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INTRODUCTION

Development of grammatical categories is crucial to allow children to produce creative utterances. The use of grammatical categories allow them to use newly learned items within constructions previously learned for similar but different lexical items (replacing a word belonging to a category by another word from the same category) (Bybee, 1995; Tomasello, 2003). If children with specific language impairment (SLI) have difficulties with categorization, they would have problems with newly learned items when trying to be creative. Instead, they would use items in the constructions in which they heard them before, reinforcing fixed forms, which may slow down morphosyntactic development.

STUDY

PURPOSE

To investigate the development of grammatical categories of noun and verb in French-speaking children with SLI in comparison with chronological age matched (CA) controls and linguistic age matched (LA) controls

HYPOTHESES

- Children with SLI are more input dependent than children with NL
- Children with SLI have to be confronted to a greater number of lexical types to reach a critical mass allowing them to abstract a category.
 - They have more difficulties with categorization than children with NL

IMPLICATIONS

- Children with SLI cannot use creatively newly learned items and use items in the constructions in which they heard them
 - They reinforce lexicalized form
 - Morphosyntactic development would be slow down

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS

- 16 children with SLI**
 - Aged from 6 to 13 years
 - Monolingual French speakers
 - QIP (WISC IV) > 82
 - Language skills below 1.25 SD from the mean in 2 or more of 5 language areas
 - No neurological or auditory Disorders

16 CA controls

- No history of language disorders
- Monolingual French speakers
- Matched with children with SLI according to chronological age, QI performance and gender

16 LA controls

- No history of language disorders
- Monolingual French speakers
- Matched with children with SLI according to linguistic age, QI performance and gender

MATERIAL

Methodology inspired from the study of Skipp, Windfuhr and Conti-Ramsden (2002)

Creation of 8 pseudo-words

- 4 new verbs and 4 new nouns

6 experimental child-directed play sessions

- 3 experimental play-sessions with new verbs and 3 with new nouns
- Children are encouraged to play with figurines Playmobil® and produced new words.
- Lexical items are modeled with 4 experimentally controlled argument structures.
- Each session comprises around 10 exposures of four novel items, for 40 exposures per session (120 exposures across the 3 sessions)
- All the children's produced utterances are recorded, transcribed and analyzed

PSEUDO-VERBS

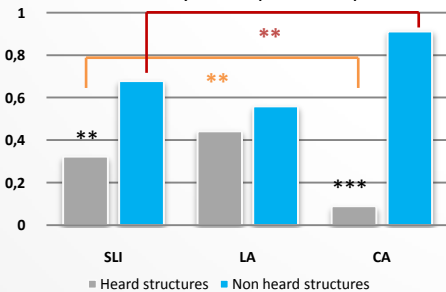
PSEUDO-NOUNS

	Maluque	Antupe	Coutine	Poujole	Loura	Chiton	Pali	Josset
Meaning	To chase away somebody with a bucket	To catch the feet of somebody	To caress somebody behind ones ears	To tell something discreetly to somebody				
Example	<i>Maluque</i> la fée (<i>Maluque the fairy</i>)	<i>Antupe!</i>	L'indien <i>coutine</i> le fantôme (<i>The Indian coutine the ghost</i>)	Le fermier <i>poujole</i> (<i>The farmer poujole</i>)	Cache le <i>loura</i> (<i>Hide the loura</i>)	Le <i>chiton!</i> (<i>The chiton</i>)	Le <i>pali</i> porte le <i>josset</i> (<i>The pali carries the josset</i>)	Le <i>josset</i> pousse (<i>The josset pushes</i>)

RESULTS

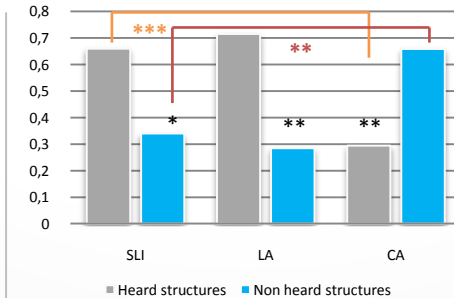
PSEUDO-NOUNS

Analyses of the production of pseudo-words

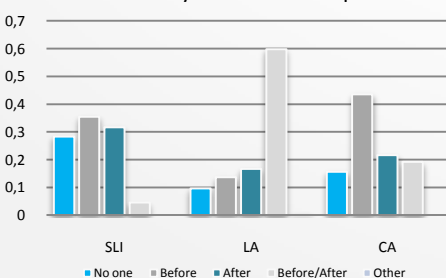


PSEUDO-VERBS

Production of "heard structures" vs. "non heard" structures



Analyses of the "non heard" productions – Linguistic information produced with pseudo-words



DISCUSSION

- Children with SLI were more input dependent than their CA controls; effect was more marked for verbs rather than for nouns
 - They produced more heard structures
 - They produced less non heard structures
- Categorization seems more difficult for children with SLI, more especially for the verbal category

- Children with SLI and their LA controls had similar performances
 - Developmental delay rather than trajectory specific to children with SLI

- By analyzing "non heard" productions, children with SLI produced less complex structures than their CA and LA controls
 - They constructed less multi-words utterances
 - They produced more utterances with only the pseudowords
 - They had more difficulties to insert a new word in another construction

Implications:

- If Children with SLI are more input dependent, they use more lexicalized forms (from their linguistic input)
 - Children with SLI could have difficulties to create the more abstract dimension of linguistic competence
 - Consequently, morphosyntactic development of children with SLI could be slowed down