

THE RELIABILITY OF USING REPORTS FROM PARENTS AND TEACHERS TO ASSESS THE VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE OF CANTONESE SPEAKING HEARING-IMPAIRED CHILDREN

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In the hearing-impaired population, parents have been used as informants in completing questionnaires like MAIS and IT-MAIS to assess children's overall daily listening ability. Such an approach in getting information on a child's specific area of language development, however, has not been used.

The present study aimed at finding the reliability of using parents and teachers as a source of information to assess Cantonese speaking hearing-impaired children's vocabulary knowledge. 52 children (21 using hearing aids, 31 using cochlear implants) with their mothers and teachers were included as subjects. Children were tested on a standardized 65-item Cantonese receptive vocabulary test. Mothers and teachers were then given questionnaires containing the same 65 items. They were asked to rate if they think the child knows the items or not. Agreements on the child's scores versus mother/teacher ratings were analyzed. The Phi correlation coefficients on mother-child and teacher-child were 0.341 and 0.327 respectively.

Using logistics regression, a number of factors were found as significant in contributing to the agreement. Easier vocabulary was associated with higher agreement. The factor of hearing loss was significant in a way that the greater the hearing loss, the lower the agreement. As for duration of integrating into normal school, a longer duration was associated with a higher agreement. The significance of sex showed both mothers and teachers achieved higher agreements on female subjects. Parents' socio-economic status, education and occupation was unrelated to a child's language ability. For teacher-related factors, their teaching experience and duration of training the child were found to be insignificant.

In conclusion, mothers and teachers are very valuable source of informants. However, the information still needs to be supplement with other sources like the clinician's observation and assessments.