The tools for Russian language assessment in monolingual children: an overview

Russian language assessment, speech disorders, diagnostic tools, development of speech, specific language impairments

There is no agreement between speech specialists in Russia on the method of diagnostics of language impairments in Russian-speaking children from 4 to 12 years old. As our research shows, speech therapists, pathologists, neurologists, psychologists and language teachers prefer to combine tasks from several different sources because none of the existing methods developed for Russian-speaking children is perfect. The majority of the existing language assessment procedures rely on qualitative evaluations and lack modern validating and standardizing procedures. Some batteries contain outdated or too difficult speech stimuli, there is an absence of possibility to control for dynamic changes in language development of a child. Finally, existing protocols vary a lot in different regions of Russia.

In our report we discuss 5 the most popular tools used by Russian specialists: the tool designed by 1) Fotekova (2000), Fotekova & Akhutina (2009); 2) Nishheva (2016; 2016a); 3) Volkova (1993); 4) T.B. Filicheva (Filicheva, Cheveleva & Chirkina, 1989; Filicheva, Tumanova, Orlova, 2015; Zhukova, Mastjukova, Filicheva, 2017) 5) Inshakova (2015).

The language assessment test must be diagnostically accurate and, thus, permit to correctly distinguish population under assessment according to the results of their performance. The measures of diagnostic accuracy might be: sensitivity, specificity, positive / negative likelihood ratio; positive / negative predictive value (Dollaghan, 2004). Furthermore, the test’s manual must describe standardization procedures (i.e. norming sample size; origin of the participants, their SES and ethnic backgrounds etc.), as well as measures of central tendency and variability, SDs and standard error of measurement (SEM). Finally, the description of norm-reference scores must be provided.

As a result of our analysis and survey in speech therapists, pathologists, neurologists, psychologists and language teachers we have come to the conclusion that none of the popular tools discussed above currently available for Russian language assessment in children fully satisfy the requirements. These tools can be rather categorised as criterion-referenced measures aim to establish whether a child have the amount of linguistic knowledge considered normal at given age. Overall, there is a clear need of the standardized norm-referenced assessment tools for Russian-speaking children.

References


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