MULTICULTURAL ASSESSMENT PRACTICES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

EXAMINING SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS' SELF-EFFICACY

by

Paola J. Flores

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand speech-language pathologists'
(SLP) self-efficacy beliefs toward assessing culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students
within public elementary schools in California. Bandura's self-efficacy theory guided this study
since it evaluated SLPs' belief in their capacity to manage their motivation, behavior, and social
environment to carry out appropriate assessment procedures for CLD students. As not all
students from CLD backgrounds are accurately identified, gathering the SLPs' lived experiences
regarding current assessment practices helped provide insight into the appropriate identification
of SLI. Participants included SLPs employed by rural public school districts in California, with
students with cultural and ethnic diversity composing more than half the student population. The
participants involved in this study were determined through total population sampling. Data were
gathered through interviews, focus group discussions, and prompt letters. Three themes emerged
from the data: understanding language and cultural sensitivity, the influence on confidence, and
the effects of collaborative experiences when conducting multicultural assessments. Subthemes
included: continual training, limited resources, pressure, uncertainty, balancing language
difference versus disorder, team assessment, and colleague collaboration. The study guided
implications for school districts and SLPs, emphasizing the significance of implementing
policies and practices that promote culturally responsive assessments. Future research is
recommended to expand the scope of the study to include varied sample pools, examine the
effectiveness of specific resources to aid in assessment, and explore the long-term impact of
appropriate SLI identification.

Keywords: speech-language impairment, speech-language pathology, self-efficacy,
culturally and linguistically diverse, assessment practices

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Dedication

To the tiny voice in your head encouraging you to accomplish your wildest dreams.

Acknowledgments

I am incredibly grateful to my supervisors, Dr. Strafaccia and Dr. Jones, for their invaluable advice, technical support, and patience during my Ph.D. study. Their immense knowledge and great experience have encouraged me throughout my academic research. I also could not have undertaken this journey without the faculty and staff at the University of the Pacific, Stockton, who generously provided support and shaped my experience as a speech-language pathologist. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my family, friends, mentors, and mentees for their tremendous understanding, encouragement, and unwavering belief in me.

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List of Abbreviations

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD)

Individualized Education Plan or Program (IEP)

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Primary Language (L1)

Second Language (L2)

Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)

Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)

Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)

Response to Intervention (RtI)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Over the last decade, the number of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CLD) in special education has increased (Santhanam et al., 2018). Although most speech-language pathologists (SLPs) resort to standardized assessments to examine speech-language skills, researchers showed that a comprehensive evaluation is required to effectively identify specific-language impairment (SLI) in students from CLD backgrounds (Chen & Lindo, 2018; Santhanam et al., 2018). Limited training on cultural and linguistic influences among SLPs is one barrier that affects completing a comprehensive assessment (Giess & Serianni, 2018). This research is significant as there is a growing number of students from CLD backgrounds, and it is imperative to appropriately identify SLI in the CLD population. This qualitative phenomenological design evaluated SLPs' self-efficacy toward assessment practice for students from CLD backgrounds.

Background

Due to the increase in the CLD population in California's public school system, there is a necessity to employ culturally appropriate assessment procedures when assessing SLI eligibility. SLPs currently do not have explicitly defined assessment procedures to determine accurate SLI eligibility in students from CLD backgrounds, resulting in under-identification or over-identification of the CLD population (Kohnert, 2010; Levey et al., 2020; Paradis, 2005; Hopkins et al., 2019). To successfully discriminate between language acquisition, language difference, and a language disorder, SLPs must study cultural and linguistic variances, environmental influences, and the ability to learn over time (Santhanam et al., 2018). In addition, alternative means of assessment in the student's first language (L1) and second language (L2) may lead to

appropriate identification of SLI in CLD populations (Laing & Kamhi, 2003; Levey et al., 2020). Examining SLPs' experiences and perceptions in assessment may lead to preserving best practices and adhering to culturally and linguistically sensitive evaluations. The following section explored the historical, social, and theoretical contexts of self-efficacy among SLPs relating to multicultural assessment practices.

Historical Context

Assessment practice research has identified SLI as one of the 13 disability criteria for special education that is defined as a speech or language impairment with no known cause (Leonard, 2014). No known etiology signifies that no other driving factors, such as hearing loss, low cognitive impairment, or another disability, impact the language deficit (Leonard, 2014). Specifically, SLI is a disorder that affects about 7% of the population and is the most common disability among preschoolers (Leonard, 2014). To qualify under SLI, students in California must score at least 1.5 standard deviations below chronological age or developmental level on two or more standardized assessments in one or more areas of language development (34 C.F.R. Section 300.8(c)(11)). In place of a standardized evaluation, one may include an analysis of a fifty-utterance language sample (34 C.F.R. Section 300.8(c)(11)).

