

Abstract

Evaluating developmental and acquired language impairments: A survey of studies.

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The valid evaluation of language is somewhat of an enigma for most speech-language therapists or clinicians. Language continues to be one of the most challenging disorders to evaluate which is not surprising considering how varied and complex language really is. The assessment and diagnosis of language disorders is hindered when resources for assessment are limited, and multidisciplinary approaches to evaluation are not encouraged.

The evaluation process determines the nature and the severity of the language disorder by taking into account the characteristics, abilities, and the current needs of the individual. In addition, information is gathered to develop the appropriate therapeutic goals, to decide on the treatment procedures and timing of therapy. The evaluation process varies depending on the disorder, the patient and the clinician/therapist.

This talk reports on research evaluating language deficits in Greek speakers based on screening, standardised and experimental measures for (i) receptive and expressive vocabulary, (ii) sentence repetition abilities, (iii) morphosyntactic abilities and (iv) narrative skills across developmental and acquired language disorders. The populations under investigation are children with developmental language disorders and adults with post-stroke aphasia and those in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. Language evaluation for pathologies not assumed to show linguistic deficits such as schizophrenia, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and HIV will also be explored.

Language evaluation measures for Greek include standardised (norm-referenced) tests of

- (1) Vocabulary such as: (a) the Expressive Vocabulary Test (Vogindroukas et al., 2009) for single word production and (b) the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (Simos et al., 2011) for single word receptive abilities
- (2) Linguistic abilities such as (a) the Action Picture Test (Vogindroukas et al., 2010) for morphosyntactic abilities; (b) the shortened version of the Boston Diagnostic Aphasia Examination (Messinis et al., 2013) for acquired receptive and expressive language deficits and (c) the Boston Naming Test (Simos et al., 2011) for confrontation naming deficits.

Experimental linguistic measures that are used as resources for assessment in the context of Greek speakers include the Diagnostic Verbal IQ test (DVIQ: Stavrakaki & Tsimpli, 1999), the Greek Object and Action Test (GOAT: Kambanaros, 2003), Sentence repetition measures (Tsimpli et al., 2013; Kambanaros & Grohmann, 2013), the Compound Word Test (Kambanaros, 2014), the Multilingual Assessment for Narratives (MAIN: Kambanaros & Grohmann, 2012) and the Bilingual Aphasia Test (BAT: Paradis & Libben, 1987) to name a few.

A number of studies administering the above-mentioned measures for the assessment of neurologically based language disorders will be surveyed. The basic principles and methods for the assessment of language disorders in developmental and acquired disorders requires careful evaluation of language abilities and communicative skills. It is important to prioritize needs for making appropriate diagnostic and subsequent treatment decisions.

