

### **Test of Language Competence**

Authors: Elisabeth H. Wiig and Wayne Secord  
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Reviewer: Speech-Language Pathology Discipline  
Carleton Board of Education, Ottawa

#### **Purpose**

To evaluate delays in the emergence of linguistic competence and in the use of semantic, syntactic and pragmatic strategies in youth aged 9 to 18.11 years.

#### **Description**

According to the authors, language competence involves (1) the appropriate understanding and/or expression of language content and (2) a responsiveness to the communicative demands of a specific situation. Spontaneous interaction does not occur unless language content and communication context are integrated. This test consists of four subtests designed to aid in discriminating between competent and noncompetent language use. The four subtests can be individually administered in less than 60 minutes. The subtests include (1) understanding ambiguous sentences — the ability to recognize and interpret the alternative meanings of selected lexical and structural ambiguities; (2) making inferences — the ability to make inferences on the basis of existing causal relationships in short paragraphs; (3) recreating sentences — the ability to formulate propositions in grammatically complete sentences using key words, related to the context of a given situation; (4) understanding metaphoric expressions — the ability to interpret metaphoric expressions and to match the structurally related metaphoric expressions by shared meaning.

Scoring of subtests yields scores on specific aspects of language content and context. A composite score allows a comparison of the student's overall performance and is expressed as a standard score. The authors provide IEPs for remediation in areas assessed by each subtest, with objectives arranged hierarchically to represent the sequence of implementation. Some resources for instruction as well as for extension testing are included to observe at what level breakdown occurs.

#### **Critique**

The TLC was designed within a strategy orientation to language learning disability and considers strategy rather than skill and repertory deficits as central to language disability. Inasmuch as strategic inefficiency is central to academic underachievement and special education, the TLC can be a useful component of an assessment battery. The authors state that this test should be complemented by the administration of standardized measures of receptive vocabulary development and by analysis of a spontaneous speech sample, and this had been our experience as well.

One test of validity used was the agreement between results of the TLC and the Test of Adolescent Language (TAL). Recently some question of the validity of the TAL scores has been raised. However, valuable quantitative information can be obtained from the TLC.

Behavioural observation checklists are provided with each subtest and give information about the way a student formulates and expresses responses. This is useful information in adding to the total picture of behavioural patterns in the student's language performance. The suggestions for extension testing can be especially useful in determining at what level a breakdown occurs and can assist in planning an effective language intervention program.

As more research becomes available in linguistic strategy competency and development, more tests will be available. In the interim, this test has been found to fill a need in assessment and program implementation for older children and adolescents.

### **Precursors of Early Speech**

Wenner-Gren International Symposium Series,  
Volume 44.

Editor: Lindblom, Bjorn and Zetterstrom, Rolf.

Publisher: Stockton Press, 1986

15 East 26th Street, New York, NY 10010

Price: \$80.00

Reviewer: Pat Wevrick

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The papers of the interdisciplinary presenters at this symposium are grouped as follows: Introduction; The time course of the infant's vocal development; Prognostic use of early vocalization; From babbling to spoken language; Motor aspects; Perceptual and intermodal aspects, and Interaction. The presenters represent linguistics, speech-language pathology, phoniatrics, psychology, pediatrics, psychiatry, education and logopedics. The purpose of the symposium was to review current international research on babbling and to provide the opportunity for discussing the issues to which that research gives rise. Information from recent research has helped to clarify the issue of "nature" or "nurture" in regards to language learning. The current evidence supports the "nature" hypothesis: specifically, children from many different language backgrounds have been shown to have similar phonetic output. As well, there are "striking similarities between the basic sound inventories of the world on the one hand, and the patterns that children produce on the other".

Many interesting questions are addressed:

- What is the function of babbling?
- Are babbling characteristics influenced by environmental factors?
- What do cross language studies tell us?
- What is the predictive value of babbling observations?

- Is babbling a form of "proto-phonology" continuously changing into adult sound patterns? (or) Is phonologic development a distinct, totally unrelated phenomenon?

Of particular interest were the chapters on motor aspects. Topics discussed include early manual development as well as bimanual coordination as related to the beginnings of speech.

Considerable research is included in the papers; therefore, the book is not particularly easy to read. However, for those to whom the topic is of importance, the effort will be worth while.

### ***Deafness in Perspective***

Editor: David M. Luterman

Publisher: College-Hill Press, Inc., 1986, 283 pp.  
4284 41st Street, San Diego, Calif. 92105

Canadian distributor: Phonic Ear Ltd.  
7475 Kimbel Street  
Mississauga, Ont. L5S 1E7

Cost: \$29.50 (US) \$39.75 (Cdn.)

Reviewer: Jean-Pierre Gagné, PhD

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aural rehabilitation

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This book was published as a result of a symposium that was held to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Thayer Lindsley Parent Centered Nursery of Emerson College (Boston, Mass.). Various clinicians/researchers were asked to summarize the developments that have occurred in different areas of aural rehabilitation/deaf education during the 20-year period ranging from 1965-85. The book consists of 12 chapters (and an epilogue) with contributions from 14 authors.

Often historical overviews summarize events/issues as they occurred, chronologically. In this book the historical perspective is traced through a discussion of selected themes. Three chapters are devoted to clinicians who work in related professional fields: otologists (chapter 1), audiologists (chapter 2) and teacher/clinicians (chapter 9). Chapter 3 deals with the development of amplification devices. Special consideration is given to classroom amplification devices and nonconventional prosthetic devices (i.e., cochlear implants and vibro-

tactile aids). The academic, linguistic (including reading and writing as well as signed and spoken language) and the speech production abilities of hearing-impaired individuals are discussed in chapters 4, 7 and 8 respectively. In chapter 9 the focus is placed on mainstreaming. Events and developments that have contributed to the current views on mainstreaming are discussed. Some factors that should be taken into account when mainstreaming is being considered for hearing-impaired/deaf students are also outlined.

Modes of communication are defined and discussed in two chapters. Chapter 5 summarizes the development and emancipation of the philosophy of total communication since its origin in the mid-1960s. The benefits and advantages of oral/aural communication are espoused in chapter 6. The increasing role of parents and family members in the educational and rehabilitation process of hearing-impaired/deaf individuals is discussed in chapter 11. The final chapter deals with some social issues related to deafness. Various organizations that have been formed to promote the rights of deaf individuals are described. The social impact that accessibility to communication systems and to the mass media has had on the social structure of deaf individuals and their communities is also reported in this chapter.

The information presented in the book is limited to aural rehabilitation/educational issues that are pertinent for persons (mostly children) with a severe or profound congenital hearing loss. Nevertheless, within those constraints, the book is successful in recapitulating the development of aural rehabilitation/deaf education for the period ranging from 1965-85. Because the book was organized around general (and sometimes quite similar) themes and since the chapters were written by several authors there are some redundancies in the information presented. For example, cochlear implants are discussed in at least four chapters. However, often when a specific topic is discussed in more than one chapter the information presented is complementary rather than repetitious. Most of the chapters are well written, easy to read and very well referenced. The strength of this book lies in the historical perspective it offers. The book should be of interest to students/scholars who seek to put current issues concerning aural rehabilitation/education of the hearing impaired into their appropriate historical context.