Title
A Latent Profile Analysis of Early Literacy Skills Prekindergarten Children who Speak Nonmainstream American English

Abstract (248 total words)

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to examine empirically the profiles of early literacy skills among urban, minority prekindergarten children who speak nonmainstream American English.

Method: 401 children (M age = 55.5 months; SD = 3.6 months) were assessed with a battery of early literacy measures, including oral language, phonological awareness, letter name and sound knowledge, print awareness, and name writing. Z-scores on 9 early literacy measures were used for latent profile analysis (LPA) via Mplus with full information maximum likelihood estimation method. Spoken dialect variation was included in the models as a covariate.

Results: LPA results indicated that a 4-class solution best described the data. Profile 1 comprised 20% (n = 77) of children who generally had poor early literacy skills across all 9 areas examined, while children in Profile 4 (24%, n = 95) had generally high scores on all the measures compared to children in other profiles. About 36% (n = 151) of children (Profile 3) had average level of oral language and phonological awareness skills, but poor print knowledge and alphabet knowledge. Dense nonmainstream American English speakers were more likely to be classified into Profile 3, while moderate speakers were more likely to be classified into Profile 1.

Conclusions: The findings of this study indicate that there are specific profiles of early literacy skills among urban, minority children who predominantly speak nonmainstream American English. These profiles can inform the educational practices, especially in early childhood and early intervention programs designed for urban children.