



PARENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE PREFERENCE AND IEP STATUS



Gabriela Guerrero, Maura Linas & Ruby Chan

Center for Response to Intervention in Early Childhood (CRTIEC): A Consortium of the University of Kansas, The Ohio State University, University of Minnesota, and the Dynamic Measurement Group

Introduction

Parents and teachers of young children are often asked to provide children's demographic information, including language preference and concerns about delays or differences in child's development. The use of parent and teacher reports offer one of most convenient and least expensive ways to gather demographic information, avoiding the need for trained personnel and lengthy assessments (Gutierrez-Clellen & Kreiter, 2003).

The purpose of the present study was to examine the level of agreement between parent and teacher perceptions when using a survey to report their child's language preference and concerns about developmental delays. In addition, this study evaluated the usefulness of these reports when compared to observed language preference as observed when using the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT-4).

Method

A total of 911 preschool children (52% boys), their parents and teachers were recruited as part of a larger language and literacy study in 4 regions of the US (MO/KS, Ohio, Oregon, and Minnesota).

Children characteristics

- 35% English Language Learners (ELLs); of the ELL children 93% spoke Spanish at home.
- 11% of children had an IEP.
- Parent level of education – 73% had at least a high school diploma.

Classroom characteristics

- Program types -- 63% State-funded, 20% Title 1, 13% Head Start, and 4% Private Tuition.
- Majority of literacy instruction occurred in English.

Measures

•Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT-4) Expressive vocabulary measure administered to a subset of 23 children by bilingual examiner. Instructions were provided in Spanish, but children were given the opportunity to respond in either English or Spanish. Percentage of correct answers in Spanish was computed as measure of language preference.

•Teacher Survey – reports on children's ELL and IEP status.

•Family Survey – questions about home language environment and concerns about developmental delays.

Results

RQ1. What is the level of agreement in parent and teacher perceptions of their child's language preference and ELL status?

Phi Coefficient Correlations between Parent and Teacher Language Reports

Parent report	Teacher report of ELL status
• Child is most comfortable with a language other than English	.801** (n=890)
•Parent speaks language other than English with child	.825** (n=911)
•Others at home speak a language other than English with child	.756** (n=892)
•Child speaks language other than English at home	.837** (n=895)

Note. No = 0; Yes = 1; **p<.001

Results indicated that there is a strong correlation between teacher and parent reports. The strongest correlation was between teacher's ELL report and parent's report of the language spoken by child at home ($\phi = .837, P<.001$).

RQ2. What is the relationship between parent and teacher perceptions of their child's language preference and the child's observed preference when taking the EOWPVT-4?

Correlations between Parent and Teacher Language Reports and Percent of answers in Spanish when taking the EOWPVT-4

	Percent of correct answers in Spanish
Teacher Report	
ELL Status	.431* (n=23)
Parent Report	
•Child is most comfortable with Spanish	.791** (n=18)
• Parent speaks Spanish when talking to child	.300 (n=19)
• Others at home speak Spanish with child	.300 (n=19)
•Child speaks Spanish at home	.436 (n=19)

Note. No = 0; Yes = 1; *p<.05, **p<.01

Parents' reports of children's language preference was strongly correlated to observed preference ($r=.791^{**}$); however, observed preference was only moderately correlated to teacher ELL status report ($r=.431^{*}$) and other measures of the home language. This suggests that a child's home language environment might not always be the best indicator of a child's language preference. This might be especially true of children who are exposed to more than one language at home.

RQ3. What is the level of agreement in parent and teacher perceptions of their child's IEP status?

Phi Coefficient Correlations between Parent and Teacher IEP Reports

Parent report	Teacher report of IEP status
•Does child have an IEP?	.706** (n=810)
•Have you had a concern about delays or differences in child's development?	.521** (n=829)
•Has teacher stated concerns about delays or differences in child's development?	.612** (n=829)
•Has child been identified as having delays or special needs?	.645** (n=826)

Note. No = 0; Yes = 1; **p<.001

Parents and teachers strongly agreed on whether a child had an IEP; however parent concerns and teacher reports were only moderately associated ($\phi = .521, p<.001$).

Cross-tabulations between teacher IEP report and parent concern about delays were utilized to identify sources of discrepancy.

Cross-tabulation between parents' concerns about child's delays and teachers' reports of IEP status

		Teacher report of IEP status		Total
		No	Yes	
Parent has ever had a concern about child's development	No	Count 639	25	664
	Yes	% within IEP 88%	25%	80%
Total	Count	88	77	165
	% within IEP	12%	76%	20%
Total		Count 727	102	829
		% within IEP 100%	100%	100%

Pearson Chi Square (1) = 225.434, p < .001

Out of those parents whose child had an IEP, 25% reported not having concerns about child's development. Conversely, out of those children without an IEP, 12% of their parents did report having a concern about their child's development.

References

- Bedore, L. M., Pena, E. D., Joyner, D., and Macken, C. (2010). Parent and teacher rating of bilingual language proficiency and language developmental concerns. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 1-23.
- Gutierrez-Clellen, V. F and Kreiter, J. (2003). Understanding child bilingual acquisition using parent and teacher reports. *Applied Psycholinguistics* 24, 267-288.

Results

Cross-tabulation between parents' report on child identification for special needs and teachers' reports of IEP status

		Teacher report of IEP status		Total
		No	Yes	
Child has been identified as having developmental delays or special needs	No	Count 707	40	747
	Yes	% within IEP 98%	40%	90%
Total	Count	18	61	79
	% within IEP	3%	60%	10%
Total		Count 725	101	826
		% within IEP 100%	100%	100%

Pearson Chi Square (1) = 347.754, p < .001

Out of those parent's whose child had an IEP, 40% reported child had not been identified as having special needs. Conversely, out of those children without an IEP, 3% of their parents did report having a concern about the child's development.

Discussion & Implications

This study examined the level of parent and teacher agreement in reporting children's language preferences and developmental concerns. Findings indicated an overall consistency between parent and teacher ELL reports, supporting the use of these types of surveys and reports as means to gather language information.

Furthermore, this study showed that survey questions about child's preferred language (most comfortable language) are strongly correlated to observed language preferences as measured by the percent of correct answers in Spanish when completing the EOWPVT-4.

This study showed moderate correlations between teacher and parent reports on children's developmental delays. Out of the parents of children with IEPs, 25% reported no concerns about their child's development and 40% reported their child had not been identified as having special needs.

A possible explanation for these parent-teacher discrepancies is that home and classroom environments clearly elicit different demands. Teachers observe different behavior in the classroom and other structured settings than parents do at home.

Better communication between teachers and parents about school activities and specific children's behaviors are necessary to get a more accurate picture of children's abilities and developmental concerns. This will help strengthen parent-teacher relationships and will in turn help make better educational decisions for young children (Bedore, Pena, Joyner & Macken, 2010).