

There is lack of agreement among researchers regarding the development of the sound system of bilingual children, i.e. children who speak two languages. Some studies point to minor differences between bilingual children and their monolingual peers in this area, while other studies indicate that bilingual children can develop atypical speech patterns. Also, there is research indicating that bilingual children have an advantage over their monolingual counterparts due to the fact that they can transfer skills from one language to another. Overall, the knowledge base in this area of science is far from settled.

The aim of the proposed study is to analyse the speech of preschool bilingual children who speak Polish and Ukrainian living in Poland, and identify sound patterns in their speech. Another aim is to compare the bilingual speech sound patterns with the patterns found in the speech of monolingual Polish-speaking children and Ukrainian-speaking children, who are the same age, gender and come from a similar social and economic background. Such comparison will allow to determine whether any differences can be interpreted as developmental, resulting from the fact that the children speak two languages or atypical. Finally, the study will attempt to determine if the bilingual children's speech sound production skills are at the same level as those of their monolingual peers.

In order to achieve the study aims, the children will be administered a picture-naming test. The words produced by the children will be audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed both descriptively and statistically. Descriptive analysis will identify the sound patterns in the children's speech, and note any similarities and differences between the three groups of children. Statistical analysis will aim to determine if there is a relation between being monolingual or bilingual and various speech sound performance measures used in the study, e.g. the number of correct sounds produced or the percentages of occurrence of some speech sound patterns.

The significance of the present research for advancing scientific knowledge is twofold. Firstly, the project will result in a description of the speech sound system of bilingual Polish-Ukrainian preschool children, currently absent in the subject literature. Secondly, the results will make a contribution to the international debate on the speech sound development of bilingual children. The proposed study will also create a much needed knowledge base that can be used to develop speech pathology instruments for the assessment of bilingual preschool children speaking Polish and Ukrainian.