

Given the right input, bilingual children can outperform monolingual children in both languages. Filling a European lacuna in the causal chain leading to disprivileged language competencies

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The input or, more precisely, the language caretakers address to young children (CDS), is the most important basis for successful language acquisition. But quality and quantity of linguistic input differ significantly according to the socio-economic status (SES) of the families (Hart & Risley 1995, Weizman & Snow 2001, Hoff 2006, Rowe 2008, Hoff 2013). These differences have direct effects on children's linguistic competences and on their later school performance (Walker et al. 1994, Nelson et al. 2011). For bilingual children, a rich input in their first language is an important basis for the acquisition of their second language (Oller & Eilers 2002, Duursma et al. 2007), and quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the input in both languages also have strong effects on the children's L2 proficiencies (e.g. Oller & Eilers 2002, Leseman et al. 2009, Scheele et al. 2010, Unsworth et al. 2012). Thus, early language support in child care facilities is extremely important, especially for children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and for children from migrant families.

Our psycholinguistic research project "INPUT – Investigating Parental and Other Caretakers' Utterances to Kindergarten Children" investigates the linguistic development of at least 48 Viennese kindergarten children divided into four groups:

- 1) 12 monolingual German-speaking children from high SES families
- 2) 12 monolingual German-speaking children from low SES families
- 3) 12 bilingual children who acquire Turkish as their family language and German as their early second language in kindergarten and who are from high SES families
- 4) 12 bilingual children who acquire Turkish as their family language and German as their early second language in kindergarten and who are from low SES families

The children are video- and audio-recorded in spontaneous interaction with their main caretakers (parents at home, teachers in kindergarten) during four observations over a period of 18 months, i.e. from age 3;0 to 4;6. Various methods are used for obtaining crucial data.

We will present first results of our work in progress: After discussing some general problems, we will present preliminary quantitative and qualitative analyses of spontaneous speech data of selected bilingual children from both high and low SES backgrounds compared with matched monolingual children. We will show that there are important differences between the output of the four different groups. Furthermore, we will demonstrate that the children's linguistic proficiencies measured by linguistic tests also differ considerably within each of the four groups, pointing to differences also in the two languages of bilingual children. We will present delays in the acquisition of German in groups 2, 3 and especially 4 in comparison with group 1, code-switching in bilingual children's input and output, and language-contact-induced properties of both L1 Turkish and L2 German. The most important underlying factors which are likely to be responsible for these differences will be also discussed. Insufficient language input has thus been so far a missing link in European empirical studies of the reasons for disprivileged development of both bilingual and monolingual children.

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