

The techniques that clinicians use to treat language deficits in SLI children are increasingly being shaped by the results of intervention studies. In this section, we examine the findings of some of these studies. Much is now known, for example, about the factors and methods that can facilitate word learning in SLI children. Also, aspects of grammar can be successfully targeted during intervention in these children. Word learning and grammatical interventions will be considered below. Parents play an essential role in any programme of intervention in SLI children. We discuss a technique that parents can use to bring about morphosyntactic gains in their SLI children. Finally, a successful language intervention is one that results in the generalisation of newly acquired knowledge and skills to untrained domains and contexts. How such generalisation can be achieved in the case of SLI children will be considered. Techniques to facilitate word learning in SLI children have been the focus of a number of intervention studies. Kouri (2005) examined the use of two interactive treatment approaches to train late-talking preschoolers with SLI in the production of target vocabulary. In one procedure (mand-elicited imitation), elicitations and imitative prompts were used. In the second procedure, auditory bombardment and play modelling were adopted and there were no response demands placed on children. Kouri found that mand-elicited imitation was relatively more effective than auditory bombardment and play modelling in facilitating frequency and rate of target word learning in the treatment setting. However, there were no significant differences between these techniques in the number or percentage of target words generalised to the home setting. Lexical productivity was balanced across settings in the children who received mand-elicited imitation, while children who received auditory bombardment and play modelling produced more target words that were restricted to the home setting. Gray (2005) examined the use of phonological and semantic encoding cues in promoting word learning in SLI children. Twenty-four preschool SLI children and 24 age- and gender-matched children with normal language participated in phonological and semantic treatment conditions. While normal language subjects displayed similar performance across both conditions, SLI children comprehended more words in the semantic condition and produced more words in the phonological condition. Gray also found that normal language subjects required significantly fewer trials than SLI subjects to produce words in the semantic condition and to comprehend words in the semantic and phonological conditions. This confirms the findings of other studies that have demonstrated a significant effect of frequency of presentation on word learning (see Riches et al. (2005) and Gray (2003) in section 4.4.2).