

The Challenge of Coding Utterances from Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Ashwini Kanade*

Faculty: Douglas F. Parham, Trisha L. Self

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, College of Health Professions

The purpose of this study was to assess the inherent difficulties of recording and coding utterances of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Each child with ASD presents with individual characteristics that make the child unique. Some of these children are non-verbal (that is, not producing recognizable speech), and little is known about how they use sounds to express their wants and needs. Coding these utterances as they occur is not practical due to their complexity, but using audio to record and then code them may assist in overcoming this problem. Reliability between coders is essential to ensure that data are consistent and accurate. This study presents the methods, problems, and limitations of a multi-coder comparison of non-verbal sounds from children assessed by WSU's Autism Interdisciplinary Diagnostic Team (AIDT). This study's findings are important because accurate utterance coding will improve the diagnosis and treatment of children with ASD.