



Title

Development of a teacher / Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) co-intervention program to support language in kindergartens in Lebanon: methodology, procedures and measures

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Background

The aim of this project is to develop a co-intervention program, lead by a teacher and an SLT, to support oral language in preschoolers in the Lebanese context (multicultural, multilingual). Actually, there is a growing consensus, that efforts to enhance children's early language skills, can improve their reading skills and long-term academic achievement. However, some children are at risk of delays due to diverse environments (e.g. low socioeconomic status), and impoverished language and literacy experiences. Thus, international recommendations highlight the necessity for SLTs to conceptualize their intervention, according to community based needs, focusing on primary prevention for early communication and language difficulties, given their later impact on social and professional integration (Law 2013).

Aims

In line with the recommendations of the Ministry of Public Health in Lebanon (*Mental Health program services MHPSS, preventive and curative*, Ministry of Public Health, 2015), the purpose of the project is to support language skills in preschoolers by adapting, implementing and analyzing co-intervention program that partners early childhood educators along with SLTs.

Methods

First, we will identify the **beliefs, representations** and **expectations** of the different stakeholders (teachers, speech-language pathologists, school principals) through questionnaires and interviews among the diverse Lebanese school contexts in order to 1) identify the **knowledge** and 2) gather their **expectations** in the area of support and prevention for language difficulties in kindergarten. Second, the project aims to identify the quality of teacher-child interaction, considered as one of the primary mechanism that foster the development of child's language competences. It is commonly assessed by using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS-K; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008). Ten dimensions will be considered: *climate (positive or negative), teacher sensitivity, children's perspectives, behavior management, productivity, teaching practices and learning formats, concept Development, quality of feedback provided to the child, and linguistic modeling*. Finally, we will design a co-intervention program that is the most consistent with the contextual, cultural and linguistic diversity in Lebanon. Two intervention settings will be addressed and compared: 1) a co-intervention with an SLT including direct coaching, and video-retroactions and 2) an implementation of the program led by the teacher after a training provided by an SLT. We will collect information about **children's**

bilingual environment through the Parental Bilingual Questionnaire (PABIQ-LITMUS, COST Action IS804), and we will evaluate **interactions** through CLASS-K (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008), pre and post evaluation. **Children's language skills** will be measured through: ELO-L (Zebib, Khomsi, Henry, Messarra, & Kouba Hreich, Lebanon Tests Editions, 2017). Moreover, measurements of the **fidelity of program's implementation** (dosage, adhesion, quality of the interactions, responsiveness) will also be carried out.

Results

The expected results are intended to demonstrate to which extent an intervention program, to enhance communication and language skills, carried out jointly by teachers and speech therapists, would be more effective than a program delivered without the intervention of SLTs. The intervention of speech-language pathologists would thus have a more effective impact on the teachers' practices and the language skills of the children. This would justify the primary role of SLTs in indirect interventions in preschools in Lebanon.