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Manifestations of SLI in LSF: Focus on argument structures

L. Puissant-Schontz(1), C. Fortuna(1)(2), M. Blondel(2)

(1) Université Paris Ouest Nanterre la Defense-MoDyCo, (2) CNRS-Paris8

puissantchontz@gmail.com, celine.fortuna@gmail.com, marion.blondel@cnrs.fr

Specific Language Impairment (SLI)

Heterogeneous language skills

Spoken Languages clues  |  Sign Languages clues
---|---
• Phonology  |  • Semantico-syntactic use of space
• Syntax     |  • Agreement morphology (regarding plain verbs, spatial verbs, agreement verbs)
• Pragmatics |  • Classifier system and personal reference
• Developmental verbal dyspraxia

Atypical language development in SL

Only a few studies on SL disorders

BSL case study  |  LSF case study
Significant delay (in both production and reception), exhibiting restricted BSL grammar and reduced sentences (Morgan et al., 2007)  |  Comprehension deficit regarding negation, aspect, argument structure
Lack of explicit reference in production (Puissant-Schontz, 2013)

Typology of LSF predicates (Puissant-Schontz, in progress)

Properties  |  Existence  |  Action
---|---|---

Discriminative Morphological Traits (DMT)

- Anchored (on the body) Vs Floating (no anchor)
With Configuration (Handling classifier)
- Oriented (palm orientation)
- Itinerary (source-goal path)

Hypothesis

SLI clues in SL comprehension:
- Deficit regarding negation, aspect, argument structure
- Lack of explicit reference
- Insight from LSF predicates typology?

Methodology

Four deaf signing children, one is SLI suspected
- Three signers aged 4.8, 7.10, 8.11
- One signer with atypical language development (communication disorders, LSF delay)
  Tested at 6.5 and 8.2, speech therapy

Results

Production tasks  |  Reception task
Delay of Isidore  |  Deficit regarding negation, aspect, argument structure

Jeanne, 8.11  |  Isidore, 8.2

Discussion

Discriminative Morphological Traits are clues that help comprehension, but they seem difficult to acquire from the production point of view.

Following step: A new assessment tool including our LSF predicates typology (Puissant-Schontz, in progress)