



Securing the future of deaf children and young people

Terminology used to describe Deaf children's linguistic needs

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Aims

- By the end of the workshop you should:
 - Understand how a language disorder may present in a child or young person who is deaf.
 - Understand recent changes to terminology used to describe language difficulties in children and young people who are deaf.
 - Reflect upon the terminology currently in use in your area.

Easy(ish) question.....

- How does hearing impairment affect the development of language, speech and communication?



What are the possibilities?

Normal development of spoken language and/or BSL following early amplification/full early access to BSL

Difficulties with speech and/or language that can be attributed to a lack of exposure to spoken language and/or good quality BSL AND **additional complex needs/other factors**

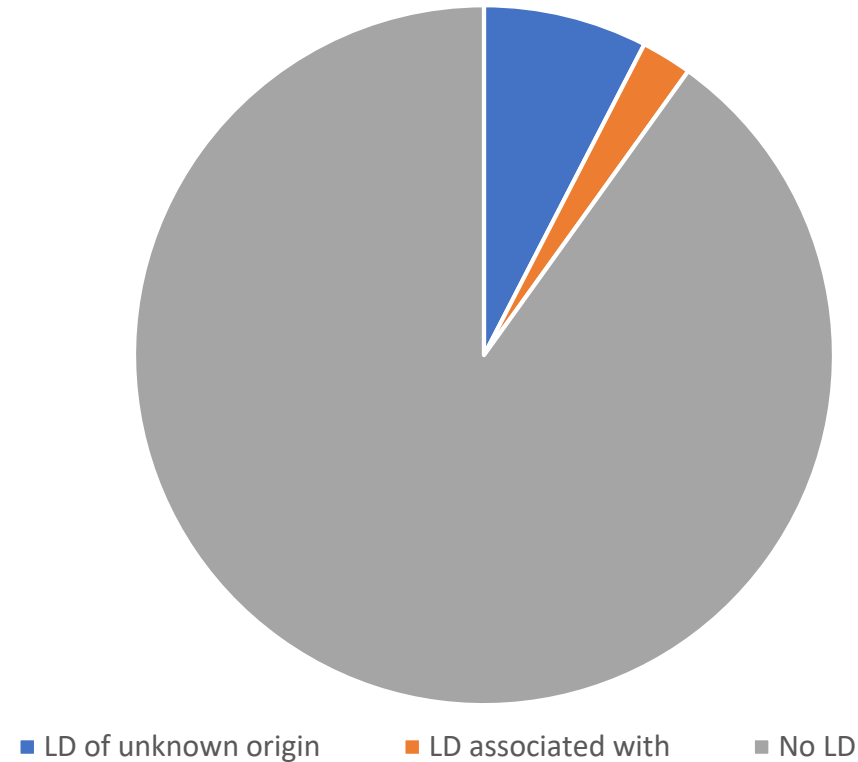
Difficulties with speech and/or language that can be attributed to a **lack of exposure** to spoken language and/or good quality BSL

Persistent and severe difficulties with language (may be signed and/or spoken) and/or speech in spite of reasonable exposure to language and appropriate intervention – **it's hard to understand why the child is having so much difficulty with language.**

What are the chances?

Approximately two children in each Year 1 class experience a clinically significant language disorder that impacts learning.

