Title: Dynamic Assessment in Speech and Language Therapy

Author: Nikolaos Kondras, SLT, Postgraduate Student

Affiliation: City University of London, Institute of Research and Education of Speech Therapy (IEEL)

Abstract

The accurate assessment of children's language abilities can be a really challenging situation for SLTs since a child's low performance on a static standardized test might be a result of other factors, such as different or lack of learning experiences, than a real language difficulty (Gutierrez-Clellen and Pena, 2001). This can be particularly true across a number of populations including culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) children as well as those from socially disadvantaged background (Law et al., 2011). Within this context Dynamic Assessment (DA) is developing over the last decades aiming to enhance the differentiation between language difference/delay and language disorder.

DA has been considered as an alternative and/or supplemental method of assessment which is thought to be less culturally and linguistically biased than the static standardized tests (Pena, Iglesias and Lidz, 2001). Unlike conventional tests, DA is a child-centered process which aims to determine child's learning potential through an interactive relationship between the assessor and the child (Hasson and Joffe, 2007). Research on DA has examined its efficacy to accurately differentiate typically developing children from language impaired ones either in monolingual or bilingual populations as well as to determine whether a low language performance on a static test constitute a potentially persistent language difficulty or not. Findings are very promising regarding its accuracy, predictive capacity and usefulness to inform the SLTs.

Overall, the increasing ethnic diversity along with the growing rate of the low socioeconomic status in Greece (Kassimeris and Samouris, 2012) highlight the complementary use of susceptible assessment methods to environmental factors. This paper aims to introduce DA in Greece presenting its rationale, theoretical background and a literature review.

Keywords: 1) dynamic assessment, 2) children, 3) language, 4) disorder, 5) static standardized test

Related conference topics: clinical trial tool, literature review, language disorders