HVDL Conference – Posters

5. Caitlin Holme et al	University of Bristol (PhD student)	*A day in the life of 12 toddlers: studying children's everyday interactions to inform parent-child interaction therapy*

Keywords**:**
parent-child interaction; DLD; naturalistic

Abstract:

Introduction
Parent-child interaction therapy (PCIT) is a common intervention used with children at risk of developmental language disorder. This approach involves working with parents to modify their interactions in ways thought to be conducive to language development (Falkus et al., 2016). Qualitative research exploring parents' views of PCIT reveals that it is most successful when strategies are embedded in families' everyday routines (O'Toole et al., 2021). This paper will explore preschool children's everyday interactions in naturalistic settings, with the aim of informing the theory behind PCIT.

Method
Participants were twelve families from diverse backgrounds with a child aged 2½ to 4 years old. On a day of their choice, parents took photographs of their child's activities and the child wore an audio device which recorded their interactions. The parent then participated in a qualitative interview to discuss their activities and interactions, incorporating the photographs and automated recording analysis.

Results
Automated timelines showing moments of high and low interaction were annotated with information about families' activities. Photographs and quotations from the interviews showed variation in how families engaged in activities, and the times of day that provided opportunities for interaction.

Conclusions
We will explore variation in the activities that families did and the opportunities for interaction that arose. Clinical implications for how we conduct PCIT will be considered, including the importance of understanding the socio-cultural context of parent-child interaction.

9 Keira Radice	Birmingham City University (PhD student)	*The effectiveness of a language intervention using an evidence-based approach for young people with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) who are accessing Youth Justice Services (YJS)*	
	International research has shown Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) are disproportionately high within the youth justice population relative to community samples (Anderson et al., 2015; Chow et al., 2022; Royal College of Speech and Language Therapy (RCSLT), 2017). One SLCN, Developmental Language Disorder (DLD), has been of particular interest in recent literature (Anderson et al., 2015; Winstanley et al., 2021). DLD is a diagnosis given to a person who has difficulty talking (expressive language) and/or understanding language (receptive language) (Bishop et al., 2017). Young people (YP) accessing Youth Justice Services (YJS) will be exposed to a range of experiences which rely heavily on expressive and receptive language skills. This presents many barriers for YP, as they may not completely understand what is happening, fully know what is expected of them in the YJS or know how to successfully participate in rehabilitation or conditions set by their imposed court orders (RCSLT, 2017). Regardless of this emerging research, Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) interventions that target the aspects of language that could support the engagement and participation of YP within YJS are not readily available or funded. To become available, there is a need to prove the efficacy and benefit of SLT interventions at a policy level, so there is a subsequent desire to invest in SLT services. This research therefore seeks to examine the effectiveness of a language intervention, using an evidence-based framework, for YP with DLD who are accessing a local YJS Team.		
7 Rhonwen Lewis et al	Cardiff Metropolitan University	*Designing a Welsh-English bilingual tool to identify speech, language and communication needs in the early years*	
	Identification of speech, language and communication (SLC) needs in the early years is essential for the provision of effective and timely intervention[1]. In Wales, there is a unique context for speech and language acquisition where children are exposed to varying degrees of Welsh and English depending on language use pattens within the home, in education and in the wider community. Existing tools and normative data based on single-language exposure cannot be applied to children experiencing dual-language input[2]. To meet the needs of children residing in Wales, Welsh-English bilingual SLC surveillance tools are being developed which identify children in need of early intervention. The tools are intended for used by health and education practitioners, in line with the Healthy Child Wales Programme contact points, at 15 months, 27 months and 42 months. Initial versions of the tools have been co-designed with parents/carers of young children, health visiting team members, early years practitioners and speech and language therapists to discuss their acceptability, feasibility and practicability. Draft versions have been developed which support practitioners to discuss and evaluate the child's SLC development with parents across Welsh, English or both languages. Where data are being gathered on language-specific elements (e.g. vocabulary, syntax), separate items		

have been created for Welsh and English. Discussion of developmental is discussed in either Welsh or English, depending on parental preference. Normative data for the tools will be collected from a large cohort of children across Wales throughout 2024-2025. The insights gained from the development of these tools, where bilingual experience has been considered from the outset, has far-reaching implications for assessment and monitoring of SLC development in a bilingual context.

