

Linguistic assessment of children with Specific Language Impairment with the BVL_4-12

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ABSTRACT. I Disturbi Specifici del Linguaggio (DSL) sono caratterizzati da alterazioni nello sviluppo del linguaggio in bambini che, per il resto, presentano un normale sviluppo. I disturbi linguistici osservabili in questi bambini possono differire anche radicalmente da individuo a individuo. Diventa quindi importante estendere l'analisi delle loro abilità linguistiche alle interrelazioni tra abilità lessicali, grammaticali e discorsive. Per questo motivo in questo studio le caratteristiche linguistiche e narrative in bambini con DSL sono state attentamente valutate e confrontate con quelle di un gruppo di bambini con normale sviluppo mediante somministrazione della *Batteria per la Valutazione del Linguaggio in Bambini dai 4 ai 12 anni* (Marini e coll. 2014). Rispetto ai controlli, i bambini con DSL avevano generalizzati disturbi nella comprensione linguistica che risparmiavano solamente le abilità di discriminazione fonologica. Sul versante della produzione, pur non presentando disturbi fonetici o morfologici avevano marcate difficoltà di selezione lessicale che, nel compito narrativo, contribuivano in modo significativo a diminuire i livelli di coerenza locale e di informatività dei loro campioni di linguaggio narrativo.

SUMMARY. Introduction: Specific Language Impairments (SLI) are characterized by language delay in children with otherwise normal development. As language is a complex cognitive process, the linguistic deficits may significantly vary from person to person. Therefore, it is important to extend the analysis of their linguistic skills to the interrelations between lexical, grammatical and discourse skills. The present study was designed to analyze the linguistic and narrative skills of a group of children with diagnosis of SLI compared to those of a group of children with typical development matched for age, level of education and mean length of utterance. The participants with SLI had a significant impairment of linguistic comprehension that spared only phonological abilities. Furthermore, they showed no phonetic-phonological or morphological impairments in production but experienced lexical selection difficulties. As a third result, they had significant problems in selecting words with clear referents and this reduced both the levels of local coherence of their narratives and the amount of informative words that they could produce.

Keywords: Specific Language Impairment, Language, Narrative analysis, Developmental Neuropsychology, Neurolinguistics

INTRODUCTION

Specific Language Impairments (SLI) are a set of relatively frequent developmental disorders (5-8% of pre-school and 10% of school-aged children; Newbury et al., 2010; Nation, 2005; Tomblin et al. 1997) characterized by language delay

in children with otherwise normal physical, intellectual, and cognitive development (Leonard, 1998). They are not a homogenous condition (Laws & Bishop, 2003). Two major approaches have biased the classification of these disorders.