LIKE TWO PEAS IN A POD? – Linguistic differences in Bilingualism and SLI: A Twin Case Study

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diploma thesis

Nowadays, bilinguals are the norm rather than the exception (e.g.: Ellis 2005; Grosjean 2010) and yet a large number of linguistic measurements are standardised on a monolingual rather than a bilingual norm.

This often leads to the misdiagnosis of typically developing bilingual children as language impaired which can have a large impact on their social and academic development. It is thus necessary to understand and disentangle the overlaps between bilingual and impaired speech, which were the aims of this study.

Using a twin case study design, the linguistic differences between a typically developing and a language impaired English-Polish bilingual were analysed. The twin boys have been assessed aged 4;8, 4;10 and 5;6 years in both their languages using one non-linguistic measurement, productive and perceptive lexical tests, sentence repetition tasks, recognition of grammar assessments and narrative tasks.

Their results differ significantly in regard to phonological processing, morphosyntactic knowledge, grammaticality, length and complexity of narratives, metalinguistic awareness and their strategic competence. The latter is a new finding and indicates that a difference in communicative strategies might be a crucial differentiating factor between typically developing bilingualism and SLI.

References


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