

Development of an Action Picture Information Test (APIT)

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ABSTRACT:

Background: The present study aims to develop a tool for assessing Urdu language, information based skills among 3 to 6 years children using action pictures. It highlights the need for norm based standardized assessments that are both culturally and linguistically appropriate. Internationally, speech and language pathologists typically include standardized tests as a part of their ongoing assessment which then forms the basis for therapeutic input as well. These standardized assessment instruments that are available to clinicians cannot always be directly translated due to their lack of appropriateness for children from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This implies that test norms derived in this manner are appropriate for use only with demographic groups that were included in the normative samples from the same culture and language. There are no such tests available in Pakistan, designed for the Urdu speaking population; therefore, a need arose to develop such an assessment.

The purpose of the study: The aim of the study was to establish Urdu norms for the assessment of information provided by children 3 to 6 years using action pictures, and to develop a tool for assessing Urdu language, information based skills among 3 to 6 years.

Methodology: Ten culturally appropriate questions and pictures were selected and administered on 200 children between 3-6 years from government and private schools through purposive sampling. The sample included equal number of participants from each gender.

Results: The results indicate that there were significant differences among all the three demographic factors including age, gender and school sectors and the study objectives were confirmed. The present study assessed the significant relationship between understanding and information providing in Urdu language using culturally and linguistically appropriate action pictures and questions.

Conclusion and recommendations: It is concluded that the current study successfully developed a norm based standardized assessment for Pakistani children 3 to 6 years which is culturally and linguistically appropriate.

Keywords: Speech pathologist, Language, Information, Urdu, Culture.

INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition is a natural phenomenon that requires no conscious effort and is mostly acquired with no formal teaching. It is argued that all human beings acquire language, but there are many different languages in the world, and it seems that any human being is capable of learning any of these as a native language with equal ease. Researches proved that no child fails to learn a native language, and it is learned largely before the age of five. There are two major factors involved in language acquisition: Firstly an innate human potential for the acquisition of a Language, secondly a linguistic environment.²

Several studies have been proven that language is one of many analytic activities which all depend on cognitive development. Language acquisition is seen as having certain cognitive prerequisites or co requisites. That is, the child will not develop linguistic forms before acquiring the cognitive bases for those forms.¹ For young children, the language of the home is the language they have used since birth, the language they use to make and establish meaningful communicative relationships, and the language they use to begin to construct their knowledge and test their learning.²

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From ancient times a central concern of theories of language has been the question whether language is predominantly a matter of nature or of nurture.⁴ The earliest theory about language development assumed that children acquire language through imitation. While research has shown that children who imitate the actions of those around them during their first year of life are generally those who also learn to talk more quickly, there is also evidence that imitation alone cannot explain how children become talkers. Skinner, the Behaviorist theorist, suggested that children learn language through reinforcement.⁵

Being able to speak and express is first of all of very important for any individual but being able to express their feelings in the language which they know and speak become very easy for the person to express him/her self. The word 'Urdu' is derived from Turkish word 'Ordu' meaning 'Army Camp' or 'Lashkar'. Later on the invasion of Delhi by Muslims engrafted many Persian elements, which resulted in the creation of a new hybrid language called Urdu.⁶

Words that are frequently used in speech to children tend to match the children's cognitive predilections. Children go through different stages in acquiring their first language. Children's speech consists of a range of words which include nouns, verbs, determiners and other grammatical elements. By exploring the grammatical composition of child language in terms of word classes, the study shows that the frequency patterns for word classes in child language differ from those of maternal language.⁷

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

The study aims to investigate the following objectives

- 1 To establish Urdu norms for information provided by 3 to 6 years old children using action pictures.
- 2 To develop a tool for assessing information skills in Urdu among 3 to 6 years old children using action pictures.

Sample of 200 participants has been collected from four private and four government schools from Gujar Khan, Rawalpindi and Islamabad city of Pakistan. All typically developing children from 3 to 6 years in private and government schools included in sample while Children below 3 years and above 6 years are excluded. Children with cognitive difficulties or any syndromes were also excluded.

The child was shown a picture followed by asking a question related to the picture. The response was documented and audio recorded. They were informed that they can leave anytime during the study and consent was verbally sought. Researcher ensured the participants that their responses would be kept confidential and would be used only for research purpose.

Questions and picture have been selected after the pilot study, while scoring for each question established after the whole data been conducted (200sample) for the most culturally and linguistically appropriate answer, for example if a child made response in few words which express the idea completely full credit is given for total information score which is 6 score, but if any extra words used which is not appropriate or not representing anything related to the picture then no score given to the child and marked as 0 score. The data has been conducted through purposive convenient sampling. The present study will be the contributing factor in the assessment process for the entire speech language pathologist. It assist therapist in assessing the level of a child with expressive language difficulties

RESULTS:

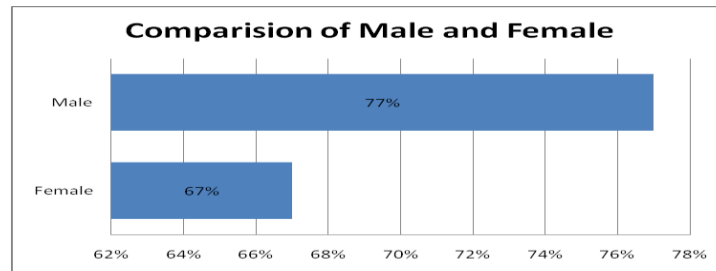
The results have been computed using mean, standard deviation, variance, range frequencies and percentages and middle age ranges including information scores, sentences score and comparison of all three demographic groups age, gender and school sectors of selected sample and explanation through different bar chart and pie charts.

