

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MANDARIN SPEECH PERCEPTION TESTS FOR MALAYSIAN CHINESE CHILDREN POPULATION

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The purpose of this study was to develop Mandarin speech perception tests for Malaysian Chinese children population. Two tests were developed in this study, which were Speech Syllable Pattern Perception Test (SPPT) and Tone Perception Test (TPT). Both tests were designed for children aged three to six years old. Eighty normal hearing children aged 3; 0 to 6; 11 from kindergartens around Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh participated in this study. Test scores of the newly developed tests were compared between different age groups, genders and second dialect or languages used. To measure test-retest and inter-rater reliability, both tests were retested by the same tester and a different tester after a time period of at least two weeks. The correlation of the first test and the repeated test were measured. Results showed that there was a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the mean score of different age groups in TPT in which the mean scores increased with age. The mean scores of SPPT did not differ significantly across age ($p > 0.05$), possibly due to ceiling effect. Gender and dialects or languages used as second language did not affect the test scores of both tests. Although the raw scores for the test-retest and inter-rater Spearman correlation coefficients of SPPT were low, the scores were highly repeatable in both test-retest and inter-rater conditions. For TPT, the test-retest and inter-rater reliability were high in which the raw score for test-retest and inter-rater Spearman correlation coefficients approximated 0.80. Content validity evidence was also collected from a panel. Overall, the performances of subjects in this study for both tests were satisfactory. As a conclusion, this study showed both tests were suitable to test Chinese children in Malaysia.

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