

Development of a phonology assessment for Turkish-German bilingual children living in Germany

Key words: Phonology assessment, bilingual, Turkish-German

Turkish heritage speakers form the largest group of non-native German speakers living in Germany. Thus it is hardly surprising that Turkish-German bilingual children are the largest group of bilingual children referred to speech and language therapy clinics in Germany (Lüke & Ritterfeld, 2011). Despite this, no scientifically sound, reliable and normed tool is yet available to assess these children's phonological skills in Turkish. Consequently, speech and language therapists frequently base their diagnostic decisions on the results of monolingual German speech assessments. This current practice is clearly unsatisfactory since it is important to consider bilingual children's speech skills in all of their languages to gain a full picture of their phonological abilities (McLeod, Verdon, & Bowen, 2013). The aim of this project was therefore to address this gap by designing a linguistically and psychometrically sound single-word naming test tool specifically tailored to assess the phonological skills of Turkish-German bilingual children in Turkish.

Following an initial pilot study (Salgert, 2011) the designed test, the Turkish Phonology Assessment (TPA), was revised and extended. The resulting single-word stimulus list consists of 70 items which were selected to assess all phones and phonemes of Turkish as recommended for single-word naming assessments (e.g. Kirk & Vigeland, 2015) and to reflect the children's vocabulary as best as possible (Stoel-Gammon & Williams, 2013). It was also designed to be child-friendly and culturally sensitive so that, for example, all items are displayed with child-appropriate and culturally sensitive clipart pictures. The TPA allows the examiner to conduct a comprehensive phonological pattern analysis, to compile phonetic and phonemic inventories, and to calculate percentage of consonants, vowels and phonemes correct. First normative data for the TPA was collected for 84 Turkish-German bilingual children aged 3;0 to 5;5 years. Validity and reliability features are being analysed and will be discussed together with the test's general applicability.

The TPA offers speech and language therapists in Germany a new speech assessment tool for Turkish-German bilingual children which is linguistically and scientifically sound as well as culturally sensitive. It allows therapists to collect information about the children's speech skills in Turkish in addition to the traditional assessments in German and will thus facilitate their decision-making process as part of their diagnostics.

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