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***“Production of coherence markers by simultaneous bilinguals and monolinguals with SLI”***

This talk compares the use of coherence markers in the narratives elicited from Russian-Dutch simultaneous bilinguals (dominant in Dutch), monolingual Russian- and Dutch-speaking children with typical language development (TLD) and their Russian-speaking peers with specific language impairment (SLI). The focus is on two kinds of coherence phenomena: additive connectives (and, but) and personal pronouns (more specifically, pronominal gender).

The results reveal no differences in connective use in the Dutch narratives produced by bilinguals and monolinguals. In contrast, frequency distributions of Russian additive connectives in the narratives produced by bilingual participants are clearly different from both Russian monolingual groups (TLD and SLI) and are compatible with the typological properties of the children’s dominant language (Dutch), which can be taken as evidence of cross-linguistic influence. However, based on error rates and types of errors we cannot distinguish between bilinguals and monolinguals with SLI; both groups make significantly more errors in connective use than monolinguals with TLD. Hence, cross-linguistic influence can only partly explain deviant connective use by bilinguals; processing cost in bilingualism can also be an important factor shaping language production of bilingual children.

In the domain of pronominal gender, we find significant differences between bilinguals and monolinguals in both Dutch and Russian. However, in the case of Dutch, we encounter positive transfer from Russian – Russian-Dutch bilinguals use pronouns more correctly than their monolingual Dutch peers. At the same time, production of pronouns in the Russian narratives of the bilingual children seems to be negatively affected by Dutch: bilinguals below age 6 have difficulty using feminine pronouns and often choose a masculine pronoun that is a default form in Dutch. Bilinguals make significantly more errors with pronominal gender than monolinguals with TLD and SLI, but do catch up with the monolingual groups by age 7.