Furthermore, the student's language performance must have a negative impact on their educational services to qualify under SLI. Given the student's needs, the evaluating SLP may administer other alternative assessments to determine eligibility. However, there are no additional or specific directions for conducting an alternative evaluation and the components it needs to include (Robinson & Norton, 2019). Currently, there are no clear guidelines for SLPs to follow when evaluating students from CLD backgrounds exposed to more than one language or dialect.

When evaluating SLI, SLPs may need to interpret students' speech-language abilities from a distinct lens, as SLI in students from CLD backgrounds presents differently when compared to SLI in students from monolingual backgrounds (Oetting, 2018). Thus, SLPs must analyze cultural and linguistic features to differentiate between a language difference and a language disorder effectively. For example, when SLI is present in Spanish-English bilinguals, there are apparent deficits across lexical, semantic, and processing areas in L1 and L2 (Mendez & Simon-Cereijido, 2019). Furthermore, there are only deficits in L2 when the Spanish-English bilingual students exhibit typical language learning patterns. Consequently, SLPs must distinguish the disorder within the diversity framework to appropriately assess the speech-language skills of students from CLD backgrounds for SLI (Mendez & Simon-Cereijido, 2019; Oetting, 2018).

Social Context

In terms of current practices, this topic may encourage using alternative assessment procedures when evaluating the eligibility of SLI in students from CLD backgrounds rather than relying primarily on performance on English-only standardized assessment results. Instead, a detailed examination of the student's speech-language skills across each language, dialect, and context is an alternative means of assessment to determine SLI. This study demonstrated the need to shift from English standardized evaluations towards the inclusion of more culturally sensitive and linguistically responsive tests. An example of moving towards inclusion is the execution of a comprehensive pre-assessment process to target the concern of under-identification and over-identification in the CLD population (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021).

Acknowledging linguistic and cultural influences in students from CLD backgrounds can promote the implementation of comprehensive assessment procedures. Between 2004 and 2014,

African American students were significantly identified as having SLI, possibly due to an overreliance on standardized scores that led to the disproportionality in SLI eligibility (Robinson & Norton, 2019). Standardized scores do not consider linguistical influences of African American English (AAE). To illustrate, an African American student who speaks the AAE dialect can be administered a standardized assessment only if the normative sample is representational of the student's background and there is no cultural bias in the assessment questions (Edwards-Gaither, 2018). For instance, there are alternative scoring procedures that allow responses in AAE in addition to Standardized American English (SAE) responses (Edwards-Gaither, 2018). Even though the African American population is an example of one minority, researchers presumed that the significant disproportionality in SLI eligibility is widespread across each minority group due to not having formal guidelines to assess students from CLD backgrounds (Robinson & Norton, 2019).

Developmental speech and language milestones vary dependent on cultural and linguistic influences. For example, a student exposed to two languages simultaneously may exhibit a silent period and consequently delay the acquisition of speech-language skills (Banerjee, 2022; Eisenwort et al., 2018). Students who have grown up speaking many languages may have linguistic profiles that, at first glance, mimic the shape of monolingual speakers with SLI (Eisenwort et al., 2018). However, a student may be exposed to two languages sequentially and have a drastically distinct profile for speech-language acquisition compared to a student learning two languages simultaneously (Banerjee, 2022; Eisenwort et al., 2018). Besides exposure to simultaneous or sequential bilingualism, many other factors can impact a student's speech-language development. Language assessment in the student's native language is crucial for students from CLD backgrounds who have more severe difficulties learning their second

language (Eisenwort et al., 2018). Thus, it is critical for evaluating SLPs to incorporate features in their assessment process that will determine each factor that can contribute to speech-language development. This includes considering each student's cultural influences that can impact a student's current performance. Cultural influences include cultural background, language exposure, immigration status, and family composition (Aston & Brown, 2020; Edwards et al., 2020). Focusing on the student from CLD backgrounds from a broader lens is vital to execute comprehensive assessment procedures.