[1]Reilly, S. and McKean, C. (2023) 'Creating the conditions for robust early language development for all—Part 1: Evidence-informed child language surveillance in the early years', *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, 58(6), pp. 2222–2241.
[2]Goh, S.K.Y., Tham, E.K.H., Magiati, I., Sim, L., Sanmugam, S., Qiu, A., Daniel, M.L., Broekman, B.F.P. and Rifkin-Graboi, A. (2017) 'Analysis of Item-Level Bias in the Bayley-III Language Subscales: The Validity and Utility of Standardized Language Assessment in a Multilingual Setting', *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 60, pp. 2663–2671.

6 Lucy Hughes et al	Reading University and Moor House Research & Training Institute	*'Better Conversations with Developmental Language Disorder': feasibility and findings from an experimentally controlled case series*

Abstract

Introduction
Developmental language disorder (DLD) affects around two pupils in every UK classroom and can impact on education and social well-being. Thus far, interventions for school-aged children with DLD have been targeted at vocabulary, grammar or narrative skills. This project co-produced and evaluated 'Better Conversations with DLD' (BCDLD), a new conversation-based intervention, grounded in evidence-based methods used with other clinical populations.

Method
Six children with DLD (6;06 - 8;02 years) participated with their mothers. Dyads took part in multiple baseline assessment and six conversation-focused therapy sessions. Video feedback was used to highlight facilitative and barrier strategies within their talk and to agree targets for change. Follow-up conversation and language-based measures evaluated progress in response to intervention. Feasibility was explored in relation to recruitment, retention and acceptability. Reliability of outcome measures was also evaluated.

Results
Following intervention, there was an increase in children's average utterance length and a statistically significant decrease in the use of barrier conversation behaviours for five dyads. Change in child-to-adult ratio of speech was achieved, in line with intervention targets. Children also showed progress on standardised assessments, including the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals.

Conclusions
The results suggest that school-aged children with DLD can benefit from direct intervention to improve their everyday conversation and the approach can produce change on formal language testing. Feasibility findings provided strong support for

	the further development of BCDLD. Larger-scale studies will be needed to establish whether these findings can be generalised to the wider population of children with language disorder.	

4 Hannah Harvey et al	Birmingham City University	*Navigating the Diagnosis: Parental Perspectives on Developmental Language Disorder*
	Abstract 1-5 Keywords: Developmental language disorder, Participatory action research, Parents, Diagnosis Introduction: In supporting children with developmental language disorder (DLD) it is the role of speech and language therapists (SLTs) to share the diagnosis, usually to parents. Research has shown that SLTs sometimes avoid formal terminology when talking to families (Ash et al., 2020), often due to concerns regarding its complexity and potential stigma (Harvey, 2023). Whilst there is limited evidence from the parental perspective, studies suggest a preference for knowing the diagnosis (Porter et al 2020), and its importance for accessing resources. The aim of the current project is to explore the experiences of a diverse group of UK parents and identify their priorities for clinical interactions. Method: This project uses experience-based co-design (EBCD) methodology and is being led by a steering group of 4 parents to children with DLD. Thematic analysis will identify key experiences in the diagnostic process from semi-structured interviews conducted with a culturally diverse group of parents. These will be edited into a film and presented to parents in a workshop, where together, they will select priorities to take forward to subsequent stages of this research (co-designing a diagnostic resource with SLTs and parents). Results: While still in progress, preliminary findings suggest that parents highly value the DLD diagnosis. Shared stories highlight the emotional impact at the time of diagnosis, including the setting, people present, expectations, and the processing of feelings and information. Conclusions: The findings will indicate ways that SLTs can support parents in the delivery of a DLD diagnosis.	