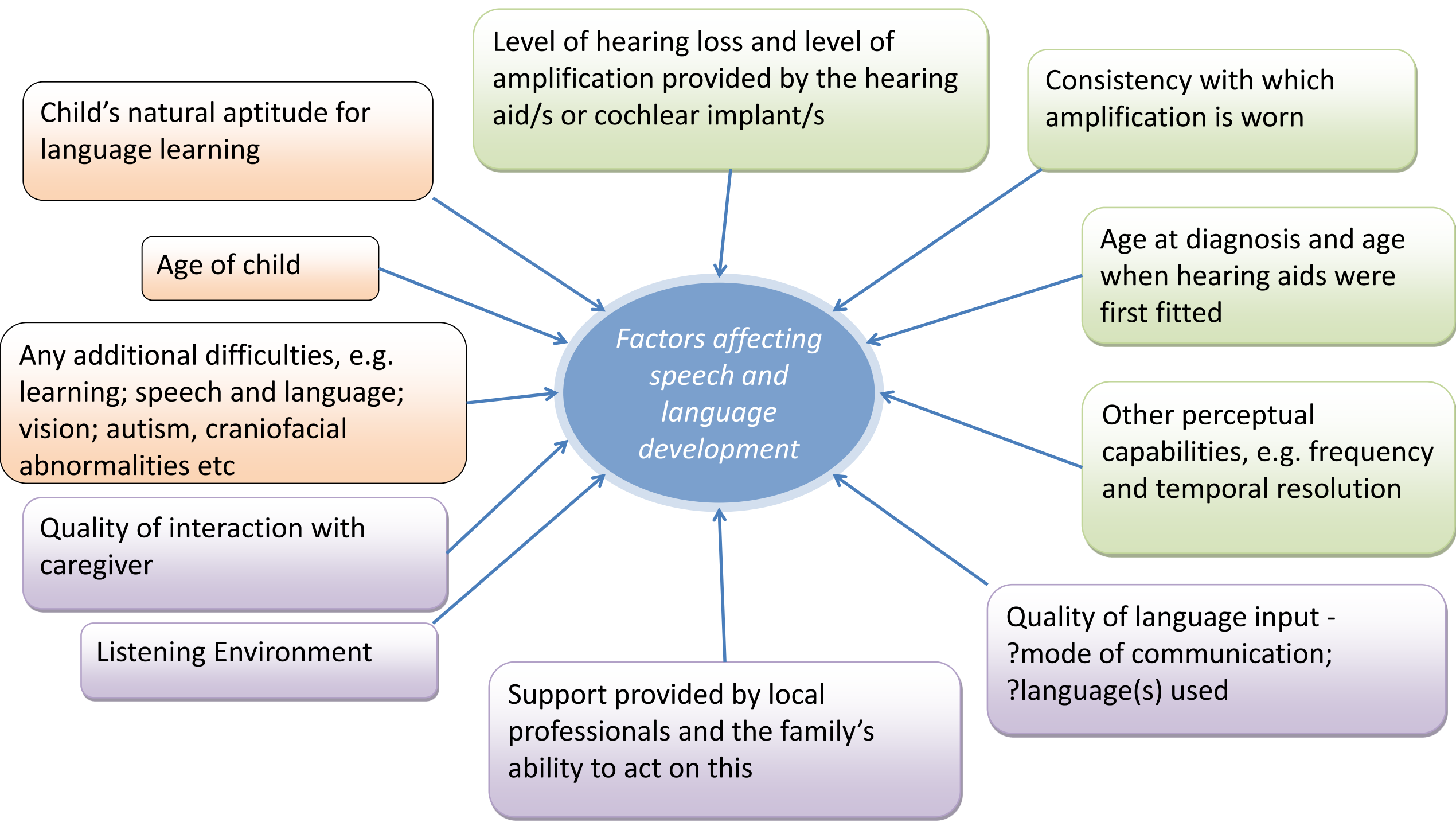
Norbury et al (2016) results



Developmental language disorder is known to be more common in boys than girls

In children who are deaf....how do we know if language is an **additional** factor?

- It's about spotting the children who are deaf and have a language difficulty that is over and above that which would be predicted by their hearing impairment alone or any other additional factors.
- To put it another way....is the individual child making '**expected progress**' with language?
- Working out what '**expected progress**' should look like is a complex call because so many factors affect the speech, language and communication development of any one child.....



Why do we need to identify children with additional language difficulties?

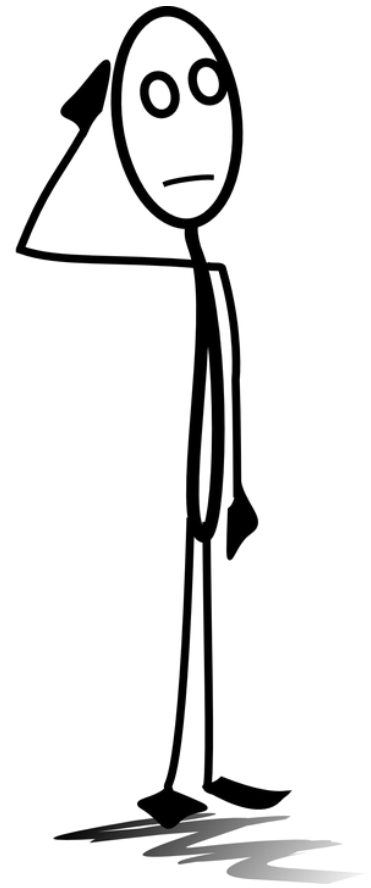


Why do we need to identify children with additional language difficulties?

