

Biography:

Katie Gervais is from Timmins, Ontario. She is a fourth-year student in the speech language pathology program at Laurentian University. She plans to start the speech language pathology master's program in September 2018. Her research interests include bilingualism, developmental language disorders and languages in minority contexts.

Research:

The goal of this study was to examine the relationship between the amount of exposure to two languages and vocabulary acquisition in those languages among bilingual children in a French linguistic minority context. The data used in this study come from a longitudinal study by Mayer-Crittenden (in progress). Sixty typically developing children aged five to six years old participated in the study. These participants were divided into two groups: French-dominant children (FD) and English-dominant children (ED). All the participants completed tests measuring receptive and expressive vocabulary, both in French and in English. The scores obtained were compared to regional monolingual norms obtained from children having the same linguistic status (Mayer-Crittenden, Elin Thordardottir, Robillard, Minor-Corriveau & Bélanger, 2014), or to published monolingual norms. The results indicate that the FD children score under the monolingual Franco-Ontarian norm on the test of receptive vocabulary in French. For the expressive vocabulary in French, the FD children also score under the published monolingual norm. There was no significant difference between the ED children and monolingual English norms on the tests of receptive and expressive vocabulary in English. It seems that when the dominant language of the child is a minority language, the vocabulary acquisition becomes more difficult in that language because of reduced exposure. On the contrary, when the dominant

language of the child is a majority language, it seems easier to acquire the vocabulary in that language.