

Future-proofing the Q-BEx tool: enabling professionals to engage with the diversity of bilingual experiences

There is more diversity in language experience among bilingual children than among monolingual children, and it is essential for practitioners and researchers to understand that diversity. [Q-BEx](#) aims to inform that understanding. It is a free, flexible online tool that documents children's experience in up to three languages.

- It can be administered in many languages (currently 20).
- It automatically calculates various measures of language exposure and use.
- It automatically generates a comprehensive report for each child (in English or Dutch, irrespective of the language used in the questionnaire), as well as downloadable spreadsheets.
- The shortest version can be administered in less than 10 minutes.

Professionals can decide which sets of questions to include, by choosing the modules that are relevant to them. The available modules are: background information, risk factors for language impairment, language exposure and use, language proficiency, richness of linguistic experience, attitudes, and language mixing. Q-BEx asks about children's proficiency in all of their languages, through parental estimates of abilities in listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing.

Q-BEx aims to enable greater comparability of bilingualism research (across studies, across labs, across countries) and to facilitate cross-sector exchanges and knowledge transfer, through the use of a common set of measures of children's bilingual experience. By investigating the impact of different kinds of environments for language learning and use, we aim to identify supportive factors for the harmonious development of children in all their languages.

Our aim is for Q-BEx to remain free to use for all practitioners and all unfunded research. [HaBiNet](#) funding will enable us to continue offering Q-BEx for free to all until 2025, while we set up a donation system to meet hosting and upkeep costs in the long term. From 2025, donations will be requested only from funded research, so that the tool can remain free to all other users.

HaBiNet funding will also enable further improvements to the online questionnaire, to the professional user interface, to the data pre-processing, and to the information provided to assist practitioners in their interpretation of children's individual reports. We will consult with researchers, teachers and speech & language therapists to inform these improvements.

In the individual reports, we aim to emphasise the importance of recognising children's abilities across all of their languages, as well as the diversity of language experiences of both multilingual and monolingual children. We believe this can be done in a way that values children's multilingual proficiency even if we do not have the resources to directly assess children's skills in all their languages. Understanding the factors that support language development both in monolingual and in multilingual children is beneficial to all children (even the monolinguals).

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