NE Speech and Language Symposium 2020 Abstract Submission

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Attempting to understanding the impact of child and social characteristics' on differential responses to language interventions for DLD pre-schoolers: A Systematic Review of Research using Third Variable Analyses

Context

The most widespread method to tackle language difficulties are psychosocial language interventions, which involve socially, psychologically, cognitively or educationally-based components to improve a skill or behaviour (Bus & Mol, 2008). Despite the relative success of psychosocial language interventions, research indicates inconsistent results both between and within interventions. For example, social and child factors which increase the risk of poor language development may also put pre-schoolers at risk of poorer intervention response (Durkin & Conti-Ramsden, 2010; Marulis & Neuman, 2013; Roberts & Kaiser, 2011). This may be because language development and impairment is underpinned by a number of these factors (COST IS1406, 2017). Despite a clear need to explore this issue, there is currently limited research directly examining the influence of child and social factors upon intervention progress. Many intervention studies have narrow inclusion and exclusion criteria; which consequently removes children with broader difficulties (Law & Stringer, 2014). Additionally, most do not compare and report differences within their sample (Bishop, 2014). Few research studies have determined whether individual and social factors have unique, cumulative, interactive or co-varying effects on a child's progress (Stoeckel et al., 2013), which makes it difficult to determine how interventions should be constructed to compensate for individual or combined risks (Law et al., 2012; Law & Stringer, 2014).

Objective

The current project used a systematic review to attempt to synthesise results from studies which considered and described characteristics to create a larger pool of knowledge from the literature. The project develops a deeper understanding of influential social and individual characteristics upon children with poor language, and develop recommendations for research and practice to consider these in interventions.