

Linguistic Profiling of Language Disorders

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ABSTRACT

The history of the evolution of language assessments for children and adults with language disorders is described briefly. This is followed by a discussion on language assessment of the clinical population with an emphasis on linguistic profiling, illustrated through the Linguistic Profile Test. Discourse analysis, in particular, is highlighted since this is an area that has not received adequate attention.

Keywords: Linguistics, language assessment, children, adults, linguistic profile test, discourse

1. INTRODUCTION

Formalization of assessment for language disorders is initiated when intervention and rehabilitation for individuals with language disorders began to be taken seriously around the middle of the 20th century. Descriptions of language disorders in adults however, predated these by a hundred years. Physicians such as Paul Broca and Carl Wernicke, the forefathers of aphasiology, had begun to assess patients who had developed language disorders subsequent to brain damage by the latter half of the 19th century, in their search for an understanding of brain-language relationships. These assessments were rather rudimentary and consisted mostly of clinical observations of what the patient could not do. This was generally limited to a description of the most striking characteristics of the patients language disorder such as a near total inability to speak as in the case of Broca's "tan tan," or a sudden inability to make sense of spoken language shown by Wernicke's first patients.

This beginning led to more systematic studies of the language disorders as in Henry head's "eye-ear and nose test" and eventually to complex psychometrically based tests such as Schuell's Minnesota Test