

The impact of diglossia on narratives characteristics of school-age Arabic speaking children with hearing-impairment compared with hearing peers



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Introduction

Arabic speaking children with typical hearing acquire Colloquial-Arabic through incidental learning and Standard-Arabic in a structured way mainly at school.

(Saiegh-Haddad & Joshi, 2014)

Children with hearing impairment can only partially rely on incidental learning due to their hearing loss. They acquire both language systems (Colloquial-Arabic and Standard-Arabic) through structured exposure.

Goals

The current study aims to explore **characteristics of narratives** of children with typical hearing and those with hearing impairment in their two linguistic systems.

Method

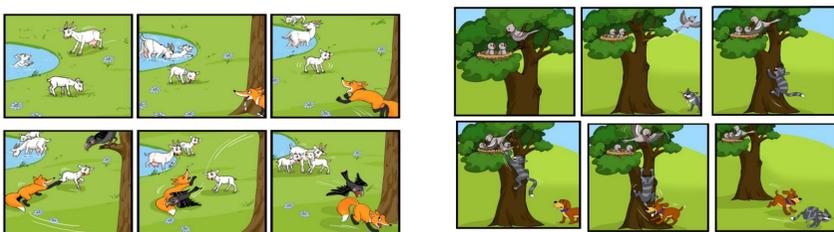
Participants

40 Palestinian-Arabic speaking school-age children aged 10-15 years old.

- 20 children with hearing-impairment.
- 20 children with normal-hearing.

Task

Each participant told two narratives, one in Standard-Arabic and one in Colloquial-Arabic. The narratives are based on two different picture-story books with similar narrative components.



MAIN, Gagarina et al., 2012

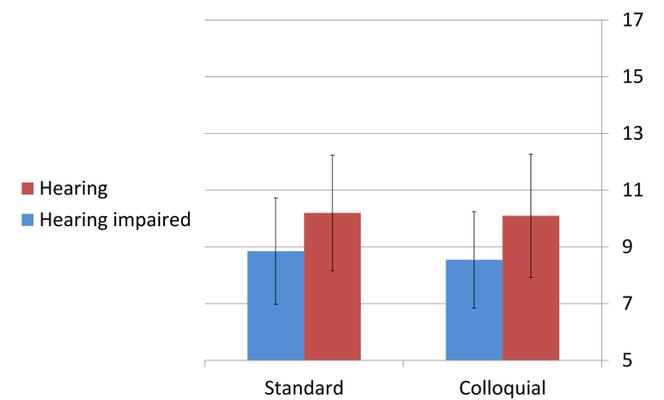
Measures

- Narratives structure: Setting and episodic structure.
- Evaluative-methods: e.g. perception (*to see*), psychological (*hungry*), mental state verbs (*to plan*).
- Lexical variation: Type/token.

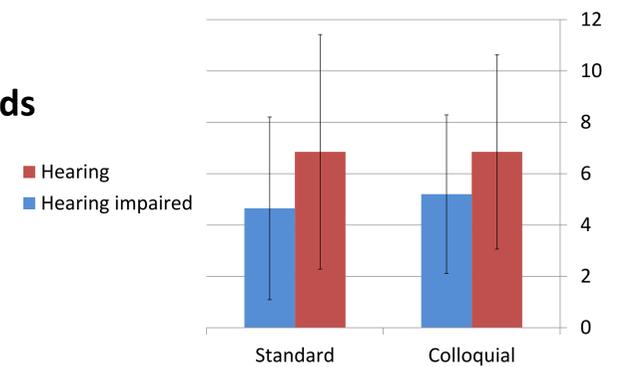
(MAIN, Gagarina et al., 2012)

Results

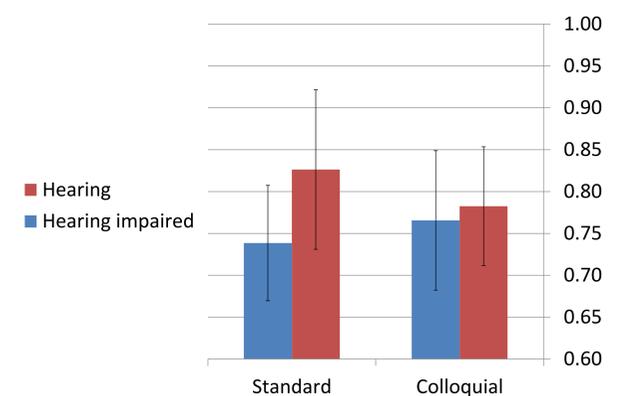
Story structure



Evaluation methods



Lexical variation



Summary

- Children with typical-hearing scored significantly higher compared to children with hearing-impairment across all measures.
- Comparisons between the two linguistic systems (Colloquial-Arabic and Standard-Arabic) revealed no difference for story-structure and evaluative-methods in both groups.
- Lexical variation showed advantage for Standard-Arabic only for children with normal-hearing.
- Children with hearing impairment showed no difference between the two linguistic systems in the lexical variation measure.

Conclusions

- The findings are in line with previous literature showing the linguistic gap between the two populations (Jarollahi, 2017).
- The findings of narrative structure and evaluative methods are in line with previous findings on bilingual children, supporting the assumption of universality of narrative grammar across the two languages children speak (Jones et al., 2016).
- Interestingly, at school age, hearing children are more productive in Standard-Arabic in a narrative task. An explanation for this finding can be that this is the linguistic system they use more for a narrative task.
- In the group of children with hearing impairment, similar lexical variation performance in the two linguistic systems suggests that structured learning supports learning for children with hearing impairment.

References

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