

EARLY LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN TWO CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL APRAXIA OF SPEECH. (ABSTRACT)

Marie-Thérèse LE NORMAND,
Claude CHEVRIE-MULLER & Shirley VINTER

Laboratoire de Neuropsychologie de l'Enfant, INSERM
Hopital de la Salpêtrière, Bâtiment Nouvelle Pharmacie, 3°étage
47 Boulevard de l'Hôpital, F 75651 PARIS, France

Recent empirical studies of single-word production in children with **Specific Language Impairment** (SLI) have moved away from a "linguistic disorder" and concluded that this language disorder may reflect a more general "cognitive deficit or executive dysfunction". Both explanations, however, ask the question about what happens phonetically during single-word production failure and event babbling period.

Two SLI-spectrum cases with single word production abnormalities - a specific consonant-vowel dissociation- are reported and a phonetic/praxis explanation for a subset of their deficits is provided. Both children were severely impaired on naming, repetition tasks (Chevrie-Muller, et al., 1988), and continuous speech in free play situation (Le Normand, 1986,1988), producing a substantial number of responses indicative of speech processing breakdown. Both children had virtually non consonants and low intelligibility but were otherwise developing normally with a) no hearing loss, b) no intellectual impairment, c) average level of fine motor skills, d) no behavior disorders, and e) normal language comprehension.

A speech model analysis (Konopczynski, 1986, 1990, 1991; Vinter 1985) including categories of syllable lengthening and pausing was used to explain this unusual impairment. An integration of this model, illustrated by longitudinal data over a two year period, shows a good language outcome of these two SLI children.

Direct observations were also undertaken over a period of two years to document the course and the sequence of their language production and their developmental changes. Subject 1 acquired the lexicon and morphology associated with a transitory dysfluency, whereas subject 2 had just begun to acquire the consonantal system.

Phonetic and morphonological factors appear to influence the frequency, consistency, and variability of the articulatory errors produced by these two children.

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