

## Lexical skills in Polish-Norwegian and Polish-English preschoolers

Disentangling bi- or multilingualism from language impairment in pre-school children is a well-known challenge, in part due to the lack of adequate assessment tools (Bedore & Peña 2008). For example, both children with language impairment (Rice & Hoffman, 2015) and multilingual children are prone to have smaller vocabularies in the majority language than do typically developing monolinguals (Bialystok, Luk, Peets, & Yang, 2010). This is particularly apparent in unbalanced or successive bilinguals. As a consequence bilingual children can be misdiagnosed with language impairment (Paradis, 2010). It is crucial to assess bilingual children in both of their languages, and to examine their proficiency also in the light of the quantity and the quality of the input they receive in these languages.

The recent COST action IS0804 (Bi-SLI; 2009-2013): *Language impairment in a multilingual society: linguistic patterns and the road to assessment* was established to address this challenge. Ten new assessment tools were developed across a wide variety of languages. This assessment battery, called the LITMUS (*Language impairment testing in multilingual settings*) battery, was presented in Armon-Lotem, de Jong & Meir (2015).

This paper combines two of these assessment tools: *Cross-linguistic Lexical Tasks* (CLT) (Haman, Łuniewska, & Pomiechowska, 2015) and *Parental Bilingual Questionnaire* (PABIQ; COST Action IS0804, 2011), investigating lexical skills in 30 Polish-Norwegian and 30 Polish-English bilingual preschoolers, as well as age-matched monolingual Polish and Norwegian peers.

CLT assesses comprehension and production of nouns and verbs. The tool was created to yield directly comparable results across languages. To achieve this goal, each language version is construction individually based on language-specific properties. Results from monolingual children indicate that CLT does indeed provide comparable results for Polish and Norwegian. Thanks to the parallel construction procedure, results in English may be contrasted to those in the two other languages. PABIQ is an extensive questionnaire covering children's early development, current language skills, risks of language delay, language use and richness, and socio-economic background. By combining CLT and PABIQ, we study how the children's reported linguistic and socio-economic background is reflected in their word knowledge and lexical processing.

For accuracy in CLT, there is a ceiling effect in the monolinguals, whereas the bilingual scores in both language groups are more spread and generally lower. Almost all the bilinguals score higher in Polish than in their second language (Norwegian or English). These results are reflected in the length of exposure to each language as reported in PABIQ.

We will also discuss how the words' semantics and age of acquisition, as well as the complexity of the target word form, affect lexical processing in monolingual and bilingual children, and how the PABIQ results on language skills, language use and richness in each language for the bilinguals, risk index, and SES correspond to the children's lexical skills as measured by the CLTs.

## References

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