


TABLE 11.3 Language Difficulties Secondary to Other Disabilities

	Phonology	Morphology/Syntax
Learning Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delayed acquisition of sounds • Inferior perception and/or production of complex sounds • Inefficient use of phonological codes in short-term memory • Impaired sensitivity to sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter and less elaborate sentences • Failure to encode all relevant information in sentences • Difficulties with negative and passive constructions, relative clauses, contractions, and adjectival forms • Confusion of articles (<i>a, an, the</i>) • Difficulty with verb tense, plurality, possession, and pronouns • Delayed acquisition of morphological rules • Difficulty with rules for auxiliaries, modals, prepositions, conjunctions, and other grammatical markers
Autism Spectrum Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties with expressive prosody (e.g., fluctuations in vocal intensity, monotonous pitch, tonal contrasts inconsistent with meanings) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusions of pronominal forms (e.g., gender confusion [<i>he</i> for <i>she</i> or <i>it</i>], case substitution [<i>him</i> for <i>he</i>], first- and second-person singular forms [<i>you</i> for <i>I</i> or <i>me</i>]) • Less complex sentences than peers
Intellectual Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delayed development of phonological rules • Problems with speech production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of shorter, less complex sentences with fewer subject elaborations or relative clauses • Delayed morpheme development • Delayed development of syntax
Traumatic Brain Injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound substitutions and omissions • Slurred speech • Difficulties with speech prosody (pitch, loudness, rate, and rhythm) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deficits in syntactic comprehension • Fragmented, irrelevant, and lengthy utterances • Mutism immediately after the injury, followed by telegraphic production
	Semantics	Pragmatics
Learning Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word-finding and definitional problems • Restricted word meanings (too literal and concrete) • Difficulty with multiple word meanings • Excessive use of nonspecific terms and indefinite reference • Difficulty comprehending certain conjunctions (<i>but, or, if, then, either</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty with questions and requests for clarification • Difficulty initiating and maintaining conversation • Difficulty with relational terms (comparative, spatial, temporal)
Autism Spectrum Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word-finding problems • Inappropriate answers to questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited range of communicative functions • Difficulty initiating and maintaining conversation • Few gestures • Failure to make eye contact prior to or during communicative interactions • Preference to follow rather than lead in a conversation • Failure to engage communication partners at a level that requires sharing
Intellectual Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of more concrete word meanings • Slower rate of vocabulary acquisition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty with speech–act development • Difficulty with referential communication • Difficulty initiating and maintaining a conversation • Difficulty repairing communication breakdowns
Traumatic Brain Injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small, restricted vocabulary • Word-finding problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty with organization and expression of complex ideas • Socially inappropriate and off-topic comments • Less use of the naming function

SOURCE: Adapted from L. McCormick and D. Loeb, “Characteristics of Students With Language and Communication Difficulties,” in L. McCormick, D. Loeb, and R. Schiefelbusch (Eds.), *Supporting Children With Communication Difficulties in Inclusive Settings*, 2nd ed. (Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2003).