Theoretical Context

The exploration of SLPs' efficacy, SLI, and students of CLD backgrounds have been examined through various theoretical lenses. While this study is based on Bandura's self-efficacy theory, which defines self-efficacy as the belief in one's ability to plan, execute, and complete a task (Bandura & Adams, 1977), various other theories have examined similar topics. Specifically, John Dewey's (1998) theory of critical pragmatism in education posits that professionals should constantly review and re-evaluate their techniques and curriculum design to enhance instruction and produce a valuable outcome for the students. The origins of pragmatism suggest that one's ideas should be evaluated based on the results of interpretations of a practical problem (Dewey, 1998; Landon-Hays et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2018). The idea of self-efficacy, wherein solid knowledge and understanding of a population will lead to positive beliefs about one's capacity to encourage student learning and engagement, is emphasized by critical pragmatism. Critical pragmatism emphasizes that educators must continuously improve their knowledge of instructional practices and strategies to support their students best (Bandura & Adams, 1977; Landon-Hays et al., 2020). The idea of critical pragmatism has influenced this study by highlighting the significance of educator knowledge and ongoing growth of their

expertise to improve their instructional practices, which would favorably affect educator self-efficacy and, consequently, student results (Dewey, 1998).

As this proposed study aimed to explore how a lack of SLP knowledge of the characteristics of SLI in CLD students can have a perceived impact on SLI eligibility, the underpinning of self-efficacy is present, indicating that SLP training, knowledge, and experiences all play a role in student outcomes (Landon-Hays et al., 2020; McBride, 2022; Sharma et al., 2018). This theory promotes examining SLPs' experiences in evaluating students from CLD backgrounds to understand where their basis of knowledge stems from and improve their practice, understanding, and execution of assessment procedures to improve student outcomes. While the theory of self-efficacy highlights a need for continual improvement, this study extended that notion by demonstrating a pedagogical challenge when SLP with various levels of understanding, knowledge, and experiences execute assessments in students from CLD backgrounds.

Problem Statement

The problem is that the self-efficacy of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) affects the correct identification of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) elementary students during assessment procedures. Consequently, SLPs must assess for linguistic and cultural differences during the assessment process (Chen & Lindo, 2018; Parveen & Santhanam, 2021; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). This research is necessary to develop an assessment procedure that considers cultural and linguistic variances (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2022; Selin et al., 2022). The examination is crucial because it impacts the proper identification of speech or language impairment (SLI) in CLD populations (Raben et al., 2019). As a result, SLPs can accurately identify CLD students with SLI and provide appropriate services. At the same time, SLPs can

also identify CLD students that exhibit a language or cultural difference and avoid over-identifying SLI (Raben et al., 2019). Many SLPs resort to standardized assessment approaches to identify students with SLI, which is problematic since this practice cannot be applied to students from CLD populations. Although using standardized assessments to determine SLI is usually acceptable, the normative sample of standardized assessments only sometimes accounts for the performance of students from CLD backgrounds (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2022). Thus, standardized assessments can inadvertently lead to over-identification, and at times under-identification, of SLI in CLD populations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the self-efficacy experienced during multicultural assessments with culturally and linguistically diverse students for speech-language pathologists at rural public school districts in California. At this stage of the research, self-efficacy experienced during multicultural assessments with culturally and linguistically diverse students were generally defined as the SLPs' capacity to plan, carry out, and conduct appropriate assessment procedures for CLD students (Bandura & Adams, 1977). Resultantly, an exploration of enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasions, and physiological states as factors of self-efficacy was also explored (Bandura & Adams, 1977). The SLPs' lived experiences regarding implementing comprehensive pre-intervention measures that can be utilized to assess students' speech and language skills was also investigated to develop a more robust understanding of the assessment process.

Significance of the Study

This study had theoretical, empirical, and practical significance for educators, administrators, parents, and students from CLD backgrounds. The observed significance of the

study demonstrated the difference between SLPs' perceptions and current research on best

practices for assessing students from CLD backgrounds and highlight the barriers impeding

appropriate identification of SLI in students from CLD backgrounds. The study's practical

significance influenced assessment procedures for appropriately identifying SLI. This is

significant for stakeholders who are invested in proper identification to provide the student

support needed. Furthermore, it provided valuable information for graduate programs on

instructing current graduate clinicians on appropriate assessment procedures for students from

CLD populations. The results of this study also had theoretical significance on the theory of self-

efficacy by interpreting SLPs' role in determining their execution of evaluation procedures

(Bandura & Adams, 1977). Regarding self-efficacy, the SLP's education, experiences, and

unique skillset facilitates their clinical decision-making process in evaluating students from CLD

backgrounds. This theory, thus, relates to multicultural assessment practices as it allows SLPs to

digest information, interpret findings, and apply them to influence the assessment practices of

CLD students.

Research Questions

This hermeneutic phenomenological study aimed to understand the lived experiences of

SLPs conducting assessments of CLD students enrolled in kindergarten through sixth-grade

public school districts within a rural county in California. The goal of a hermeneutic

phenomenological study was to understand the genuine meaning of the phenomenon and allow

the lived experiences of SLPs to emerge naturally (Moustakas, 1994). Thus, an exploration of

SLPs during the assessment process of CLD student populations was examined.

