

ABSTRACT

Psychological assessment is often seen as a controversial process due to the numerous factors which influence a child's performance on cognitive assessment measures; one being the child's English language proficiency. This research aimed to investigate and compare the performance of English First Language (EFL) and English Additional Language (EAL) speaking children on the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children – Second Edition (KABC-II) Knowledge Scale. This scale includes three individual subtests; Expressive Vocabulary, Verbal Knowledge and Riddles. The purpose of the comparison was to determine whether there is a significant difference between the performance of EFL and EAL speaking children on a scale which by virtue of the nature of the subtests, are more verbal and language based than the other KABC-II Scales. The method used to carry out the study was quantitative in nature; specifically, a non-experimental ex post facto design. The sample size included a total of 50 children i.e. 25 EFL and 25 EAL children from two government primary schools in the Johannesburg North area. The data was analysed through the use of independent samples t-tests in order to determine if there were significant differences between the performance of EFL and EAL children. The results indicated that there were significant differences found between the performance of EFL and EAL speaking children on all three subtests and resultantly the KABC-II Knowledge Scale. Additionally, chi-square tests of associations were used to determine if there were any items that showed a significant association between language and performance of EFL and EAL speaking children. These results indicated that there were items on each subtest which indicated significant associations between the two groups. These included 3 items on the Expressive Vocabulary subtest, 2 items on the Verbal Knowledge subtest and 3 items on the Riddles subtest. Interestingly, there were items on all three subtests which both the EFL and EAL children found challenging and therefore potentially not appropriate for the South African context. Finally, through the use of additional questions, further insight was provided into the difficulties experienced by the EFL and EAL children. The themes around the difficulties stemmed from the content of the items, exposure to knowledge and understanding the instructions of the items. This research ultimately found that the items within the subtests of the Knowledge Scale need to be revised if they are to be used in the South African context as part of a broader psychoeducational assessment.