- To ensure appropriate support.
- (Hearing) children with language disorder display elevated symptoms of social, emotional and behavioural problems relative to peers, and 88% do not make expected academic progress (Norbury et al 2016).
- (Hearing) children with language and or speech difficulties are at increased risk for developing literacy difficulties e.g. Conti-Ramsden and Durkin (2007); Isoaho et al (2016).
- Speech and language is SO important – for making friends, accessing the curriculum and the world!



What do you consider to be the 'red flags' in terms of a child having additional language difficulties?



Possible signs of additional language difficulties in a younger child who is deaf....

- Passivity
- Lack of engagement
- Failure to develop joint and shared attention
- Limited interest in what adults have to communicate
- Limited range of word types used
- Gesture dominates – child does not move to use of symbols
- BUT.....a diagnosis of an additional language difficulty would not normally be made until a child is at least 5 years of age.

Possible signs of additional language difficulties in a younger child who is deaf....

- Excessively slow to progress to two word/sign combinations – despite good input.
- Continued reliance on visual and contextual prompts.
- Might learn chunks of language as a whole, but not be able to break phrases down or create their own novel phrases at the same level.

Possible signs of additional language difficulties in a child who is deaf....

- An uneven language profile not accounted for by any other factor, e.g. semantic skills much weaker than grammar (BUT... beware of assessments that are not standardised on deaf children!!!).
- Word finding difficulties – the child who understands what words mean but has difficulty accessing those words – this means their receptive vocabulary score is much higher than their expressive vocabulary.
- Pragmatic difficulties – non-verbal skills or the way in which language is used.

Possible signs of additional language difficulties in a child who is deaf....

- Word order difficulties greater than expected given input.
- Problems with morphology – BUT think about audiogram!
- Extreme difficulties learning new aspects of language – problems learning from modelling; problems generalising; poor self monitoring.
- Extreme difficulty with non-literal language.
- Limited narrative skills.

And in a child for whom BSL is the first language...

- The characteristics of DLD/LD in BSL are strikingly similar to those found for hearing children, with mixed strengths and weaknesses across different areas of language structure and use (Mason et al 2010). They found some with marked comprehension problems; some with marked expressive difficulties and some with problems in all areas of language.
- Herman et al (2014) found their 'SLI' group produced shorter, less structured and grammatically simpler narratives, with verb morphology particularly impaired.

And speech difficulties (over and above those caused by the hearing impairment)...

- Errors that would not be expected given loss and amplification – e.g. A child with a cochlear implant making vowel errors and deleting initial consonants.
- Obvious motor difficulties.
- children who make **VERY inconsistent** errors.
- Excessively slow progress.



What terms/labels have you heard/used to describe children who have language difficulties over and above those caused by their hearing impairment?



Terminology.....

Developmental
Language Disorder

Language Processing
Difficulty

Speech, language and
communication need
(SLCN)

Higher Level Language
Difficulty

Unexplained language
problems
(Bishop 2014)

Specific Language
Impairment (SLI)

Language learning
disability

Idiopathic language
impairment

Language learning
difficulty

Language Disorder

Primary Language
Impairment

Language difficulties
over and above those
caused by HI

Aphasia/Dysphasia

Expressive Language
Disorder

Dyspraxia

Speech/Phonological
Disorder

Why all the labels?

- SLI/DLD/LD is not a homogenous disorder. Affects the various subcomponents of language to varying degrees, so each child presents with a different profile of difficulty.
- Many different professionals with differing backgrounds and philosophies are involved with children with language difficulties.
- The diagnostic criteria for 'SLI' was never universally accepted.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition (DSM-V): 'SLI'

- A. Persistent difficulties in the acquisition and use of language across modalities (i.e., spoken, written, sign language, or other) due to deficits in comprehension or production that include the following:
 - 1. Reduced vocabulary (word knowledge and use).
 - 2. Limited sentence structure (ability to put words and word endings together to form sentences based on the rules of grammar and morphology).
 - 3. Impairments in discourse (ability to use vocabulary and connect sentences to explain or describe a topic or series of events or have a conversation).
- B. Language abilities are substantially and quantifiably below those expected for age, resulting in functional limitations in effective communication, social participation, academic achievement, or occupational performance, individually or in any combination.
- C. Onset of symptoms is in the early developmental period.
- D. The difficulties are not attributable to hearing or other sensory impairment, motor dysfunction, or another medical or neurological condition and are not better explained by intellectual disability (intellectual developmental disorder) or global developmental delay. (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 42)

