

Assessment of Acquired Language Disorders in Bilingual French-English Adults in Ontario: Current Practice and Challenges

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Abstract : The assessment of acquired language disorders in the adult population, whether for a bilingual or monolingual adult, is a complex process that requires the speech-language pathologist (SLP) to make a judicious choice when selecting the assessment method and tools. However, this task is even more complex with Ontario's bilingual population due to the lack of linguistically and culturally appropriate tools for this population. Numerous researches examined language assessment of the pediatric bilingual population; however, few studies have focused on assessing acquired language disorders in bilingual adults. This study's main objective is to identify the challenges that SLPs encounter when assessing language in the bilingual English-French adult population in Ontario to ultimately be able to serve this population in the future better. An online questionnaire was made available to 1325 members of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO) who work with the adult population. The answers to this questionnaire (n = 71) allowed us to identify the tools and strategies most commonly used by SLPs in current practice, identify the assessment challenges faced by SLPs, and determine the causes of these challenges as well as potential solutions. In an English and French assessment, the Western Aphasia Battery, the Boston Diagnostic Aphasia Examination, and the Boston Naming Test were the three tools that respondents deemed to be the most relevant for the assessment. Besides, the results revealed that limited access to SLPs and interpreters who speak the client's language and the lack of standardized and normalized assessment tools for Ontario's French-speaking and bilingual English-French clientele are at the heart of the challenges of current SLP practice. Consistent with these findings, respondents highlighted two potential solutions to address these challenges: SLPs have access to standardized/normalized tools for the population under study and better access to SLPs and interpreters who speak the client's language.

Keywords : assessment, acquired language disorders, bilingualism, speech-Language pathology, adult population

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