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Evidence-Based Practices in Selecting & Using Standardized Tests: Considerations for Language Testing

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Learner Outcomes

1. Describe testing considerations for English Learners
2. Describe how the culture of poverty could impact test selection
3. Describe how the cultural/linguistic load of a test could impact test selection

Advance Organizer

- Best Practices in Assessment
- How to use tests
- How to pick tests
 - Diagnostic Accuracy
 - Test Content
 - Considerations for Dialect and ELL
 - Cultural/Linguistic Load

Advance Organizer

Unique Areas for Consideration

- Language Variation & English Learners
- Culture of Poverty
- Cultural/Linguistic Load

SLP Goals for Assessment

1. Children with *Speech-Language Impairment* correctly identified as SLI
2. Children with *Speech-Language Impairment* inappropriately found “not impaired”
3. Children inappropriately identified as *Speech-Language Impairment*
4. Children without impairment found “not impaired”

Test Considerations

Language Variation & English Language Learners

Culture of Poverty

Cultural/Linguistic Load

Language Variation & ELs

Use of Past Tense in Children with SLI

- Use of regular past tense lower than age- and language-matched controls
- Use of irregular past tense lower than age- and language-matched controls
- Less overgeneralization than controls

Pruitt & Oetting, 2009

Differences in Language Variation

African American English and Southern White English

- Mark regular past tense similarly to mainstream dialect
 - Pay particular attention to:
 - Verbs that end in vowels
 - Verbs that end in non-stop consonants
- Over-regularizations similar to mainstream

“In a nutshell, the pattern of results across the English tests indicates that the areas of extreme difficulty for children with LI remain the same whether English is a child’s first or second language.”

Paradis, Schneider, & Sorenson Duncan, 2013

Test Norms

- Not appropriate for EL if not normed on EL participants

Culture of Poverty

Culture of Poverty

- *Why Does The Gap Persist?* (Barton 2004)

*“Three-year-old children in professional families had a vocabulary as large as that of the **parents** in the study who were on welfare.”*

Early Language Experiences Quantitative Differences

	Words heard per hour	Words heard in a 100-hour week	Words heard in a 5,200-hour year	Words heard in 4 years
Professional Family Child	2,153	215,000	11 million	45 million
Working Class Family Child	1,251	125,000	6 million	26 million
Welfare Family Child	616	62,000	3 million	13 million

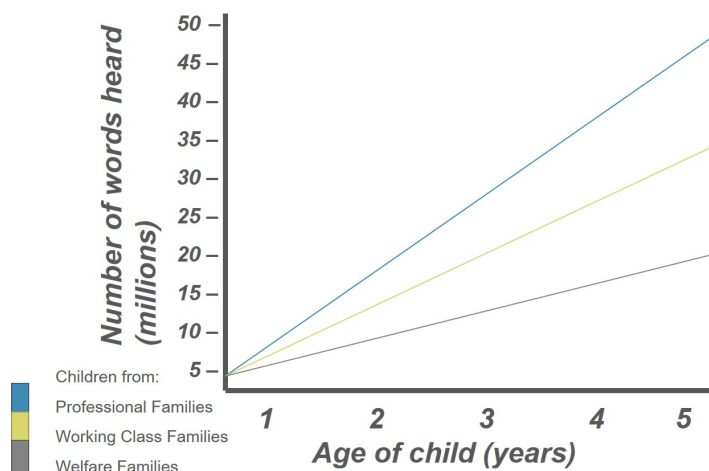
Hart & Risley (1995)

