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Journal of Communication Disorders

Volume 36, Issue 3, May–June 2003, Pages 221-231

Working memory and comprehension in children with specific language impairment: what we know so far

James W. Montgomery

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[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0021-9924\(03\)00021-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0021-9924(03)00021-2)

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Abstract

Many children with specific language impairments (SLI) demonstrate deficits in the areas of verbal working memory and language learning/processing. In this article, evidence is reviewed suggesting that the lexical/morphological learning and sentence comprehension/processing problems of many of these children are associated with their deficient working memory functioning. Evidence is also reviewed for the possibility that deficient working memory provides a clinical marker of SLI. A number of potentially useful assessment and intervention techniques are offered, as well as several directions for future research.

Learning outcomes

The reader will be introduced to two prominent models of verbal working memory

(phonological working memory model, functional working memory) and how each model potentially relates to (a) various language abilities in typically developing children, (b) the morphological and lexical learning abilities in children with specific language impairment (SLI), and (c) the sentence comprehension of children with SLI. The reader will also be provided a variety of clinical suggestions on how to assess and treat the working memory and language processing problems of children with SLI. Finally, some suggestions for future research will also be offered.



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Keywords

Specific language impairment; Children; Working memory; Comprehension

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