

ABSTRACT

Eva Richterová – Early reading skills development in children with specific language impairment

This study investigated the development of early reading skills in children with specific language impairment within a psycholinguistic framework. The investigation is based on theories concerning linguistic and cognitive skills which play a crucial role in the development of reading skills. This approach is utilized to identify groups which are at risk of difficulties in literacy acquisition as a result of language impairment.

Theoretical background of reading development in children with SLI is presented, in addition to current knowledge about the relationship between language and reading skills. Studies on SLI highlight the need of longitudinal investigations, which enable better understanding of the relationship between literacy development and preliteracy skills.

The aim of the study was to provide a systematic description of the reading skills development in children with SLI from first to fourth Grade. A group of 25 children with SLI was repeatedly investigated in terms of their reading skills (decoding and reading comprehension) and preliteracy skills. Assessment of language and cognitive skills was also carried out and involved phonological awareness, rapid automatized naming, and letter knowledge as well as linguistic comprehension, grammar and vocabulary.

Findings confirm the negative impact of SLI on reading development. Children with language impairment performed worse than typically developing children in most reading measures. These findings were statistically significant. The longitudinal design of this study enabled observation of the development of reading profiles. Children with language impairment experienced a decline in their decoding skills throughout the study. Meanwhile, performance in reading comprehension remained poor throughout the progression of this study. These findings indicate that children with SLI have a double deficit in both decoding and reading comprehension rather than a single deficit in one of these measures.

Key words: specific language impairment, language skills, reading skills development, decoding, reading comprehension, psycholinguistic approach