Why the need for a change in terminology

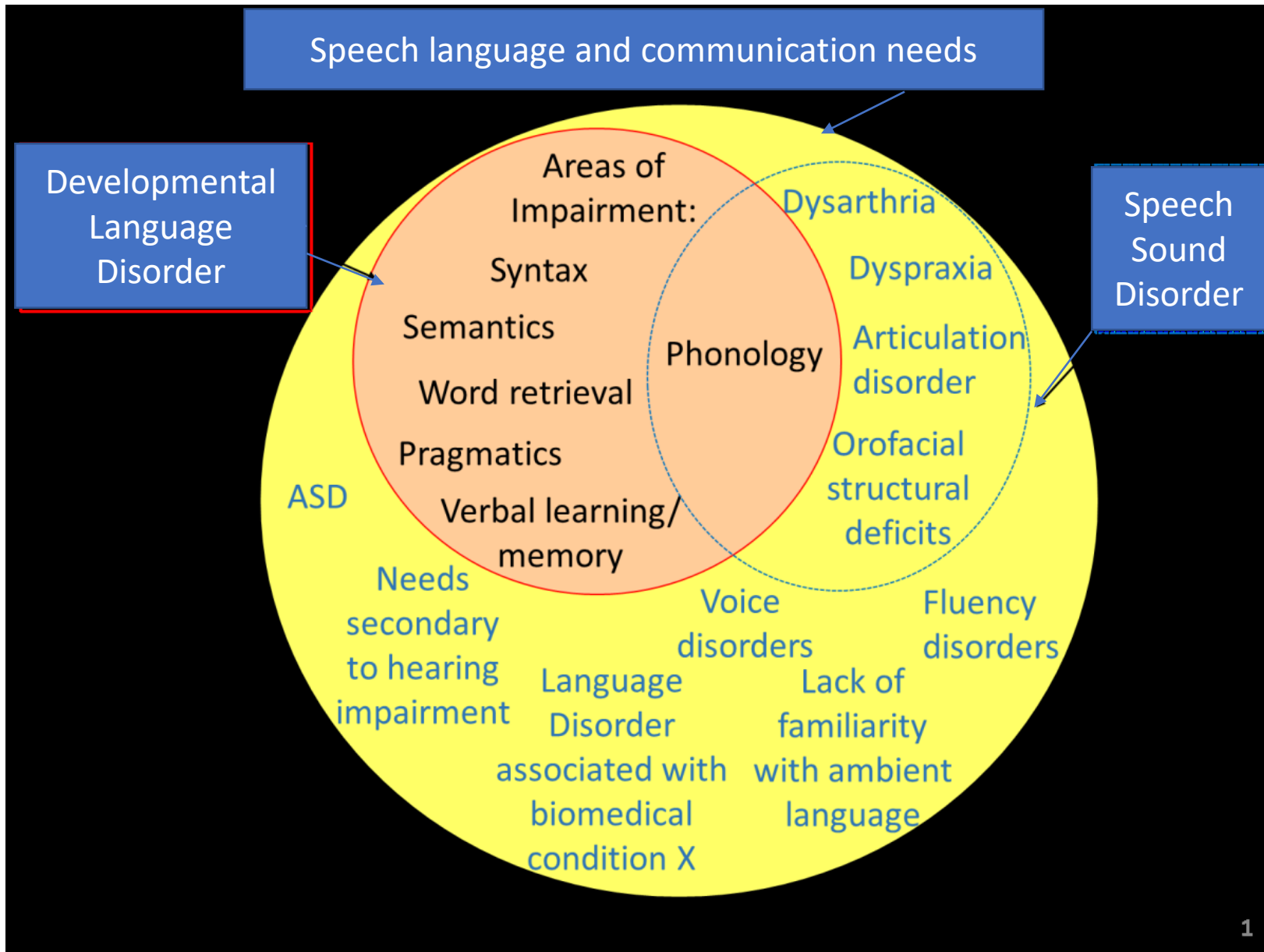
- The term '**specific language impairment**' was not a very helpful title as it implied that children with language impairments can have no other diagnoses i.e. (hearing impairment, ASD, cognitive delay).
- The strict criteria for **specific language impairment** meant that children who had a language disorder alongside other diagnoses sometimes missed out on the additional Speech Therapy they needed.
- Lots of professionals were using different terms to refer to the same language difficulties (as seen in the previous slide) which made research confusing and inconsistent.
- Raising awareness of language disorders was difficult because so many different labels were in use.

