

# How informative are psycholinguistic tasks for the identification of speech sound difficulties in Turkish-German bilingual children?

**Key words:** Phonological development, Turkish-German, bilingual children, differentiation

The identification of bilingual children with speech difficulties is particularly challenging due to the children's heterogeneity in terms of their levels of experience and competence in each language as well as a lack of normative data for bilingual populations (e.g. McLeod et al., 2013). The inclusion of psycholinguistic tasks in speech assessments of monolingual children has been shown to be useful for the identification of specific strengths and weaknesses in the speech processing chain and the differentiation of typically from atypically developing children (Stackhouse & Wells, 1997). However, their diagnostic relevance for bilingual children is not clear yet. Thus, this project in progress aims to investigate whether the application of different psycholinguistic tasks in the assessment of bilingual children's speech skills can shed light on potential markers for an atypical phonological development. The focus is on the language combination of Turkish and German.

Within a cohort study the speech skills of 43 Turkish-German bilingual children were assessed in both languages at two time points (t1; 3;0-5;5 yrs and t2; 4;0-6;5 yrs). The assessments at t1 included single-word naming tests in Turkish (Turkish Phonology Assessment, Salgert, in prep.) and German (Psycholinguistic Analysis of Children's Speech Sound Disorders - II, Fox-Boyer, 2014). At t2, which took place 12 to 15 months after t1, participants were additionally assessed on phone imitation, quasi language-independent non-word repetition and consistency tasks. Subsequently, single-word naming data from t1 and t2 were analysed in terms of the children's production of phonological patterns. Data gained from the non-word repetition and consistency task were analysed in terms of accuracy and consistency of productions.

Based on the children's types and tokens of phonological patterns the following three subgroups could be identified at t1: a) typically developing children (n= 21), b) children with suspected speech difficulties (atypical development; n= 2) and c) children who could not be clearly classified as either a or b (n= 20). Following t2 all children were re-classified applying the same criteria as at t1. Children who were assigned to the typically developing subgroup mainly remained in this subgroup (n= 18). The two participants with suspected speech sound difficulties were also re-classified as atypical at t2. Eleven of the 20 children in the 'unclassifiable' group could be classified when the assessment data from t2 was considered. A subset of nine children, however, remained difficult to classify. The paper aims to highlight characteristics of the children who shifted from one subgroup to another by looking at the informative power of psycholinguistic tasks based on further analyses. The value of the results for the identification of speech difficulties in Turkish-German bilingual children as well as their potential generalisability to other language combinations will be discussed.

## References

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