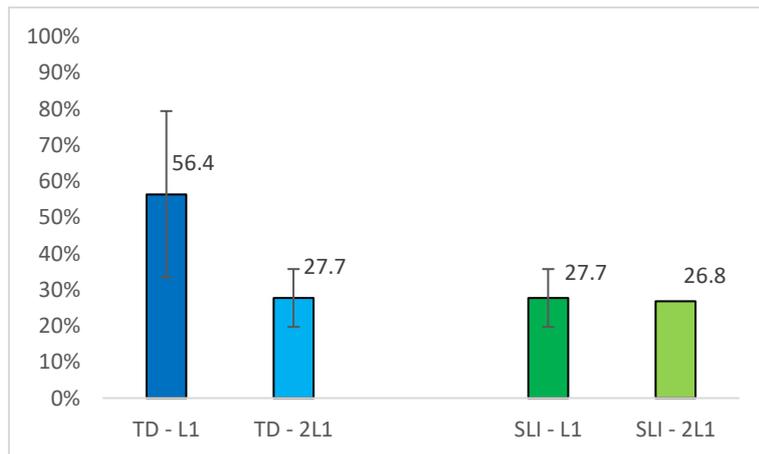


## **L1, L2, 2L1 and SLI: a Pilot Study on the Acquisition of German Dative Case Marking**

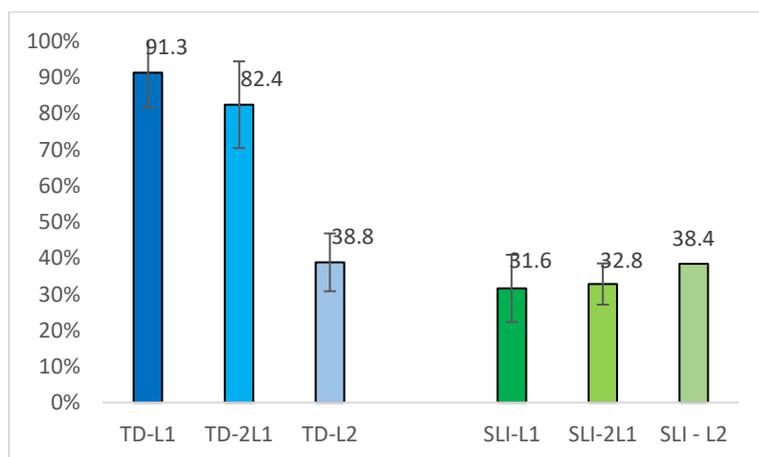
In research on different types of language acquisition, there are two main challenges for theory and practice: First, there is a huge variability in bilingual population (between 2L1 and L2 but also within these groups), but few studies directly contrast 2L1 and L2 bilingual children (Grimm & Schulz 2014, 2016). Second, bilinguals often produce language forms resembling those of children with specific language impairment (SLI, see amongst others Paradis & Crago 2000, Armon-Lotem et al. 2015). Some important open questions related to these challenges are: a) Do 2L1 and L2 bilingual children need different norms in assessment? b) How can we differentiate between children who need speech and language therapy and those who need early language intervention, especially in bilingualism?

For monolingual children, so called linguistic markers for SLI have been identified for a number of languages. These markers concern phenomena that children with SLI have significantly more difficulties with than typically developing (TD) children do. For bilingual children, a diagnostic tool has been constructed for German L2 children (LiSe-DaZ, Schulz & Tracy 2011). However, this tool has been constructed in order to reveal needs for early language intervention and it is controversial in research literature, whether it can be used for clinical population as well (Voet Cornelli et al. 2013 vs. Stephan & Keilmann 2015). Additionally, there are no norms for 2L1 bilinguals in this diagnostic tool. Therefore, further research on linguistic markers and more data on different types of language acquisition is needed in order to get an idea of what is normal and what is delayed or impaired within monolingual and bilingual children.

Case marking in German is often used in diagnostic tools in order to differentiate between TD and SLI population (e.g. in PDSS by Kauschke & Siegmüller 2010). However, there is inconclusive research on the acquisition of case marking in German in monolingual acquisition, in bilingual acquisition as well as in children with SLI (Ruigendjik 2015). Therefore, the current pilot study investigates German dative case marking within longitudinal studies of 2L1 bilingual children with SLI (N=3) aged 4 and 7 years. Furthermore, aged-matched cross-sectional studies (N=50) of monolingual TD children, 2L1 TD children and L2 TD children as well as monolingual children with SLI and L2 children with SLI were conducted containing spontaneous speech data and elicited dative case constructions (overall utterances analysed N=21.644). The research questions are: 1) Are there differences between 2L1 and L2 children in their acquisition of German dative case marking? 2) Are there differences between bilingual children and children with SLI in their acquisition of German dative case marking? 3) Can dative case marking be identified as a linguistic marker for SLI in German in monolingual and/or bilingual acquisition? Results show no differences between 2L1 and SLI by age 4. However, by age 7 there are differences between 2L1 and SLI on the one hand, but no differences between L2 and SLI on the other (in line with Paradis & Crago 2000; see target-like markings in Figure 1 and 2). We find thus significant differences between 2L1 and L2. Hence, separate norms in assessment are needed for different kinds of bilingualism (in line with Grimm & Schulz 2016). Case marking turns out to be a potential linguistic marker for L1 children at ages 4 and 7, but in case of 2L1 children only for the age of 7. Further research is necessary to fully understand the performance of L2 children.



**Figure 1.** Percentages of target-like dative case markings by children of age 4.



**Figure 2.** Percentages of target-like dative case markings by children of age 7.

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