recognizable that exist some differences between both instruments, that derive from the existing differences between the languages, something that can make easier to understand why is necessary to use specific instruments for making a diagnosis in English and in Spanish. Nevertheless, the instruments used for this purpose should be deeply analysed before their implementation: we cannot make just a simple translation of the test used for diagnosing dyslexia in the L1 and we cannot use either an English test without taking into account that some tasks could lead to a negative response just because of a

difficulty with the language that has no relation with a learning disability; then, it is crucial to know what instruments we are going to use in their original form, to know which is the level of domain of our students in each one of the languages (in order to avoid a misinterpretation of the results and to provide the most appropriated test according to student's level), to be aware that the suspected learning disability should be recognizable in both languages and to carry out an specific evaluation in each one of the languages. Also, the age of the student is an important factor that should be taken into account (because of its relation with the previously mentioned level of domain of the language), as well as the frequency of the evaluations: it is advisable to apply these test with a certain regularity, especially when they are short, in order to get reliable results that will allow us to draw conclusions about the existence or not of the suspected disability.

In conclusion, this study has helped us to identify which are the assessment tools we have in our hands for the diagnosis of dyslexia in Primary Education students in a bilingual context. Despite the extra difficulties of detecting this learning disability in two completely different languages, it is extremely necessary to know that these differences exist and that we have to analyse these evaluations tools individually before their implementation, as well as to be aware of the individual characteristics of the student who is suspected of being dyslexic. Dyslexia is a learning disability which is difficult to recognise, because it does not necessarily appear in students with a physical, mental or socio-cultural handicap; thus, its fast detection plays a key role during the literacy process of the child: it will allow teachers and specialists to determine the necessities of each student (the effects of dyslexia can vary depending on the person) and also, it will help to fight against school failure: most of the dyslexic students are over identified as having any other disability (e.g. ADHD), they are labelled as “lazy” or “distracted”, or it is defined just as a “lack of practice” in terms of reading and writing. Thus, its detection implies a victory over the consequences of dyslexia (stressing the difficulties related with learning a foreign language for the purpose of this study) and the risk of failure, giving teachers and specialists the opportunity to design the most appropriated strategies in order to guarantee the success of this group of students.

Keeping in mind all of these facts, we have access to these resources and we have the opportunity to use the most appropriated tools; that is the only way to guarantee a quality education and learning process for those students who are struggling

because of a situation they cannot control and that we should detect as soon as possible, without forgetting that these students are living in a bilingual context in which their performance, not only in their mother tongue but also in a second language, will mark their level of successfulness in our current society.

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