What is a Late Talker: A Case Study of Twin Boys

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Abstract: Present research is inconclusive on whether or not children who are nonverbal at 2½-years, considered late talkers, will catch up, or if their language development will remain behind that of peers causing them to become known as language impaired. Language impairment greatly affects literacy development and school success. A review of the literature found that at 2½-years, late talkers used fewer than 50 words and had a restricted phonetic inventory, fewer speech sounds. Twins are more at risk for becoming late talkers. Studies of the language of twins, in general, revealed use of fewer words and a more limited expressive vocabulary, than singletons. The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not two twin boys were at risk for becoming late talkers or more seriously, language impaired. Characteristics of late talkers were applied to the communication of two 2-year old twin boys who were nonverbal. Results of standardized tests administered prior to enrollment in a language-based preschool and test results one year later were compared. The twin boys were found to fit the criteria for late talkers. They met the criteria in six of the eight late talker characteristic areas: phonetic inventory, syllable structure, variability in consonant production, error patterns, expressive vocabulary, and use of gestures for communication. Specific results will be presented in this poster.

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