



ISCH



Working Group 1 - Syntax and interfaces with morphology and semantics

Group Leaders: Theo Marinis, UK & Petra Schultz, DE

The most established linguistic indicators of SLI are found in syntax (sentence formation) and morphology (inflection of words). They are already being studied widely in bilingual SLI. Therefore, they serve as a starting point for this Action. WG1 will aim to identify structures which are less sensitive to crosslinguistic differences, and are vulnerable in monolingual and bilingual children with SLI, but not in typically developing bilingual children. In doing so, WG1 attempts to isolate the characteristics of bilingualism and language impairment.

Working Group 2 - Narrative and discourse

Group Leaders: Joel Walters, IL & Natalia Gagarina, DE

Telling a story, even supported by pictures, is difficult for children with SLI. WG2 will evaluate the ability of different tasks to elicit narratives and tap specifically bilingual properties. Examples of such tasks are: narratives in response to familiar and unfamiliar picture books, a bilingual retelling task, narratives without the benefit of picture stimuli, and an interactive task based on a controlled improvisation procedure. These tasks also allow for the assessment of language dominance and code-switching patterns

Working Group 3 - Lexical and phonological processing

Group Leaders: Dolors Girbau, ES & Ewa Haman, PL

For phonological processing and lexical processing there are rapid 'screening' tools. WG3 will estimate their potential for identifying SLI in bilinguals. Properties will be evaluated of non-word repetition and naming tasks to decide whether they are relevant for identifying SLI in bilingual populations with various language pairs. WG3 will also review bilingual lexical data in order to develop new bilingual measures of dominance and diversity.

Working Group 4 - Executive functions

Group Leaders: Anne Baker, NL & Kristine Jensen de Lope, DK

Executive functions (like attention, inhibition, control) provide a promising direction for disentangling bilingualism and SLI. It is often assumed that executive functions are deficient in language-impaired children. Since tests for executive functioning are not necessarily language-dependent, they may provide a way of identifying indices of SLI without addressing language itself. WG4 will investigate which of these tasks are most appropriate for bilingual children with SLI and what are the best ways to adapt the tasks to the bilingual contexts.

Objectives:

- The **main objective** of this Action is to profile bilingual specific language impairment (SLI) by establishing a network to coordinate research on the linguistic and cognitive abilities of bilingual children with SLI across different migrant communities.
- **Derived objectives**
 - Disentangle bilingualism and SLI by establishing the relative contribution of each.
 - Show how SLI can be identified in both of a child's languages;
 - Explore the extent to which the manifestations of SLI are similar or different across languages in the same child
 - Establish whether the nature and severity of SLI is affected by the child's acquisition of more than one language.
- **Secondary objectives**
 - Mentor young researchers from countries with significant immigrant populations and language combinations.
 - Identify critical sociolinguistic information which will set standards for increasing comparability of research in bilingual SLI.
 - Develop guidelines for assessment.

Expected Outcomes:

- Development of tasks which tap both unique bilingual phenomena and unique SLI phenomena in order to distinguish both
- Better understanding of the relative contribution of representation and processing capacity in typically developing bilinguals, in bilingual children with SLI, and in monolingual children with SLI.
- Creation of guidelines for diagnosis and of instruments to distinguish typically developing from SLI bilinguals
- A rationale, based on a strong research base, for decisions about whether to educate bilingual children with SLI in a single (home or school) language or bilingually, by showing whether bilingualism adversely affects children with BISLI or not.

