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Production and comprehension of French wh-questions by children with autism spectrum disorder: A comparative study with specific language impairment—CORRIGENDUM

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ABSTRACT
The nature of structural language difficulties in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) was explored in a comparative study with specific language impairment (SLI) through investigation of the frequently reported ASD weakness in receptive skills relative to expressive skills. Twenty French-speaking children with ASD aged 6 to 12 were compared to age-matched children with SLI on production and comprehension of $wh$-questions. The two groups displayed similar effects of the complexity of the different $wh$-strategies. In the ASD group (as in the SLI group), these effects were not greater in comprehension compared to production; moreover, nonverbal ability (which varied from normal to impaired) was not related to language performance. Observed ASD-SLI differences are argued to largely be due to ASD pragmatic deficits, rather than to a qualitative difference in structural language skills.

Human communication involves linguistic knowledge (grammar, lexicon, and sound structure), as well as knowledge about the context within which it is used (what can be inferred about the speaker’s intentions, etc.). This latter type of knowledge, pragmatics, has received considerable attention in studies on autism, and impairment in this domain is considered a core feature of autism spectrum disorder (ASD; see Baron-Cohen, 1988; Boucher, 2003). By contrast, formal aspects of language (those concerning sound, word, and sentence structure) have been