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Antje Orgassa *Specific language impairment in a bilingual context*

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Specific language impairment in a bilingual context

The acquisition of Dutch inflection by Turkish-Dutch learners

With the aim of specifying the relationship between SLI and L2 acquisition, production data of various groups of L1 and L2 learners with and without SLI were compared. The experiments centered on the application of morphosyntactic rules in Dutch that were considered vulnerable in SLI and L2 acquisition. The results of systematic cross-group comparisons of error types and error frequencies contribute to the ongoing theoretical debate as to whether (L2-)SLI is caused by linguistic-representational deficits or by processing limitations. The issue of age dependencies on grammatical rule learning is also discussed in relation to L2 acquisition.

The central claim in this book is that the similarities in error patterns across the impaired and unimpaired child L1 and child L2 groups indicate that all children rely on the same linguistic resources to derive grammar. The persistent problems with inflectional morphology in the SLI groups are interpreted in terms of processing limitations that affect either the intake needed to derive rules or the degree of automaticity to apply rules once established. The present study also reveals how reduced intake affects typical child L2 acquisition. If a large amount of consistent input is needed to derive grammar, it is possible that both SLI and L2(-SLI) children may fossilize in immature stages resulting in incomplete structure-specific representations. Interestingly, then, processing accounts and representational accounts can be related.

This study is of interest to scholars working in the field of clinical linguistics, L1 and L2 acquisition, inflectional morphology and educators and therapists working with atypical language development in multilingual settings.

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Netherlands
Graduate
School of
Linguistics
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Landelijke Onderzoekschool Taalwetenschap