Gender Differences in Linguistic Measures Among Three-Year-Olds with ASD

Kylie Robinshaw¹, Grace Corrigan¹, Brianna Heath², David Amaral², Marjorie Solomon³, Christine Wu Nordahl² & Letitia Naigles¹.

¹University of Connecticut, ²University of California, Davis MIND Institute

BACKGROUND

• Typically developing (TD) girls frequently ahead of TD boys in actual speech and ratings of speech.¹,²
• Debate over whether differences attributed to biological or input factors.³
• Our Question: Might girls with ASD also show more advanced speech than boys with ASD?

METHODS

• 28 toddlers diagnosed with ASD (M_age = 38.40 months)
• 14 girls (M_age = 37.18 months)
• Module 1 (N = 9); Module 2 (N = 5)
• Language samples from the entire ADOS-2 administration were transcribed
• Analyzed in CLAN for noun/verb types and MLU
• Qualitative hand-coding to identify unique noun/verb types by gender

RESULTS

• Girls appear to use a more diverse set of words; possibly more meaningful subgroups of Autism.
• Proposal: Investigate (a) language in naturalistic settings in (b) even younger children?

CONCLUSIONS

• Trend for higher language levels in girls with ASD, but not significant
• Large variability, especially in Module 2
• Girls appear to use a more diverse set of words; possibly more meaningful subgroups of Autism
• Plan to add TD age-matched comparison group; also include discourse measures to evaluate linguistic camouflage

REFERENCES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS


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