A Preliminary Investigation of Performances on Phonological Awareness Tests by Beginning Readers

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Abstract. Phonological Awareness (PA) and Letter Knowledge skills in kindergarten are the two best predictors of literacy. A growing concern in this country regarding poor literacy skills has led to the publication of a number of PA tests in recent years. Data are lacking regarding comparison of these tests. This study was designed to compare performances of typically developing 5- and 6-year olds on three commonly used PA tests, *Pre-Reading Inventory of Phonological Awareness, Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing,* and *Phonological Awareness Test-2nd ed.,* to determine the merits of each. The results of each test will be compared on this poster.

1. Introduction

Phonological awareness has been an area of extensive research in the last 40 years. Phonological awareness, defined as an individual's ability to manipulate sounds of spoken words (e.g. rhyming, syllable segmentation) independent of meaning, is the main focus of early literacy education. Through research, it has been determined that a child's vocabulary development, grammatical abilities, and understanding of phoneme manipulation (i.e., phonological awareness) greatly influence a child's reading and spelling development [1].

A search of the electronic database CSA Illumina, using the keywords "comparison" or "comparing" "phonological awareness tests," retrieved no articles pertaining to the area of research. Using the ISI Web of Knowledge yielded the same results. Using the keywords, "phonological awareness test comparisons," to investigate past research using the search engine Google, however, brought up a small amount of related information. After reviewing the top 10 articles, one was found to relate to this area of interest. In this study, the Yopp-Singer Test and the Task of Auditory Analysis Skills were used. Individual's scores were not comparable across tests [2]. Three more recently published tests, the *Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (* CTOPP;[3]), the *Pre-Reading Inventory of Phonological Processing* (PIPA; [4]), and the *Phonological Awareness Test, 2nd ed.* (PAT-2; [5]), were selected for this investigation to provide information that could be helpful to practitioners in determining which test will meet their needs best.

2. Experiment, Results, Discussion, and Significance

Children between the ages of 5:0 and 6:11 (years:months) participated in this study. They were selected to participate if their ages were appropriate and no special services were being received. Testing, which was completed on a single day, was conducted at the Evelyn Hendren Cassat Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic. The CTOPP, PIPA, and PAT-2 were used to assess the children's phonological awareness abilities. The tests were administered in a random order in a quiet room. Each child was given subtests in the order specified in the respective manuals. The results of each subtest were recorded for each child. Each test yielded raw scores and percentile scores. The CTOPP and PAT-2 also provided standard and age equivalent scores. The CTOPP also provided a grade equivalent score and a composite score. Scores for each test were obtained according to specifications in the respective manuals. There are major differences among the three tests in terms of variables assessed, scoring, methods, interpretations of data and outcomes. Findings from this study will be summarized on this poster.

3. Conclusions

The preliminary results indicate that these three phonological awareness tests are not comparable. Practitioners need to understand the strengths and limitations of each test prior to selecting a test to administer.

4. References

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