

Analysis of the normative data on linguistic profile test



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Normative Data of Linguistic Profile Test on the Elderly Population: a Comparison of Literates and Illiterates

INTRODUCTION

Literacy is a basic human right and keystone for lifelong learning. It is fully vital to human development in its ability to alter lives.

In 1951, UNESCO defined literacy as the aptitude of a person who can read and write, and has the ability to write about their daily life. UNESCO later revised this definition in 1978, now referring to the literate person as one who has the capability to participate in all activities in which literacy is necessary for “ effective functioning in his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing, and calculation for his own and community’s development” (Soares, 1992). The change in UNESCO’s definition reflects modification from a narrow set of behaviors in reading and writing to a broader sense of skills including mathematics.

In UNESCO’s publication, literacy is viewed from a social-psycholinguistic viewpoint, one in which literacy constitutes more than the ability to read and write, extending also to the use of oral and written language as well as other sign systems, such as arithmetic and art, to make sense of the world and communicate with others (Berghoff 1998, Harste, Woodward, & Burke 1986, Heath 1984, & Halliday 1975).

Other definitions of literacy emerged in 1992 when the National Institute for Literacy Council defined the term as involving the ability to write and read,

to make use of oral and written language in all respects, and to critically and successfully use oral and written language “ for all purposes”.

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 defines literacy as competence in the ability to read, write, and speak, to “ compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job,” and to do so in personal and professional situations. This interpretation denotes a broader view of literacy, instead of the more simplified determination of an individual’s ability to read, which the more conventional concept of literacy is.

India does not have any reliable indicator of ‘ who is a literate person’. Indian government defines literacy as the capability of a person to read and write. A person who can only read but cannot write is not considered as a literate.

Illiteracy in India is characterized by ample proportions between the urban and rural populations. The rural population depends on agriculture mainly and high illiteracy rate can be noticed here, while the urban population is more of the ‘ employee class’ and also more educated. Even between the male and female population, there is a wide discrepancy in literacy. The literacy rate of male is 82. 14% and female 65. 46% according to census in 2011.

Language is the most important aspect in life of all beings. We use language to convey our inner thoughts and emotions make sense of complex and abstract thoughts, to fulfill our wants and demands, as well as to uphold our culture.

Language is divided into major 3 components- Form, Content and Use (Bloom & Lahey, 1978). Form consist syntax, morphology and phonology- the components that connect sounds or symbols with meaning. Conventionally, the study of language has been equated with Form only. Content includes meaning or semantics and Use includes pragmatics.

Phonology is the study of sound systems in language. It includes how speech sounds are classified and structured and how they are used in a particular language. Syntax is the basic structure of language. It is the way in which humans form meaningful sentences and understand it. Sentences have to follow certain structural rules in order to make sense. We cannot use any words together to make a sentence. Studying syntax helps to understand how children acquire their language, how they start constructing sentences and what stage do they learn the syntactic rules of the language. Syntax can also be learnt to understand how adults construct sentences and also the changes that has been seen after a brain injury. Semantics is the study of meaning. Meaning is the set of associations that a word evokes. The growth of vocabulary continues throughout a person's lifetime. Through the school years, words are added to the speaker's vocabulary. This acquisition of vocabulary involves more than adding items to one's lexical list. Semantics also involves the sorting of words into categories.

Assessment is one of the major tools that are used by a speech-language pathologist. A thorough assessment leads to accurate diagnosis, identification of etiology and also provides a foundation for treatment.

Chaotic assessment leads to wasted time and energy, and eventually to inaccurate conclusions and incompetent planning.

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A test is basically a device used for objective measurements and helps the clinician in arriving at a truthful diagnosis and in successful rehabilitation of the clients. Some tests are carried out only for adults and some only for children. There are even tests are efficient in testing all the age groups. The information obtained from an appropriate tests, reveal the child's or adults positives and negatives within his language system. Tests also help us to know how language processing might be disturbed in an individual after brain injury which there by helps us in intervention.

Linguistic Profile Test (Prathiba Karanth, 1984) was designed with the objective of evaluating the linguistic competence of children by obtaining and analyzing adequate linguistic samples at the phonemic, syntactic and semantic levels. The test was designed originally in Kannada. The framework of the test is such that, it can be easily constructed in any language. Over the last few years, the test has been extensively used with clinical populations (both adults and children) and has been found clinically useful, both for evaluation and as a basis for rehabilitation and linguistic retraining of communicatively disabled (Prathiba Karanth, 1980).

Need for the study

Acquisition of reading and writing skills influences the functional status of the brain, and accordingly alters the performance on language tests. Thus, it is important to identify the degree of the impact of levels of both illiteracy and education as potential confounders on test performance in people with neurological communication disorders.

Malayalam is a language which is considered as the mother tongue of Keralites where there are no standardized tests available for assessing language in literate and illiterate adults with norms. Language skills in literates and illiterates are different. Education-adjusted norms are necessary for an adequate interpretation of test results. Impaired language seen in an individual may be due to the impact of illiteracy rather than a brain damage. So it is important to distinguish the cause of language impairment observed in the patient is due to the impact of illiteracy or the actual cause is brain damage. There are only limited studies which address the performance of participants who are illiterates or participants with low education.

So this study is an attempt to establish normative data on Linguistic Profile Test - Malayalam (Asha M. M, 1997) for adults who are literates and illiterates. This study is thought to yield a better understanding of differences in the performance of literates and illiterates, thereby aiding us in identifying the adults with language deficits and also the area of deficits.

Aims of the Study

1. To standardize LPT for adults who are literates and illiterates.
2. To find out the differences in performance between literates and illiterates.
3. To understand the impact of literacy in language.