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## ABSTRACT

### **Acquisition and Composition of the German-Italian bilingual Vocabulary in the holophrastic Stage**

A quantitative and qualitative Analysis

In the present study I analyzed the natural and simultaneous first language acquisition of a German-Italian bilingual child around the second birthday. In order to compare the bilingual data with monolingual data I additionally observed the linguistic development of an Italian monolingual child. The investigation focused on the quantity, the rate of acquisition and the composition of the vocabulary.

Concerning the quantitative development of the vocabulary the results show that in the end of the observation period the bilingual child has already acquired twice as much words as the monolingual child. The strategy of word acquisition could be seen as a reason for this difference in quantity. The bilingual child followed a quantitative strategy and the monolingual child a qualitative one.

The rate of acquisition of both children markedly increased after having acquired a quantity of about 50 words and subsequently a vocabulary spurt was observed. The monolingual child reached the linguistic milestone of 50 words four months after the bilingual child.

Regarding the composition of the vocabulary I analyzed the total bilingual vocabulary and besides that also the German and the Italian part separately. All three results show a clear noun preference in vocabulary acquisition of the bilingual child. In the monolingual vocabulary I also observed a noun preference, just that the result was not as clear as for the bilingual child.

The comparison of the Italian-interlingual vocabulary (without any German speech elements) of the bilingual child and the Italian monolingual vocabulary did not show any striking difference in quality. In contrast to this, the comparison of the German monolingual vocabulary of Kauschke's study (1999: 126) and the German-interlingual vocabulary (without any Italian speech elements) of the bilingual child brought up an evident difference. The German monolingual vocabulary showed a dominance of personal-social words and relational words and the German-interlingual part of the bilingual vocabulary showed an obvious noun dominance.