

24.947: LANGUAGE DISORDERS IN CHILDREN

Review of SLI

Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders

Five traditional ways SLI differ from TD children

- A. Delay: the delay involves not only the late emergence of language but also the slower than average development of language from the point of emergence to that of mastery.
- There is also a shallower slope of development for these children than for TD children. The gap between the two groups widens over time.

- B. Plateau: SLI can be a long-standing problem continuing into adulthood for some individuals. The language development of these individuals cannot be considered to be delayed only, for mastery never occurs.
- There is often late emergence, and protracted development, but in this case, a plateau is reached at some point before certain aspects of language are developed.

- C. Profile difference: The picture of delay could make it seem that a child with SLI might look like a normally developing 2;00 year old. However, this picture sidesteps the fact that at any given age, children show greater ability with some features of language than others.
- For example, a TD 2;00 year old will show greater ability with the noun plural inflection /-s/ than with the present third person singular verb inflection /-s/. However, the patterns of development for SLI children do not match these patterns systematically.

- D. Abnormal frequency of error: SLI children may exhibit a particular type of error that may also be seen in the speech of TD children. However, the patterns occur at much higher levels of frequency.
- A good example is the overuse of accusative case pronouns, “him pushing up.” “Me want the dolly.” This error in SLI children is much higher at any point of development when compared to TD children and the pattern persists for a much longer period of time.

- E. Qualitative Difference: Very few, if any, of the patterns of development observed in children with SLI are unattested in TD children. But, how are we to define qualitative difference?

Four General Hypotheses:

- Surface Account: SLI children have problems due to a difficulty with the phonetic properties of English inflections and auxiliaries.
- Sparse Morphology Hypothesis: Paucity of inflections in English and limited processing capacity of SLI children.
- Missing Feature Hypothesis: Implicates the underlying grammars of SLI children. The grammar lacks features needed for both morphophonemic rules and grammatical relations.
- Auditory Processing Deficits.

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