Central Research Question

How do elementary school SLPs describe their self-efficacy during multicultural assessments for culturally and linguistically diverse students?

Sub-Question One

How do elementary school speech-language pathologists describe influential experiences of multicultural assessment?

Sub-Question Two

How do elementary school speech-language pathologists describe vicarious experiences of multicultural assessments?

Sub-Question Three

How do elementary school speech-language pathologists describe physiological feedback of multicultural assessments?

Sub-Question Four

How do elementary school speech-language pathologists describe performance feedback of multicultural assessments?

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Definitions

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1. *Culturally and linguistically diverse* - A characteristic of a population whose language, cultural beliefs, and background may differ from mainstream culture (Chen & Lindo, 2018).

2. *Diversity* - Composed of a range of human characteristics that impact a student's ability to absorb information from, react to, or engage in a school environment. These traits may be overt or hidden, acknowledged by the person or not, and biological, environmental, or societal in origin. Some characteristics are only significant when describing an

individual, whereas others are more significant when representing a group (Shapiro et al., 2001).

3. *Expressive Language Disorder* - Occurs when one has difficulty expressing thoughts, ideas, and emotions (Rinaldi et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2019).

4. *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* - The United States' special education statute in which schools are required to identify and assess students who may have difficulties accessing their academics at no cost to the family (Yell et al., 2020).

5. *Individualized Education Plan or Program* - Individualized Education Plan or Program that outlines the special education accommodations, modifications, services, and supports a student will require to succeed in school *(Yell et al., 2020).*

6. *Language* - Includes the words we use and how we use them to share ideas and get what we want; composed of three major aspects: form, content, and use (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2019; Bloom & Lahey, 1978).

7. *Least Restrictive Environment* - The idea that students in special education spend as much time in general education as possible; each student's proposed classroom setting is unique to their abilities (Williamson et al., 2020).

8. *Phenomenology* - The shared meaning between individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

9. *Primary language* - An individual's first or native language (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2022).

10. *Receptive Language Disorder* - Manifests as difficulty understanding what others say (Rinaldi et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2019).

11. *Response to Intervention* - A multi-tiered support structure that delivers interventions and services to struggling students (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2020).

12. *Secondary language* - An individual's second language (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2022).

13. *Self-efficacy* - Relates to an individual's confidence and belief in their ability to carry out the behaviors required to achieve goals (Bandura & Adams, 1977).

14. *Sounds* - A phonetically distinct unit of speech (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association 2019; Farquharson & Tambyraja, 2019).

15. *Speech or language impairment* - Exhibited in approximately 7% of the population, as demonstrated by a significant deficit in language with no known etiology (Leonard, 2014).

16. *Speech-language pathologist* - Speech-language pathologists assess, diagnose, prevent, and treat speech, voice, language, cognitive communicative, and swallowing disorders across the lifespan (Giess & Serianni, 2018).

Summary

The perception of self-efficacy inhibiting SLPs has been underexplored in relation to assessment practices in students from CLD backgrounds. Self-efficacy in SLPs impacts actual assessment practices versus execution of best practices, as delineated in the current research when identifying SLI in students from CLD backgrounds. As determined in existing studies, there is an increase in literature on appropriate identification practices in students from CLD backgrounds. However, despite the research on serving the CLD population, the problem is that many SLPs needed to apply best practices to identify SLI in CLD populations appropriately. This study focused on analyzing SLPs' perceived self-efficacy, identifying potential barriers in executing evidence-based practices, and interpreting its repercussions upon identification of SLI.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

A systematic review of the literature was conducted to explore the problem of assessment procedures employed to evaluate the speech-language skills of students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds, as well as the role of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and their perceived self-efficacy for assessing CLD students. The problem is that the self-efficacy of SLPs affects the correct identification of CLD students during assessment procedures. Consequently, this chapter reviewed the current literature related to multicultural speech-language assessment practices. In the first section, the theory relevant to the groundwork of multicultural assessment, precisely the idea of self-efficacy (Bandura & Adams, 1977), was discussed, followed by a synthesis of recent literature regarding multicultural speech-language assessment procedures. Specifically, the review of literature examines linguistic influence, cultural factors of speech development, and assessment alternatives. The exploration of literature further examines culturally responsive assessments and their effect on special education eligibility. Finally, an examination of SLPs' perceived self-efficacy about working with students from CLD backgrounds is considered.

