

# 13<sup>th</sup> International Congress for the Study of Child Language



**Amsterdam**

**14-18 july 2014**



Universidad de Málaga



Universidad Autónoma  
de Madrid



Universidad de Oviedo



Universidad Autónoma  
de Querétaro (México)



Universidad Nacional  
Autónoma de México

---

# SYMPOSIUM

---

**Morphosyntactic profiles in Spanish-speaking children and adolescents with Primary Language Disorder, Down Syndrome, Williams Syndrome and Deaf Children with and without Cochlear Implants**

---

**GOALS OF THE SIMPOSIUM** → to compare the developmental profiles of morphosyntactic development in four populations with language impairments:

- Primary Language impairment (PLI)
- Down syndrome (DS)
- Deaf people with hearing aids and / or cochlear implants (DHA-CI)
- Williams syndrome (WS)

**IN ORDER TO :**

- find similarities and differences between the populations
- understand the mechanisms that underlie each language impairments

**CURRENTLY →** Several researchers have argued about the importance and need for in depth studies that compare different populations with language impairments:

Rice, Warren, & Betz (2005, p. 7): “There are fewer investigations involving pairwise comparisons across conditions to determine if language and/or cognitive profiles are the same or different across clinical groups. Rice and Warren (2004) argue that there is a current need for careful consideration of the ways in which language disorders are manifest across clinical conditions ...”.

### **THE REASON IS CLEAR:**

Rice et al. (2005, p. 8): “To the extent that language impairments are manifest in diverse clinical conditions, an understanding of what is common across conditions will help clarify the symptoms of each condition, as well as clarify the **nature** of language impairments and the ways in which the human language capacity is vulnerable”.

**In the last few years, several studies have found similarities between PLI and DS:**

**In English: Laws & Bishop (2003, 2004); Eadie, Fey, Douglas, & Parsons (2002).**

**In Italian: Caselli, Monaco, Trascini & Vicari (2008)**

**Overall, these studies have shown:**

- **linguistic abilities are poorer than what is expected on the basis of their cognitive abilities.**
- **Verbal production is more impaired than comprehension and grammar is more impaired than vocabulary.**
- **Morphology and phonological memory are also vulnerable (Laws & Bishop, 2003).**

**However, there are also subtle differences between groups:**

- **Children with PLI tend to omit verbal inflections, while children with DS tended to produce more incorrect forms.**
- **Children with DS demonstrated a relatively strong performance on the irregular past and third person irregular present tense forms (Eadie et al., 2002).**

## DEAF PEOPLE WITH HEARING AIDS AND / OR CI

Although there are some disagreements, in recent years, several studies (Sarant et al., 2008; Ramírez et al., 2009) have shown that DHA-CI fail to reach typical language levels.

→ Ramírez et al. (2009), for example, in a study with 45 deaf children (aged 4-6 who had been fitted or implanted three years before):

- only 18 % reached a grammatical level higher than three year age equivalence, and 42 % fell below the three year age equivalence.
- Productive morphosyntax were an area of special difficulty.

→ Moeller et al. (2007), in a review of current research, conclude:

- The most challenging morphemes are third person singular –s, past –ed, and possessive.
- Most frequent errors involved: complex syntax, verb structures (e. g., omissions of main, copular, auxiliary , or modal verbs), bound morphemes, and pronouns

→ According to Szagun (2001) and Le Normand (2004):

- DHA-CI show problems in function words (articles, possessives, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, etc.).

**Other populations display inferior linguistic ability in certain areas (morphosyntax) than what would be expected for the level of their nonlinguistic abilities**

**People with WS present a different / contrasting profile:**

- They show a delayed onset of morphosyntactic abilities, but
- Reach expected levels of growth despite persistent delays in nonverbal cognitive skills.



**their overall grammatical skills exceed their nonverbal cognitive levels**

**It should be emphasized that most research has been carried out with English-speaking children**

↓ **Caselli et al. (2008 –an argument shared by many researchers)** ↓

the morphosyntactic demands of the language learner could be very high.

the language learner could be very high.

For example → e.g. studies, there were

- Italian children exhibited more morphological errors than English speaking children.
- Italian children used more function words and verbs.



**Like Italian,  
Spanish is a  
morphologically rich  
language compared  
to English**

to English

functions but  
English speaking

of function words and

**The authors interpreted these results as a function of the morphosyntactic demands placed on children by the language to be learned**

**Finally, to the degree at which we are able to find similarities and differences between the populations examined, can significant implications be examined for:**

- Theory construction**
- The improvement of intervention strategies / methods.**

## The presentations included in this symposium are the following:

- Research group: Donna Jackson-Maldonado. Children with PLI.
- Research group: Miguel Galeote. Children and adolescents with DS.
- Research group: Antonia González. Deaf people with HA-CI
- Research group: Eliseo Díez. People with WS.
- Discussant: Ricardo Maldonado.

**NOTE:** After each presentation there will be 5 min. for questions, and 20 min. after the discussion/conclusions of symposium.

## References.

Caselli, M.C.; Monaco, L., Tasciani, M. & Vicari, S. (2008). Language in Italian children with down syndrome and with specific language impairment. *Neuropsychology*, 22 (1), 27-35.

Eadie, P.A.; Fey, M.E., Douglas, J.M. & Parsons, C.L. (2002). Profiles of grammatical morphology and sentence imitation in children with specific language impairment and Down syndrome. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 45, 720-732.

Laws, G. & Bishop, D. (2003). A comparison of language abilities in adolescents with Down syndrome and children with specific language impairment. *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research*, 46, 1324-1339.

Laws, G. & Bishop, D. (2004). Verbal deficits in Down's syndrome and specific language impairments: a comparison. *International Journal of Language and Communicative Disorders*, 39, 423-451.

Ramírez, I., Odell, A., Archbold, S., & Nikolopoulos, T. (2009). Expressive spoken language development in deaf children with cochlear implants who are beginning formal education. *Deafness and Education International*, 11, 39-55.

Rice, M.L.; Warren, S.F. & Betz, S.K. (2005). Language symptoms of developmental language disorders: An overview of autism, Down syndrome, fragile X, specific language impairment, and Williams syndrome. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 26, 7-27.

Sarant, J., Holt, C., Dowell, R., Richards, F., & Blamey, P. (2008). Spoken language development in oral preschool children with permanent childhood deafness. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 14, 205-217.

# 13<sup>th</sup> International Congress for the Study of Child Language



**Amsterdam**

**14-18 july 2014**