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Book of Abstracts



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IASCL 2024 Symposia: Thursday Morning

07/18/2024, from 11:30 AM to 01:30 PM , Room P131

Symposium: A direct approach to global vocabulary assessment

Speakers: Margaret Friend; Celia Rosemberg; Florencia Alam; Naomi Havron; Michael Frank

Introducing four new adaptations of the Computerized Comprehension Task (CCT; Friend et al., 2012) presenters will discuss applications to bilingualism and understudied languages.

Scaling up: Increasing the age range and accessibility of early vocabulary assessment

Authors: Margaret Friend; Matthew McArthur, Diego Leon, and Melisa Gonzalez

"Vocabulary is a strong predictor of children's cognitive, academic, and social outcomes and an important measure of proficiency in the languages of bilingual children. However, direct measures often require lab- or clinic-based administration, limiting equitable and representative access. Recent research focuses on measures easily administered in community settings. For example, Bleses et al., (2021) extended a lab-based measure of receptive vocabulary for children up to 24 months of age in English, Spanish, and French (the Computerized Comprehension Task or CCT; Friend, et al., 2012) to 35-month-old children learning Danish. The task was implemented on a tablet and administered by preschool teachers. Similarly, Lo, et al. (2021) used a similar, tablet-based, task with Norwegian children administered by parents in the home. This report concerns the development of the Web-CCT in English and Spanish, bringing continuous vocabulary assessment from 18 to 60 months of age to scale.

We present data on a preliminary sample of 52 (27F) children ($M=35.9$; range=19 to 64 months): English monolingual ($n=43$), Spanish-English bilingual ($n=7$), and Spanish monolingual ($n=2$). The psychometric properties of the Web-CCT are strong. The English Web-CCT correlates well with age ($r_{42}=.866$, $p<.001$) and converges with the MCDI:WS (Marchman et al., 2023; $r_{17}=.721$, $p<.001$) and the ROWPVT-4 (Martin & Brownell, 2011; $r_{16}=.750$, $p<.001$). Internal consistency is excellent ($\alpha=.982$) and test-retest reliability is satisfactory ($r_{13}=.679$, $p=.008$). Web-CCT Spanish-English conceptual vocabulary correlates well with age ($r_7=.916$, $p<.001$) and converges with the ROWPVT-SBE (Brownell, 2012; $r_7=.775$, $p=.041$). Internal consistency is excellent ($\alpha=.974$) and test-retest reliability is promising ($r_5=.822$, $p=.088$). These measures expand the opportunity for early vocabulary assessment to families without ready access to a lab or clinic and can be completed on a desktop, laptop, tablet, or cellphone anywhere with Wi-Fi access. We anticipate presenting data on 100 participants. Applications of this extended measure will be discussed."

Documentation of vocabulary acquisition in Bilingual Qom-Spanish children in Argentina

Authors: Celia Rosemberg; Florencia Alam, Gladys Ojea, Leandro Garber, Alejandra Stein, Carla De Benedictis, and Margaret Friend

This study documents vocabulary acquisition in bilingual Qom - Spanish indigenous children. The Qom ethnic group is one of the largest in Argentina (INDEC, 2010). Qom l'aqtaqa (a Guaycuruan language) is characterized by the morphological complexity of nouns and verbs, tending towards polysynthesis and agglutination. Only 44.3% of the Qom population over 5 years of age speak Qom l'aqtaqa at home (ECPI, 2004-2005). In rural communities language attrition has increased, due to the spread of social media and schooling in traditional Spanish monolingual contexts (Hetch, 2017). High quality bilingual education in the early years of schooling is crucial to fostering bilingual acquisition, intergenerational transmission, and cultural identity. We assessed Qom and Spanish vocabulary from preschool through the early school years to inform educational interventions and extend the literature on bilingual development. We developed adaptations of the Computerized Comprehension Task (Author, 2012) in Qom and Chaco Spanish. Item selection was based on word frequency in recordings of household interactions (corpus: Author, 2011- 2019) and interviews with native speakers. 70 bilingual children ($x= 5.5$ years; range=3.0 to 7.0) were assessed by monolingual Spanish and bilingual Qom teachers. Regression analyses revealed a positive trajectory in Spanish: the association between age and accuracy was positive (from 3 to 5 $\Phi = .751$, $p = .00$ and from 5 to 7: $\Phi = .289$, $p = .048$) and between age and latency was negative (from 3 to 5: $\Phi = -.661$, $p = .00$ and from 5 to 7: $\Phi = -.222$, $p = .057$). Qom showed a positive association with vocabulary from 3 to 5 (accuracy $\Phi = .506$, $p = .037$ and latency $\Phi = -.780$ $p = .00$), but the association with accuracy was negative from 5 to 7 years ($\Phi = -.58$ $p = .00$). This points to potential Indigenous language attrition relative to the majority language in the early school years.