Theoretical Framework

New research studies are often grounded in previous theories, such as Albert Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory of self-efficacy revolving around the SLP's growth and professional development to embody an effective and unbiased clinician who adheres to evidence-based practices (Bandura & Adams, 1977). Bandura's (1977) writings and his self-efficacy theory served as the foundation for this investigation. Self-efficacy theory stems from the level of confidence in an individual when executing a specific activity (Bandura & Adams,

1977). Confidence increases through applying the tasks and can be influenced by exposure to new knowledge and increased opportunities to practice the learned skillset (Chu, 2013).

The self-efficacy theory describes individuals' learning by observation and is followed by applying such actions or behaviors (Bandura & Adams, 1977). A review of speech-language assessment literature indicates an increase in students from CLD backgrounds; therefore, there is an expansion of knowledge regarding the development of speech and language skills of students from CLD backgrounds and its influence across social and cultural contexts (Arias & Friberg, 2017; Dubasik & Valdivia, 2021; Oetting, 2018; Santhanam et al., 2018). Thus, self-efficacy is a critical component of an SLP's assessment procedures as it allows past experiences to influence future actions.

As the self-efficacy theory indicates, self-efficacy is produced through four key sources: enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasions, and physiological and emotional states (Bandura & Adams, 1977). Enactive mastery experiences provide compelling sentiments because of taking on complex tasks and achieving or failing (Bandura & Adams, 1977). The outcomes of enactive mastery experiences significantly impact self-efficacy (Bandura & Adams, 1977). The process of cognitively processing all four sources of self-efficacy and determining the weight and amount of integration each source receives leads to the formation of influential beliefs (Bandura & Adams, 1997). When combined with prior experiences, information obtained from sources of self-efficacy has the potential to develop efficacious beliefs (Bandura, 1997). School districts may accurately identify CLD students with speech or language impairments (SLI) by studying which factors may promote the development of SLPs' self-efficacy. Regarding self-efficacy, the SLP's education, experiences, and unique skillset facilitate their clinical decision-making process in evaluating students from CLD backgrounds. Thus, this

theory relates to multicultural assessment practices as it allows SLPs to digest information, interpret findings, and apply them to influence a student's SLI assessment.

This proposed topic incorporated the theory of self-efficacy within the research questions, as the questions seek to understand SLPs' experiences and how factors such as previous experience, continuous training, and perceived knowledge play a role in the beliefs in their ability to evaluate students from CLD (Bandura, 1997). The data collection techniques used in this study align with the research questions and demonstrate SLPs' experiences to reveal SLPs' beliefs about their capacities and highlight their perceived impact on assessment outcomes in the CLD population. This proposed topic emphasized how self-theoretical efficacy's framework can be extended by emphasizing that SLPs' knowledge and belief in their capacity to assess CLD students are gained from their experiences, training, and education. It aimed to contribute to the body of existing research. This proposed research narrowed the gaps regarding a general understanding that SLPs possess, where and if they were exposed to or provided strategies for evaluating students from CLD backgrounds, and how they feel their culmination of knowledge correlates to their ability to effectively conduct evaluations by specifically examining the experiences of SLPs working with CLD populations. Even though self-efficacy in SLPs has been widely studied and is included in current literature, this suggested study expanded on the idea by examining the subject in relation to the CLD student population.

Related Literature

Following is a summary of related literature on SLPs' perceived self-efficacy in relation to assessment practices for CLD students. There is abundant literature on assessment procedures and the use of standardized assessments to determine SLI eligibility (Edwards-Gaither, 2018). Additionally, with the growing CLD population, there has been an increase in cultural and

linguistic factors impacting speech and language development (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2017; Edwards et al., 2020). There is, however, limited research related to the self-efficacy of SLPs in the assessment of SLI in CLD students (Narayanan & Ramsdell, 2022; Santhanam et al., 2018). This literature review reflects on eligibility criteria for SLI, the impact of CLD backgrounds, factors that influence speech-language development, culturally responsive assessment practice, appropriate identification of SLI, and how-efficacy influences all aspects of an SLPs' assessment.

Speech or Language Impairment

In general, the field of special education covers various services offered in distinct methods (Francisco et al., 2020; Kauffman et al., 2018). Special education aims to cater to the individual needs of students with disabilities (Fain et al., 2019; Kauffman et al., 2018). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the federal legislation that establishes and governs special education (34 C.F.R. Section 300.8(c)(11); Yell et al., 2020). Students between the ages of three and 21 years who satisfy specific requirements must receive special education services from public schools (34 C.F.R. Section 300.8(c)(11); Yell et al., 2020). A student must possess a recognized disability in one of the 13 categories listed in the IDEA and require special education to access the general education curriculum to be eligible for special education services within a public school (34 C.F.R. Section 300.8(c)(11)).

