

Assessment criteria and selection decisions

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It is one thing to operationalise job criteria and personal characteristics required, and yet another to use them in final selection decisions! Evidence is presented from UK and Portuguese case studies that, even where formal psychometric assessment is employed, personal characteristics of managers and the company culture they represent are major factors in decisions made by both selectors and applicants.

Keywords: staff-selection, decision-making, interview-data, psychometric-data, organizational culture, organizational-climate

Assessing child language: An integrated approach

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The traditional approach to child language evaluation was interested on clinical diagnosis of the neurophysiological causes of linguistic disorder or retardation, and child linguistic development was related to phonological and syntactic norms of an adult model. It became common, at the end of the 50's, for psychologists and speech therapists to make use of standardized tools in order to make differential diagnoses and comparisons between groups. If, at the 70's, language evaluation was affected by the cognitivist approach to language acquisition, by acquiring a wider scope, less exclusively directed towards syntax and phonetics, new developments in sociolinguistics and pragmatics resulted in a greater value being placed upon social and communicative aspects of language. A key notion to the clinical domain is communicative competence, introduced by D. Hymes (1977), which highlights the need for knowledge, not only of the language, but also of its uses in different social contexts. By extending the concept of linguistics development, the focus of observation has been placed upon the functional aspects of language, so that not only the grammatically of child discourse is evaluated but also its appropriateness to the pragmatic demands of communication. Therefore, we consider it necessary that child language testing procedures should become integrated; this does not mean abandoning standardized methods, which have certain advantages, but rather bringing together the formal and functional aspects.

Language development assessed by the Griffiths' Hearing and Speech Scale and by psycholinguistic measures: A comparison

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The Griffiths Mental Development Scales are an assessment tool that offers the advantage of providing not only an overall measure of development, but also a profile of the strengths and weaknesses of a child. One of the five scales it comprises bears directly to language, the Hearing and Speech scale. We examine here whether the score on this scale can be useful for the early diagnosis of slow or impaired language development in preschool children. For this purpose, we compare the results on this scale with standard psycholinguistic measures of language development. Forty-seven children were observed at the age of four years; 23 were judged by their kindergarten teacher as 'with language difficulties', and 24 as 'without language difficulties'. All children were observed on the Griffiths Scales (particular attention was given to the Hearing and Speech Scale that we adapted to Portuguese) and on a standard play situation with a familiar adult, that was videotaped and later transcribed using CHAT. The transcripts were subsequently analyzed with CLAN for vocabulary size, MLU and morphological errors. Children classified 'with language difficulties' scored on average more poorly than their peers on the Hearing and Speech Scale and on the psycholinguistic measures. However, individual variability was large, namely in the Griffiths Scale. We discuss the discrepancies in the results from both types of measures, and try to elucidate the costs and benefits associated with each assessment strategy.

Keywords: language development, preschool children, language impairment, European Portuguese

Neurocognitive assessment of sentence comprehension in children and adults

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The assessment of verbal skills plays an important role both in research and practice. We approach verbal skills from a neurocognitive perspective. According to this view, language is a complex system of processing components that have a neural basis. An assessment of language should elucidate the particular components of the system. Sentence comprehension was examined in this study, using a subset of tests from an English neuropsychological