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Design and Standardization of a Speech and Language Screening Tool for Use among School-Aged Bilingual Children in a Minority Language Setting

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Abstract: This study investigated the psychometric properties of a speech and language screening tool "Profil de la langue, du langage et de la parole" (Speech and Language Profile) (PLLP-SLP) used with franco-dominant and anglo-dominant children aged forty-six to fifty-eight months who had entered the school system in kindergarten. All kindergarten students (1092 boys and 1080 girls) enrolled in a French-language school board in Northern Ontario in 2004, 2005, 2009, and 2010. They were assessed using the PLLP-SLP and formed the standardization sample for this norm-referenced language assessment tool. Reliable data is now available for this new speech and language screening tool to be used with French-English bilingual students entering kindergarten in a minority language setting. Scores for receptive and expressive language, as well as initial speech sounds and clinical judgment are available. An independent samples t-test revealed significant differences between groups on 4/10 subtests. In these instances, girls outperformed boys, though the difference was always slight (between .13 and .28), and anglophones outperformed francophones on one subtest, with the difference being less than .25. Speech-language pathologists working in minority language settings face particular challenges with respect to the absence of norms available for this population. Norms specific to language and gender should be observed when using this tool, as significant differences between girls' and boys' results, as well as between anglo-dominant and franco-dominant students living in a minority-language setting was observed.

Keywords: Standardization, Assessment, Reliability, Validity, Speech-Language Pathology

Introduction

Test standardization is a necessary step in establishing measures by which one's performance is compared to that of other individuals. Standardized assessment tools are important to clinicians in that they should reflect the needs of the population that is targeted by the assessment objectives. They also allow clinicians to make a judgment on participants' speech and language skills, as well as classify individuals among their age-matched peers. However, in certain clinical settings (i.e. minority language settings), many clinicians do not have tools that reflect the linguistic context in which they work (Paradis, Desrochers, and Garcia 2002). In the event that clinicians resort to using tests that have not been standardized on like populations, there are methods to establish norms for these populations (Brown and Bryant 1984). Though the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and the American Psychological Association (APA) have recognized that this is less than favorable practice, it is common for clinicians to administer tests created in one language (i.e. English) to a population for which the test was not intended (i.e. French). Speech language pathologists (SLPs) abide by their regulatory bodies and ASHA who state that "it is not appropriate to simply translate, then

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