Early Language Experiences: Qualitative Differences

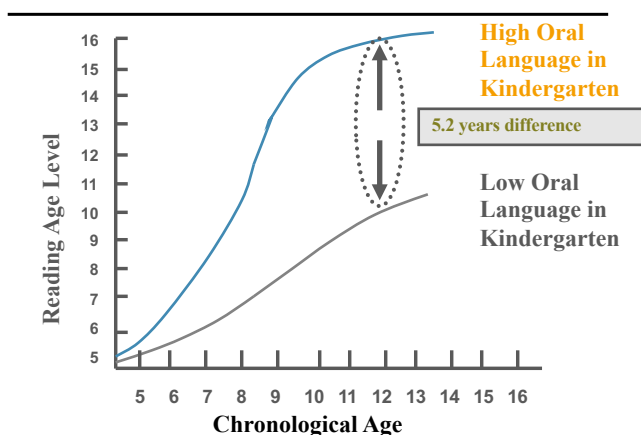
	Words heard per hour	Affirmatives per hour	Prohibitions per hour
Professional family child	2,153	32	5
Working class child	1,251	12	7
Welfare child	616	5	11

-Hart & Risley (1995)

Cumulative Language Experiences: The 30 Million Word Difference



The Effects of Weaknesses in Oral Language on Reading Growth



Consider Home Culture

- Locus of control for behavior
- Structure and use of routines
- Use of rigid time limits
- Temporal concepts
- Narrative Use (stories)
- Executive functioning skills
 - Planning
 - Self regulation
 - Choice making

Evidence Based Supports

- **Preschool**
 - Program development
 - Parent training sessions
- **School age**
 - Language supports
 - Explicit instruction on language variation
 - Narrative language skills
 - Choice making
 - Structure and routines

Vocabulary

- African American children (typically developing) from low income households

Test Name	Mean Score
Expressive Vocabulary Test	90.58
PPVT-III	91.5

McCabe & Champion, 2010

Cultural/Linguistic Load

Impact of Dialect, Culture and SES

- Is it a true measure of ability and achievement?
- Consider impact of
 - Language load
 - Cultural load
- What about the culture of poverty?
 - Executive functioning differences
 - Learning to “do school” – self regulation, self control, temporal concepts, vocabulary, etc

Culture and Language Load

- Consider and address in reports as appropriate:
 - Impact of Cultural Load
 - Prior knowledge
 - Temporal concepts
 - Common customs
 - Pragmatic norms

Research Shows . . .

- Culture and Language can impact a score by up to 35 pts
- Rhodes, R., Ochoa, S., and Ortiz, S., (2005) Assessing Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students: A Practical Guide, Guilford Press
- Matrix of culture and language loads
<http://facpub.stjohns.edu/~flanagad/cross-battery/downloads/C-LTC%20and%20C-LIM%20-%20Complete%20Packet.doc>

Who lives
in an igloo?

Is milk pink?
What is an
Eclipse?

👍 True or False 👎

Due to the tremendous linguistic and cultural diversity in the world, every assessment tool is culturally or linguistically biased.

Resources

- Blom, E. & Paradis, J. (2013). Past tense production by English second language learners with and without language impairment. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 56, 281-294.
- McCabe, A., & Champion, T. (2010). A matter of vocabulary II: Low-income African American children's performance on the expressive vocabulary test. *Communication Disorders Quarterly*, 31, 162-169.
- Oetting, J., Cleveland, L., & Cope III, R. (2008). Empirically derived combinations of tools and clinical cutoffs: An illustrative case with a sample of culturally/linguistically diverse children. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 39, 44-53.

Resources

- Oetting, J., Lee, R., & Porter, K. (2013). Evaluating the grammars of children who speak nonmainstream dialects of English. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 33, 140-151.
- Paradis, J., Scheider, P., & Sorenson Duncan, T. (2013). Discriminating children with language impairment among English-language learners from diverse first-language backgrounds. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 56, 971-981.
- Pruitt, S., & Oetting, J. (2009). Past tense marking by African American English-speaking children reared in poverty. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 52, 2-15.
- <http://facpub.stjohns.edu/~flanagad/cross-battery/downloads/C-LTC%20and%20C-LIM%20-%20Complete%20Packet.doc>

What's Next?

Other Testing Considerations

Speech Sound Assessment