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# Developmental factors influencing lexical abilities of Polish-English bilingual children

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## Abstract

There are about 50 thousands Polish children from migrant families who are currently living in the UK, learning the new language of the community and constituting one of the largest new bilingual populations in Europe (Kulakowska, 2013). However, still not much is known about linguistic and cognitive development of those children.

In this study, we will analyse vocabulary size in both languages of Polish bilingual migrant children (N=100) aged 4;5 – 6;9, living in the UK. Their Polish receptive and expressive lexical abilities are assessed by tests standardized for monolingual population: the OTSR (Haman et al., 2012) and the ZNO (Haman & Smoczyńska, 2010) for Polish, the BPVS (Dunn et al., 2009) and the EVT-2 (Williams, 2006) for English. In the receptive tests, a child's task is to point to a picture (one in four presented) that goes best with the target word provided by the experimenter. In expressive tasks, a child is to name an object or an action presented in the picture.

To gather the information about participants' early development, current language skills, parental worries of language delay, child language input and richness, and parental socio-economic background, we use a long version of Parental Bilingual Questionnaire (PaBiQ, Tuller, 2015; Polish version: Kuś, et al., 2012).

The same lexical measures and a monolingual version of PaBiQ addressing children's language development and current skills, are applied for Polish monolingual control group (N=100), matched with the bilingual participants for age, gender and parental education level.

In the analyses, we aim to explore the relations between lexical development of migrant children (in Polish and in English) and: (1) bilinguals' daily language use patterns, (2) the school and the environmental language input, (3) the developmental factors (early language development, the socio-economic status and the current language skills assessed by parents). Additionally, we aim to compare these findings to similar analysis done on the monolingual control group, with regard to their outcomes in Polish.

We expect that balanced language use pattern in both languages and rich school and environmental input will be the factors driving high lexical skills in bilingual migrant children. However when input in one language is impoverished, we expect to observe the beginning

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of language attrition process (in the case of Polish) or ‘a lag behind’ effect (in the case of English) in comparison to lexical norms available for monolingual populations (Bialystok et al., 2010) and in comparison to the monolingual control group. We predict that the developmental factors will contribute more substantially to lexical abilities of bilinguals than in their monolingual counterparts’ case.

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