10 Anna Sowerbutts	The Churchill Fellowship	*Supporting Developmental Language Disorder in schools: an international perspective*
	Keywords: DLD; education; collaboration; literacy; advocacy Prevalence of DLD upon school entry is estimated at 7.58% (Norbury et al., 2016), equating to roughly 1 million children and young people (CYP) across the UK. There are insufficient numbers of Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) to individually assess and treat this many CYP, so collaboration is essential to effectively support students with DLD. The author undertook a Churchill	

	Fellowship within Australia to compare DLD support there with the UK. This aimed to explore the successes and challenges experienced by SLT teams there, and gain insight into how the UK can best identify and support the large number of children with DLD. A broadly ethnographic approach was used, comprising participant observation, interviews, document analysis and field notes. Settings visited included specialist language schools, mainstream schools, universities, government departments, professional organisations and SLT teams. Participants included SLTs, teachers, students with DLD, parents, researchers and other health professionals. Data were analysed using Content Analysis. Four themes were identified and discussed in detail: 1) Health, Education and Funding; 2) Specialist Language Provisions and Outreach; 3) Collaborating with(in) schools; and 4) Literacy. Numerous recommendations were identified for UK SLT and education practice. Collaboration could be enhanced through reciprocal training for (student) SLTs and teachers, and through greater attention to literacy within SLT training. Establishing a national network of language provisions could support best practice sharing and community outreach, enabling the benefits of these specialist settings to reach mainstream schools. Finally, appointing an Oracy Lead within schools could promote the importance of oral communication.	

2. Laura Chambers et al	University of Newcastle	*Participatory research in action: Using participatory action research methods to implement the BEST intervention in early years settings*
	Key words: Language intervention, Early Years, Participatory action research Introduction Participatory action research (PAR) requires meaningful collaboration with community stakeholders and is integral to successfully implementing interventions to ensure maximum impact (Argyris & Schon, 1989). BEST is an evidence-based language intervention associated with large, positive effects on functional language and comprehension skills of children aged 3;5 to 4;5 when delivered by Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) (Trebacz et al; 2023). Partner schools involved in BEST piloting and the LIVELY efficacy trial will collaborate with researchers to facilitate an adaptation of BEST, enabling Early Years Practitioners (EYPs) to deliver the intervention themselves. Methods We present a summary of PAR methods used in an implementation study to support the roll out of the Building Early Sentences Therapy (BEST) intervention into Early Years Settings (EYS). An iterative cycle of reflection and development, informed by the ADAPT framework (Moore et al; 2021), incorporating interviews, focus groups, and co-design workshops will be used to better understand what knowledge and resources EYPs need to deliver BEST confidently, and with high levels of fidelity. EYPs will join with researchers to consult on, develop, and co-create a range of written and audio-visual therapy	

guides, resources and training materials to enable settings to understand the theoretical underpinning of BEST, to identify children who will benefit most from the intervention, and to deliver BEST sessions as intended. All co-designed resources and materials will be made freely available on a website allowing EYPs to use BEST with confidence and oversight from SLTs to support the language and communication needs of young children.

References
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Moore, C, M., Copeland, L., Craig, P., Movsisyan, A., Hoddinott, P., Littlecott, H., O'Cathain, A., Pfadenhauer, L., Rehfuess, E., Segrott, J., Hawe, P., Kee, F., Couturiaux, D., Hallingberg, B., & Evans, R. (2021). Adapting interventions to new contexts—the ADAPT guidance. *BMJ* (Online), 374, n1679–n1679.
Trebacz, A., McKean, C., Stringer, H., & Pert, S. (2023). Piloting building early sentences therapy for pre-school children with low language abilities: An examination of efficacy and the role of sign as an active ingredient. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*.

3. Susan Ebbels et al	University of Oxford; Moor House Research & Training Institute	*The effectiveness of individualized morphosyntactic target identification and explicit intervention using the SHAPE CODING™ system for children with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) and the impact of within-session dosage*

Keywords*:* Developmental Language Disorder; intervention; grammar; dosage

Introduction
We investigated the effectiveness of a highly individualized morphosyntactic intervention using the SHAPE CODING™ system delivered at different dosages.

Method
Eight children with DLD aged 8;0-10;10 received ten hours of explicit individualized intervention for morphosyntax delivered in 30-minute individual sessions once per week for 20 weeks. Following at least four baseline probe tests, two grammatical targets per session received explicit instruction until they reached criterion (90%), when the next target was introduced. To control for session length and teaching episode density, either both targets received 20 teaching episodes per session, or one target received 10 teaching episodes and the other 30. Maintenance testing of completed targets was also carried out.