Table 1: Comparison between three age ranges (Mean analysis)

| Age | Mean | Middle half of Range | Standard deviation |
|-------------------|------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 3 ⁰⁻¹¹ | 13 | 10-16 | 8.57 |
| 4 ⁰⁻¹¹ | 16 | 13-19 | 12.70 |
| 5 ⁰⁻¹¹ | 17 | 14-20 | 11.21 |

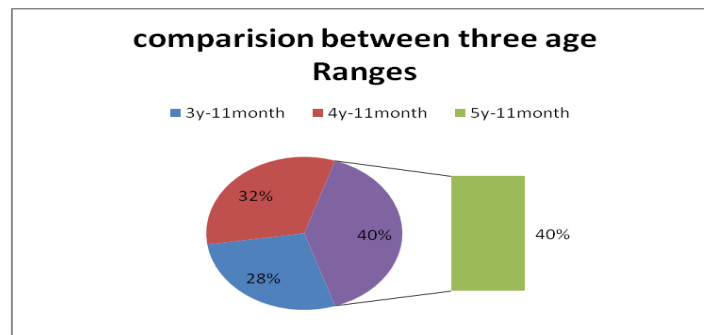
Table shows mean and middle half range values of all the three ages from 3 to 6 year's children.

Table 3:



The above mentioned results shows that male has got 77% while female score 67% which means male scored high than females and respond well to all action picture questions.

Table 2:



Results shows that children of age 5 years-11month got the highest ratio in scoring high (40%) while 4years-11month children were the second best scorer (32%) and 3years-11month age children were the least scorer(28%) among all groups.

Discussion

The current study aimed to explore and apply a systematic, quantitative approach to develop norms for assessing information provided by children 3-6 years of age in Urdu language. For clinicians working in different setups conducting a valid and reliable assessment of children's language, clinicians need to have a good understanding of typical language development and

cultural and linguistic factors that affect language development. It stresses the importance of developing a test in Urdu language by paying attention to the cultural knowledge and understanding in terms of national language. Data analysis provides insight regarding information provided by this age range. Gender differences, age differences and school sector differences have also been examined separately. Measures of internal consistency were computed for all the items for determining their properties by descriptive frequencies and cross tabulation of all the ten items and demographic factors.

In the present study, a total of 200 typically developing children participated. In the current study 10 actions pictures were used which was culturally and linguistically appropriate which is a significant figure for keeping Childs attention and keeping them motivated. This norm bases assessment is developed in the light of Renfrew Action Picture test which is a standardized assessment which is a test of spoken language that can be scored for both information and grammatical part which evaluated in terms of information given and the grammatical structures used, and mainly it also looks at information part which is also provides good evidence and background to current research.⁸

A study which has great link with the current study has been conducted on the acquisition of the syntax and morphology of the English spoken in Singapore to check whether culturally and linguistically appropriate materials elicited a better sample of children's expressive language abilities in Singapore, the Renfrew Action Picture Test was modified to make it more culturally and linguistically appropriate for preschool Chinese Singaporean children. Children by age 4 to 5 years assessed by using three assessment the original RAPT, its line drawn version (LRAPT) and the modified form of assessment which is Singapore English Action Picture Test (SEAPT), The results showed that the SEAPT elicited more representative samples of expressive vocabulary and grammar in English than the original RAPT and LRAPT.⁹

Code switching was widely observed for example *sarak /road* (see table no.1). In the current study all items were used according to culture and keeping in mind Urdu words. However, children frequently used English alternatives for Urdu words. During the study focus group of children showed different responses to (mixing language/switching code) because of their environmental factors such as home and school set up. Code switching is basically the way people mix languages and speech patterns is an apt metaphor for the way race, ethnicity and culture intersect in our lives.¹⁰

The total high scorer is 77% in male and 67 % in female. Overall the percentage of all the items was above 50% which shows that children responds very well to all the questions. Preschool children level of understanding and information in their own native language help them to express their understanding in more appropriate way see table no.14 for information scores. Language reveals that how people think and how they view the world. In short, language both defines and reflects the particular attitudes and values of a people.

CONCLUSION:

It can be concluded that current study provided a norm based standardized assessment for the Pakistani children 3 to 6 years which is culturally and linguistically. The results indicated that there were significant differences among all the three demographic factors. Results showed that most of the children have high score in all the items. The study provided that information and understanding is better assess when it's according to child's own culture and language.

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