Socioeconomic and cultural differences in lexical comprehension

Authors: Florencia Alam; Celia R. Rosemberg

The majority of the studies that have documented the effects of social inequality on lexical comprehension were built on a relatively small range of SES variation, since caregiver's education generally ranges between 12 and 16 years of schooling in the samples analyzed. Furthermore, almost all the studies have been carried out in the USA or in Western Europe. This paper delves into the impact of SES on the comprehension of different types of content words in Spanish-speaking Argentinian children, a population in which socio-economic differences are more striking than in the previously studied populations. Previous findings have shown group variability, particularly in low SES groups (Author, 2021), which need to be considered in vocabulary development research. Therefore, in this study we examine children's vocabulary comprehension in three socio cultural groups, distinguished by maternal education, place of residence and Indigenous heritage: semi-urban low-income Indigenous communities (IndLow), urban low-income (UrbLow) and urban middle-income (UrbMid). Using a performance based forced choice lexical recognition task implemented on a tablet (an adaptation of the Computerized Comprehension Task -CCT- Friend and Keplinger 2003), recognition accuracy and haptic response time to nouns, verbs and adjectives were assessed. 143 toddlers were tested. Regression analysis was carried out. Preliminary results that considered only data from UrbMid and UrbLow showed overall SES effects on recognition accuracy ($\Phi=1.1$, $p=.00$) but not on response time. Further analyses that considered lexical category revealed an interaction between SES and lexical category ($\Phi=-0.23$, $p=.00$): UrbMid children were only more accurate on the recognition of nouns and adjectives but not verbs. We expect to find differences between the three groups. The discussion links socio-cultural differences in children's performance to previous evidence regarding the characteristics of the three groups of children's linguistic experiences.

Adapting the Computerized Comprehension Task to Sub-dialects of Palestinian Arabic

Authors: Naomi Havron; Maali Jammal-Agbaria, Jawana Zoubi, Rawan Abu-Baker Watad, and Rana Abu-Zhaya

"The CCT is validated on resource-rich languages such as English and Spanish. It is important to adapt it to understudied languages. Arabic is such a language: There are few studies on language acquisition, despite its large number of speakers (e.g., the first CDI-WG parental-report questionnaire in Arabic was developed in 2021, but the data are not openly available; Abdelwahab et al., 2021). Thus, there is a need for assessment tools, like the CCT, for Arabic-learning children; however, developing them is challenging. Spoken Arabic has many dialects, varying greatly from one another - each dialect might need its own CCT. Second, the lack of resources and validated tests in Arabic make it hard to choose items, and to validate the CCT.

In this project, we are developing a CCT for two sub-dialects of Palestinian Arabic: the Northern-Triangle-Area and the Northern-Rural dialects. We based our word list on two sources: words from a Palestinian-Arabic parental-report tool (PA-CDI) for 18- to-36-month-olds (validated only for production, Hashoul Essa, 2018); and culturally-appropriate words from the English CCT. We created a preliminary list of 177 words, 22 of them were manipulation checks (easy words, e.g., "mother", and hard words, e.g., "pier"). Pediatric speech-language pathologists rated the words on their difficulty level. The chosen 100 words constitute the items for the CCT. They are matched for syntactic and semantic categories, and difficulty level.

We will test 150 infants aged 18-22 months and should have results by July 2024. Validity will be assessed in comparison to a parental-report of comprehension of the same 100 words as the CCT items, and by examining well-known effects from the language-development literature, such as an advantage for girls over boys. Reliability will be assessed by repeating 12 of the word pairs a second time at the end of the test."