A uniform, one size fits all strategy cannot be applied in special education due to the unique needs of each student. As the needs of students vary greatly, the types of services and their applications can also vary. For example, special education does not automatically entail keeping students in a specialized classroom all day (Kauffman et al., 2018). On the contrary, special education students are required by federal law to spend as much time as possible in

regular classes (34 C.F.R. Section 300.8(c)(11)). The least restrictive environment (LRE) is consequently determined by discussing the appropriate setting to meet the student's needs (Bolourian et al., 2020; Williamson et al., 2020). A prominent goal of special education is to give each student the tools required to advance in their education (Kauffman et al., 2018; Williamson et al., 2020). Within a student's individualized education plan (IEP), the tools and environment warranted to access education appropriately are specifically delineated (Yell et al., 2020). Tools, services, environment, accommodations, and modifications are discussed and determined by the IEP team, composed of teachers, families, administrators, and specialists (e.g., SLPs, school psychologists, and occupational therapists) (Yell et al., 2020).

SLI is one of the 13 disability categories within special education (Gress & Hill, 2018; Ireland et al., 2020; Prelock et al., 2008; Yell et al., 2020). Evaluating SLPs can determine the eligibility of SLI (Gress & Hill, 2018; Prelock et al., 2008; Ireland et al., 2020). SLI includes a communication condition such as stuttering, poor articulation skills, a language deficit, or a voice impairment that has a negative impact on a student's academic achievement (34 C.F.R. Section 300.8(c)(11)). Generally, the procedures depend on the type of communication disorder (Karem & Washington, 2021; Prelock et al., 2008). As such, SLI is divided into two categories: speech or language (Farquharson & Tambyraja, 2019; Heppner, 2020; Ireland et al., 2020; Krueger, 2019).

Speech refers to how sounds and words are generated, whereas language is the use of words to receive and communicate information (Farquharson & Tambyraja, 2019; Ireland et al., 2020; Ito et al., 2011; Krueger, 2019). Students with speech impairments may struggle with articulation, fluency, vocal quality, pitch, or resonance (Heppner, 2020; Ireland et al., 2020). Consequently, speech encompasses articulation, fluency, and voice disorders (Farquharson &

Tambyraja, 2019; Krueger, 2019). Whereas language refers to the form, content, and use of words to share ideas and express what one wants (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2019; Prelock et al., 2008). Students with language impairments may struggle to comprehend others and express themselves and present as a receptive language disorder, expressive language disorder, or a mix of both (Heppner, 2020; Murza & Ehren, 2020). A receptive language disorder manifests as difficulty understanding what others say (Rinaldi et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2019). An expressive language disorder occurs when one has difficulty expressing thoughts, ideas, and emotions (Rinaldi et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2019). Students may also present with receptive and expressive language disorders (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2019). Furthermore, a student may have difficulty in distinct areas of language, including its form, content, and use (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2019; Heppner, 2020). Depending on SLI eligibility criteria, students can have deficits only in speech, language, or both (Heppner, 2020; Ireland et al., 2020).

Eligibility of Speech or Language Impairment

Although SLI is a disability, IDEA does not provide explicit guidelines for any of the communication impairments encompassed under the label of SLI (34 C.F.R. Section 300.8(c)(11); Selin et al., 2022). Consequently, states' eligibility guidelines vary (Karem & Washington, 2021; Selin et al., 2022). Moreover, SLI eligibility standards differ depending on the type of communication disorder and state regulations (Dragoo & Lomax, 2020; Farquharson & Tambyraja, 2019). In determining eligibility for special education, evaluating SLPs must consider if the students' needs meet the requirements of a three-prong test (Francisco et al., 2020; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). Students must pass a similar three-prong test to qualify for disabilities, including SLI (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). The first part of the three-prong test is

fulfilled by conducting a thorough assessment to determine if the student demonstrates severe deficits in speech or language with no known etiologies (Fulcher-Rood et al., 2018; Gress & Hill, 2018). Next, the evaluating SLP must determine if the second part of the three-prong test is met by reviewing if the student's performance in school is adversely impacted by SLI (Fulcher-Rood et al., 2018). In other words, the students' difficulty in speech or language must impede their ability to access the curriculum and deter their engagement in meaningful conversations with peers and teachers (Oetting, 2018; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2022). Finally, the evaluating SLP determines if specialized speech or language services are necessary for students to obtain and access free public education (Gress & Hill, 2018). In deciding if SLP needs are required, the evaluating SLP considers if the student's disorder warrants direct speech-language remediation to access the general education curriculum (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2022).

