The language development of sequential bilingual (L2) typically developing children and that of monolingual children with Specific Language Impairment (SLI) often presents similarities [1][2]. Therefore, disentangling children who need language therapy from those who simply need more language exposure can be challenging [3].

**Study motivations**

The study is a first attempt towards the evaluation of whether the ability to process gender marking on Greek object clitic pronouns distinguishes between monolingual (L1), bilingual (L2) typically-developing (TD) children and monolingual children with SLI.

1. Are there differences in terms of accuracy, reaction times (RT) and non-target responses?  
2. Do different gender combinations (e.g., fem-fem, masc-fem, neu-fem, ...) reveal L1 to L2 interference?  
3. Is gender marking on clitic pronouns a potential clinical marker of SLI in Greek?

**Participants:** 16 Greek L1TD (5;6 years); 14 German-Greek L2TD (5;3); 6 Greek L1SLI (7;5)

**Material & Procedure:**

- **Elicited Production** (8x3 genders=24 test trials)
- Gender Mismatch: What is the sheep doing to the cow? “He is kicking HER”
- Gender Match: What is the frog doing to the rooster? “He is kicking HIM”

**Self-paced listening** (24 test trials, 24 fillers, 10 practice)

- Gender Match, Gram: The frog | plays | and | the rooster | paints | HIM | with the colors
- Gender Match, Ungram: The frog | plays | and | the rooster | paints | HER | with the colors
- Gender Mismatch, Gram: The frog | plays | and | the goat | paints | HIM | with the colors
- Gender Mismatch, Ungram: The frog | plays | and | the goat | paints | HER | with the colors

**Assessment of cognitive development:** Verbal intelligence (via Action Picture Test, APT), Working memory (via Sentence Repetition) and non-verbal IQ (via Colored Progressive Matrices) were assessed, together with a parental questionnaire.

**Results**

- Online Comprehension
  - L1TD group
  - L2TD group
  - L1SLI group

- Gender interference
  - L1TD group
  - L2TD group
  - L1SLI group

**Production**

- All groups performed less accurately in the Gender Mismatch condition compared to Gender Match, with (only) verbal intelligence modulating their performance: the performance of L2TD children with higher APT score is less disrupted (than L1TD children) in the Mismatch condition.
- The most common non-target response (within Mismatch condition) across groups is the production of a clitic pronoun marked with the wrong gender. Moreover, children with SLI omit the clitic pronoun at a higher rate than TD children, a hint of their difficulty with sentence structure.

**Comprehension**

- L2TD children are overall slower than L1TD. A slow down in the Ungrammatical, Gender Match condition appears to emerge in the postcritical segment in both L1TD and L2TD groups, but only L2TD children seem to be even more delayed in the Gram, Match condition (final segment).
- The (currently very small) group of children with SLI does not reveal the slow down at the postcritical segment, a hint of their insensitivity to the sentence ungrammaticality.

**Gender analysis**

- The children with SLI reveal a certain insensitivity across gender combinations, while the L1 and L2 TD children reveal similar response patterns. The apparent insensitivity to ungrammaticality and to gender combinations suggests that gender on Greek pronouns has the potential to distinguish the performance of L2TD vs. L1SLI. Larger groups of participants are currently being tested.

**Discussion**

- NEED OF LANGUAGE THERAPY OR OF MORE LANGUAGE EXPOSURE? 

**References**


**Production and on-line processing of gender marking on personal pronouns by Greek-speaking monolingual and sequential bilingual children, with and without language impairment**

**Background**

Difficulties with object clitic pronouns are argued to be a clinical marker for SLI in many languages [4], although Greek-speaking children with SLI do not show consistent performance [5,6], but they differ from L2 children when tested by means of online methods [7]. Children with SLI often present difficulties with gender agreement while a L1 to L2 interference is documented in bilingual development [8,9].

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