Recent recommendations.... The Delphi Study (Bishop et al 2016)

- An international group of experts (the CATALISE panel) have recommended using the following terms for children with language difficulties:
- **Language Disorder** for language difficulties that significantly affect children's lives and are unlikely to just go away
- **Developmental Language Disorder** for a language disorder that is not associated with conditions such as autism, hearing impairment or Down's Syndrome
- **SLCN (Speech, Language and Communication Needs)** to be used by commissioners and others who plan services as a generic term for the broad range of children needing language support

From Susan Ebbel's Summary of Bishop et al (2016)

<http://www.afasic.org.uk/2016/11/new-terminology-for-language-impairments-sli-to-become-dld/>



Where do our children who are deaf fit in?

- *“Language disorder associated with hearing impairment”*
- Can anyone spot any issues with this??
 - 1. It does not separate those with additional language difficulties that seem to be caused by more than just the hearing impairment. This category will actually cover a fairly broad spectrum of children/young people.
 - 2. ‘associated with’ could be interpreted as implying that the hearing impairment has caused the language disorder and we know that is not always the case.

What labels should we use?

- Work in under way by specialist speech and language therapists to address the issue of terminology in relation to children and young people who are deaf.....watch this space!
- In the mean time I will continue to:
 - **Describe** the child's language difficulties in as much detail as possible.
 - In the rare cases where there does appear to be a difficulty with language that is in addition to the hearing impairment or any other factor I will **explain** this.
 - I will refer to children as having 'language disorder **AND** hearing impairment' (and any other diagnoses that they are regarded as having.

References and Useful weblinks

- Bishop DV, Snowling MJ, Thompson PA, Greenhalgh T, CATALISE consortium. (2016) CATALISE: a multinational and multidisciplinary Delphi consensus study. Identifying language impairments in children. PeerJ Preprints 4:e1986v1
<https://doi.org/10.7287/peerj.preprints.1986v1>
- You can find a link to a summary of this research by Susan Ebbels at <http://www.afasic.org.uk/2016/11/new-terminology-for-language-impairments-sli-to-become-dld/>

For more information on DLD/SLI and HI see:

- Gravenstede.L. (2018) SaLT terminology. BATOD magazine, November p.48-49
- Gravenstede.L. and Clements.K. (2015) **Specific Language Impairment and Deaf Children.** RCSLT July Bulletin p.13-15.
- Baker, Clements, Gravenstede, Grey and Preito (2015) **Deafness and Language: Delay or Disorder?** BATOD magazine, 38-40.
- Hawker.K, Ramirez-Inscoe.J, Bishop.D, Twomey.T, O'Donoghue.G, Moore.D. (2008) **Disproportionate Language Impairment in Children Using Cochlear Implants.** Ear and Hearing, 29, 467–471.

For more information on language disorder in children who use BSL see:

- Herman.R, Rowley.K, Mason.K. & Morgan.G. (2014) Deficits in narrative abilities in child British Sign Language users with specific language impairment. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders* 49 (3) 343-535.
- Mason, K., Rowley, K. Marshall, C.R., Atkinson, J. Herman, R. Woll, B. & Morgan, G. (2010). [Identifying Specific Language Impairment in Deaf children acquiring British Sign Language: Implications for theory and practice.](#) *BJDP* 28, 33-49
- Woll, B. & Morgan, G. (2012). [Language impairments in the development of sign: Do they reside in a specific modality or are they modality-independent deficits?](#) *Bilingualism, Language & Cognition*, 15, 75-87.

If you like to watch films/hear about issues:

- <https://www.youtube.com/user/RALLIcampaign> Has a series of short films aimed at raising awareness of SLI (made a couple of years ago).
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBehC82whh0> – for an hour long lecture by Dorothy Bishop on the latest on terminology with regards to SLI/DLD.