Following a review of eligibility criteria for SLI across 15 states, language disorders are more likely to have SLI qualifying criteria, including standardized, norm-referenced assessments (Dragoo & Lomax, 2020). On the contrary, speech disorders, such as articulation, fluency, and voice disorders, typically employ qualitative methods, such as error analysis and quantitative methods for delivering assessments (Bawayan et al., 2022; Dragoo & Lomax, 2020; Farquharson & Tambyraja, 2019). For instance, the state qualifying criteria may employ speech-language samples to indicate the number of errors, percentages of dysfluencies, the number of physical tension, or other secondary behaviors to quantify assessment data (Bawayan et al., 2022; Farquharson & Tambyraja, 2019). When identifying students with language disorders, some states offer criteria utilizing norm-referenced assessments (Dragoo & Lomax, 2020). Other states incorporate additional criteria for determining students with fluency and articulation disorders, including data from standardized, norm-referenced assessments or percentage of errors (Dragoo

& Lomax, 2020). The most consistent eligibility requirements across states pertain to articulation and language disorders (Castilla-Earls et al., 2020; Dragoo & Lomax, 2020).

While some states impose general eligibility guidelines for language disorders, others clearly specify eligibility criteria (Dragoo & Lomax, 2020). A student may meet the requirements for SLI under a language disorder in states that specify qualifying criteria if the assessment results are two standard deviations or more below the mean on a standardized, norm-referenced test. Suppose a standardized, norm-referenced assessment is not available to provide evidence of a two-standard deviation deficit. In that case, some states extend this eligibility by specifying that a student may be evaluated using two documented assessment procedures that indicate a significant language difference from expectations based on age, developmental stage, or cognitive level (Castilla-Earls et al., 2020; Dragoo & Lomax, 2020). California is an example of a state that extends details in eligibility guidelines by proposing alternative assessment procedures (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021).

To qualify for a language disorder under SLI within the California public school system, students must score 1.5 standard deviations or more below chronological age or developmental level on two or more standardized assessments within the same area of language ((34 C.F.R. Section 300.8(c)(11)). The same area of language includes semantics, syntax, or pragmatics (34 C.F.R. Section 300.8(c)(11)). The evaluating SLP may also analyze a student's fifty-utterance language sample in place of one of the standardized assessments (34 C.F.R. Section 300.8(c)(11); Bawayan et al., 2022; Castilla-Earls et al., 2020; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). On the other hand, to qualify for articulation disorder under SLI, the student's production of speech sound must be below that expected for their chronological age or developmental level and adversely affects educational performance (34 C.F.R. Section 300.8(c)(11); Castilla-Earls et al.,

2020). Due to the unique composition of speech and language development in students from CLD backgrounds, a standardized assessment may not be an effective marker in determining SLI.

Standardized Assessments and CLD Disproportionality

Special education assessments aim to create a student's knowledge and capabilities profile. By establishing a student's eligibility for special education services, such evaluation outcomes may impact their educational future. For students from CLD backgrounds, assessments designed for middle-class Caucasian students may not be appropriate as they may erroneously mark cultural or linguistic influences as errors (Edwards-Gaither, 2018). Therefore, the evaluation processes used to determine a student's eligibility for special education generally can affect the representation of CLD students in special education.

As most students from CLD backgrounds are not represented in the normative sample in standardized assessments, many standardized assessments are consequently not appropriate due to the normative sample basis, with the normative sample being predominately middle-class and Caucasian students (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). Furthermore, standardized assessment procedures do not account for any cultural or linguistic bias that can affect accurately scoring a CLD student's responses (Cruz & Firestone, 2022; Fulcher-Rood et al., 2019; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). When the normative sample does not represent the student's language and cultural differences, results from standardized tests should be used as an informal measurement (Bawayan & Brown, 2022; De Lamo White & Jin, 2011). The expected speech or language levels can be examined with an alternative assessment when standardized examinations may be considered invalid or inappropriate (34 C.F.R. Section 300.8(c)(11)). However, there are no specific guidelines on what the alternative assessments entail. An investigation of special

education assessment procedures uncovered that most evaluators regularly utilize norm-referenced, standardized, decontextualized assessments conducted solely in a clinical context despite recommendations to achieve informal measures for students of CLD backgrounds (Bawayan & Brown, 2022; Chen & Lindo, 2018; Denman et al., 2021; Santhanam et al., 2018).

