

# Diagnostic memory assessment in Italian-born Australians

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**Key Words:**

language, cognition, second language, Italian

**Research aim:**

We examined the hypothesis that long-term retrieval ability assessed in English is primarily influenced by cognitive abilities assessed in Italian and by English language competence.

**Results/Conclusion:**

Regression analysis showed that the strongest predictor of long-term retrieval in English was long-term retrieval in Italian. English language competence failed to add significantly to variance explained in memory tested in English. Results of the present study support the view that long-term retrieval memory is not significantly affected by second language proficiency after control of cognitive ability assessed in Italian.

**Implications:**

As a consequence, if an Italian-born elder Australian with English as a second language scores poorly on a diagnostic memory test, this result may be due to cognitive impairment rather than language issues. If, instead, we attribute poor performance to language competence, an increased risk of false negative diagnosis may arise.

**Cultural Group(s):**

Italian

**Location of study:**

**Age group:**

56-90

**Number included in study:**

75

**Type of participants:**

Italian born older people from the general community

**Research approach:**

Quantitative

**Type of data:**

Primary

**Secondary data sources used:**

**Specific scales or analytical techniques used:**

English tests: WMS-III, WAIS-III, BNT, Schonell Graded Word Reading Test, Italian tests: Milan Overall Dementia Assessment, MODA

**Implications/ Recommendations:**

**Notes:**