

with their mothers, children interacted with a female undergraduate who demonstrated her unfamiliarity with the toys. The children, now having previous experience with the problem-solving tasks, served as tutors at Time 2.

Sample:

n=54 4-year-old Head Start participants (34 experimental and 20 control)

Measures:

Child

Social Interaction -Verbal and Nonverbal Problem-Solving Behaviors

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III

Teacher

Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-Preschool Edition

Mother

Social Interaction - Verbal and Nonverbal Scaffolding Behaviors

Lisa M. Lopez

Project Title:

Assessing Phonological Sensitivity in Hispanic Head Start Children as a Precursor to Literacy

Grantee:

Lisa M. Lopez

Project Funding Years:

1999-2001

University Affiliation :

University of Miami

Project Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to assess pre-literacy skills of low-income Hispanic Head Start children by (1) creating a comparable measure of English and Spanish phonological sensitivity for this population, (2) assessing internal consistency among children's Spanish and English phonological skills, (3) determining the relationship between phonological awareness and oral language skills in this sample, and (4) identifying a cross-language transfer of skills.

A phonological assessment tool was developed and modified during the first year of the project with a sample of 50 Spanish-speaking Head Start

children. During the second year, the tool was used to determine the phonological sensitivity of 100 4- to 5-year-old Spanish-speaking Head Start children. These children were drawn from three selected Head Start centers in Miami-Dade County, Florida serving the Hispanic population. The tool was composed of tasks used by other researchers in English. The tasks included a rhyme-matching task, an alliteration-matching task, and a sentence-segmenting task. The children were assessed on these tasks in both English and Spanish. Additionally, the PRE-LAS 2000 was used to measure oral language proficiency in English and Spanish.

Analyses provided quantitative information of individual children's phonological awareness and language proficiency in two languages. A similar relationship was identified between oral language and phonological awareness in both languages, independently. However, the children's oral language skills were much better defined in Spanish. A cross language transfer of phonological awareness skills was also identified with phonological awareness skills in Spanish, along with English oral language skills, playing a major factor in the children's English phonological awareness abilities. Implications include the importance of assessing bilingual children in both languages, as well as the importance of strengthening the child's primary language and literacy skills prior to literacy instruction in the second language.

Sample:

n=50 low-income, Hispanic Head Start children, ages 3-5 (Year 1) from 2 centers

n=100 low-income, Hispanic Head Start children, ages 4-5 (Year 2) from 3 centers

Measures:

Child

Phonological Sensitivity Test (English and Spanish)

Pre-Las2000 (English and Spanish)

Greta M. Massetti

Project Title:

Assessment of Emergent Literacy in Head Start Preschool

Grantee:

Greta M. Massetti

Project Funding Years:

1999-2001