Objectives:

The main objective of this Action is to profile bilingual Specific Language Impairment (SLI) by establishing a network to coordinate research on the linguistic and cognitive abilities of bilingual children with SLI across different migrant communities.

Derived objectives

- Disentangle bilingualism and SLI by establishing the relative contribution of each.
- Show how SLI can be identified in both of a child’s languages.
- Explore the extent to which the manifestations of SLI are similar or different across languages in the same child.
- Establish whether the nature and severity of SLI is affected by the child’s acquisition of more than one language.

Secondary objectives

- Mentor young researchers from countries with significant immigrant populations and language combinations.
- Identify critical sociolinguistic information which will set standards for increasing comparability of research in bilingual SLI.
- Develop guidelines for assessment.

Expected Outcomes:

- Development of tasks which tap both unique bilingual phenomena and unique SLI phenomena in order to distinguish both.
- Better understanding of the relative contribution of representation and processing capacity in typically developing bilinguals, in bilingual children with SLI, and in monolingual children with SLI.
- Creation of guidelines for diagnosis and of instruments to distinguish typically developing from SLI bilinguals.
- A rationale, based on a strong research base, for decisions about whether to educate bilingual children with SLI in a single (home or school) language or bilingually, by showing whether bilingualism adversely affects children with SLI or not.