Results
Scores on probe tests post-intervention were significantly higher than during the baseline phase (d=1.6) with no change during the baseline or maintenance phases. However, progress during the intervention phase was highly significant.

	When considering progress relative to cumulative intervention sessions, progress was faster with 30 teaching episodes per session and slower with 10. However, when cumulative teaching episodes was used as the predictor, all three within-session dosages showed very similar rates of progress, with the odds of a correct response increasing by 3.9% for each teaching episode. Conclusions The individualised intervention was highly effective and efficient. The cumulative number of teaching episodes per target provided across sessions appeared to be key. Our next study will use the same intervention method in a much larger scale RCT with children in mainstream schools.	
1. Elaine Ashton et al	University of Newcastle	*Working with bilingual children and interpreters: from research to clinical practice*
	Keywords: bilingualism, language intervention, interpreters Introduction Most Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) are monolingual English speakers and therefore need to work alongside interpreters when working with children who speak languages other than English (LOTE). There is clinical guidance available on the assessment of speech, language and communication needs in a bilingual context, and how to work with interpreters. However, there is limited research on delivering intervention in the child's home language. Method Part of the Language Intervention in the Early Years (LIVELY) project involved an experienced SLT working with interpreters within education settings to deliver home language intervention for children speaking a LOTE. Reflections around the enablers and barriers to working successfully with bilingual children and interpreters were collated throughout the project. Results Despite thorough preparation, implementing the recommended guidance and the practicalities of delivering home language intervention was challenging in practice. The children rarely spoke during sessions and the pragmatics of the language situation may have influenced this. Although the interpreters received tailored training, they benefitted from additional training to follow the intervention procedures more closely. Conclusions Reflections from the LIVELY project have identified practical ideas for SLTs working with bilingual children and interpreters. To encourage bilingual children to speak their home language more freely, it is important to work with members of their language community at home and/or within familiar settings. SLTs may need to adapt their interaction styles and be more directive to	

		reflect parental and community communication styles. Accredited speech and language training may be beneficial for interpreters working with SLTs.
11 Kate Shobbrook	UCL (lecturer & PhD student)	*Developing oral comprehension in preschool children with language difficulties: an examination of intervention components and their relevance for research and practice*
	Keywords: language disorder; preschool; comprehension; TIDieR; intervention Oral comprehension difficulties are prevalent in preschool children with language needs and are often a feature of language disorder. Although comprehension is frequently targeted in speech and language therapy, there is a reported lack of research into interventions developing oral comprehension, existing research having limited applicability to UK practice. Checklists such as the Template for Intervention Description and Replication (TIDieR) are valuable tools for supporting the application of research to practice, yet none have been used to describe interventions for children with language difficulties. Our study (Shobbrook et al, 2024), aimed to identify intervention studies effective for oral comprehension in preschool children and describe the components of these interventions. A PROSPERO registered search identified 20 systematic reviews, 17 studies within these describing effective intervention for children 1 to 5 years old with language difficulties. Data was extracted against headings from the TIDieR checklist, findings were analysed and reported using narrative synthesis. Studies demonstrated that intervention can improve oral comprehension in this population. A wide variety of rationales, techniques, procedures, settings and intensities were associated with effective intervention. Relevant aspects for practice include: the importance of naturally occurring interactions as the context for language development; supporting parents to deliver and adhere to intervention; the value of rich vocabulary and inferential comprehension; the benefit of expressive language strategies. Implications for research are found in components unreported or under-described in the TIDieR, including details of the quantitative and qualitative aspects of dosage and how interventions were tailored to the individual's profile and needs.	
12 Dr Juhayna Taha & Prof Julie Dockrell	UCL	*An exploration of the knowledge, practices, and needs of Arab early years teachers in promoting oral language development*

Introduction:

A significant number of children, including those living in social disadvantage, enter formal education with poor oral language (OL) skills. These difficulties can hinder children's ability to access the curriculum and increase the risk of literacy difficulties. In Jordan, over 50% of children cannot read and understand a simple text by age 111. High-quality OL teaching in the early years can improve reading outcomes and mitigate this learning poverty. However, little is known about the status of OL-supporting practices in early years classrooms in the Arab region, including Jordan. This study aims to evaluate the knowledge, practices, and needs of Arab early years teachers in promoting OL.

Method:

Data will be collected from teachers of kindergarten to grade 3 classrooms in schools in Jordan. Using an online survey, we will gather information on a) demographics and teaching experience and evaluate the b) knowledge and implementation of elements of language-rich environments, c) knowledge and experience in supporting children with language difficulties, and d) barriers and training needs in these areas. Data collection will take place between March 1st and April 15th.

Expected results:

Given the scarcity of research, policy, and resources related to language development in Arabic, we predict to identify some gaps in Jordanian early years teachers' knowledge and training, influencing the frequency and effectiveness of their practices for supporting OL, especially for children with language difficulties.

Implications:

This study will be a stepping-stone towards promoting OL development in Arab early years classrooms, addressing the educational inequalities encountered by children with language difficulties.

References
(1) World Bank (2019). Jordan Learning Poverty Brief.
https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/457891571223499270090022019/original/MNAMNC02JORLPBRIEF.pdf

8. Dr Kathryn Mason et al	UCL; City University	*Contribution of the Preschool Home Literacy Environment to Language and Literacy Skills after One-Year of Formal Schooling in Deaf and Hearing Children*

Keywords: Home literacy; deaf; emergent literacy; language

Abstract
The early home literacy environment (HLE) is known to be an important predictor of children's early language and literacy skills. This longitudinal study investigated the relationship between preschool HLE and child language and literacy outcomes after their first year of school in deaf and hearing children. Participants were 44 deaf children who use spoken language and 30 hearing children, all aged 4-5 years. Parents completed a questionnaire asking about their HLE. The questionnaire

collected data on parent literacy behaviours around shared storybook-reading (SBR), such as how often they read to their child, and child literacy behaviours, such as how much their child engages during SBR, and their interest in letters. A year later, after their first year of school, children completed a battery of tasks assessing their emergent language and literacy skills. Correlations were used to analyse associations between HLE and language and literacy outcomes, and Principal-component analysis (PCA) determined the number of components represented by the items within the HLE questionnaire.

Introduction

The home literacy environment (HLE) is an important predictor of children's early language and literacy skills. Language and literacy outcomes are very variable for deaf children. This longitudinal study aimed to determine the relationship between preschool HLE and child language and literacy outcomes after their first year of school in hearing and deaf children who use spoken language.

Methods

Participants were 44 deaf and 30 hearing children aged 4-5 years. Their parents completed a questionnaire about the preschool HLE, including questions about literacy behaviours around shared storybook-reading (SBR), (e.g. how often they read to their child and discuss the content of books), and child literacy behaviours, such as their child's engagement during SBR, and interest in letters. A year later, at the end of their first year of school, children completed tasks assessing their emergent language and literacy skills, including phonological awareness (PA), letter-sound knowledge, vocabulary, early reading and spelling ability. Pearson's product-moment correlations were used to analyse associations between HLE and language and literacy outcomes measures, taking HLE scores and each outcome measure as covariates for the deaf and hearing groups separately. Principal-component analysis (PCA) was used to determine the number of components represented by the items within the HLE questionnaire using HLE data for both deaf and hearing children.

Results

Deaf and hearing children differed in their parent-reported preschool HLE, and in the relationship between the HLE and later language and literacy outcomes. Principal-component analysis revealed 3 HLE-components: (i) parent literacy facilitation and SBR-engagement, (ii) child's literacy interest in letters/books, and (iii) child's interactive SBR-engagement. For deaf children, the child literacy interest-component was positively associated with all language and literacy outcomes, while the other components were positively associated with PA and vocabulary. For hearing children, there was a positive association between the child literacy interest-component and single-word reading. For deaf children, all HLE components were related to later PA and vocabulary, and child literacy interest was related to literacy outcomes. For hearing children, only child interest was related to reading outcomes.

Conclusion

	Children who show a greater interest in literacy activities in preschool have higher language and literacy skills at the end of their first year of school. Preschool HLE exerted a greater influence on later outcomes in deaf compared with hearing children.	