Using norm-referenced, standardized assessments on CLD populations consequently resulted in legal actions. For example, legal actions in the early 1970s in California revealed a pattern in which schools disproportionately labeled Latinx, African American, and American Indian students as intellectually disabled and placed them in self-contained classes (Diana v. California State Board of Education, 1970; Hobson v. Hansen, 1967; Larry P. v. Riles, 1979). For example, in one case, Monterey County schools administered an English-language intelligence quotient (IQ) test to students from monolingual Spanish-speaking backgrounds, from which the students were classified as intellectually disabled based on the findings (Diana v. California State Board of Education, 1970). Additionally, standardization groups made up entirely of white monolingual English speakers were used to norm the evaluations used to identify CLD students (Hobson v. Hansen, 1967; Larry P. v. Riles, 1979;).

Prior to Diana v. California State Board of Education (1970), only English was used to evaluate students for special education. In addition, IQ assessments included questions in English that heavily relied on verbal responses and thus created another bias toward non-native English speakers (Bekele, 2019; Blackmon, 2022). Students who did not grow up in a typical white middle-class family were more likely to struggle with IQ questions. As a result, numerous schools misidentified students in special education programs. The Diana v. CA State Board of Education (1970) case resulted from a monolingual psychologist administering an English-only assessment to Spanish speakers to determine eligibility for special education. Diana and eight

other students were subsequently enrolled in special education programs after their school erroneously identified them as students with intellectual disabilities, even though all nine students' first languages were Spanish. Despite their native language (L1) being Spanish, they were administered the IQ test in English to determine their eligibility for intellectual disability.

Consequently, the use of English-only IQ assessment to classify students as needing special education was contested in this case (Diana v. California State Board of Education, 1970). The goal was to retest the students in their L1 to determine eligibility for special education. Ultimately, the court decided in Diana's favor by requiring the nine students to be assessed in the L1 to determine special education eligibility (Diana v. California State Board of Education, 1970). The court agreed that all future students in California evaluated for special education had to be examined in their L1 or undergo a nonverbal assessment (Diana v. California State Board of Education, 1970). Other Mexican American students who had already been identified with an intellectual disability also had to abide by this guideline (Blackmon, 2022). Following this case, the California Department of Education (CDE) ordered testing to be conducted in the student's native language to help deter placement due to limited English exposure (Blackmon, 2022). Indirectly, this case impacted the creation of standardized assessments that can be administered in other languages (Bekele, 2019).

Aside from linguistic bias in administering English-only standardized assessments to CLD populations, there is also cultural bias. For example, the class action lawsuit Larry P. v. Riles (1979) demonstrated the unfair representation of African American students in special education. The school administration was charged with cultural bias in the class action case in the evaluation, procedures, and usage of standardized IQ tests. The court held that IQ tests were insufficient to determine where to place students with disabilities (Larry P. v. Riles, 1979; Lyons

et al., 2021). The court also held that IQ tests were discriminatory due to cultural bias (Lyons et al., 2021). IQ tests were viewed as biased since the normative sample primarily consisted of Caucasian, English-speaking students from middle-class backgrounds (Lyons et al., 2021; Woods & Graves, 2021). As a result, the IQ assessments did not appropriately capture African American students' language and cultural differences.

Results of the Larry P. v. Riles (1979) class action lawsuit also underlined the necessity for assessments that are impartial and sensitive to cultural differences to identify African American adolescents with disabilities correctly. Minorities continue to be overrepresented in special education notwithstanding the adoption of Larry P. v. Riles (1979) and its subsequent restriction on the use of IQ tests on African American students in California's public school system (Lyons et al., 2021; Woods & Graves, 2021). There are currently no effective, culturally competent assessment methods to effectively identify African American students and other students with disabilities, despite the court's ruling goal of preventing assessment prejudice (Woods & Graves, 2021). Even if IQ and other assessments derived from them are prohibited for use with African American children, other standardized tests considered acceptable with this demographic fail to account for linguistic or cultural factors (Aston & Brown, 2020). Therefore, Larry P. v. Riles (1979) has increased the challenges in evaluating minority students by failing to address the cause of the disproportionate representation of minorities in special education.

Larry P. v. Riles (1979) significantly impacted special education as it considered the validity of assessments and the need to eliminate any potential prejudice against the student's background (Lyons et al., 2021; Powers et al., 2021). A standardized assessment, for instance, could only be given to an African American student who uses the African American English (AAE) dialect if the following criteria are met: the normative sample is representative of the

student's background, there are alternate scoring options that permit responses in AAE, and the assessment questions have no cultural bias (Edwards-Gaither, 2018). Additionally, there was a shift towards including multiple assessments in determining a student's eligibility for special education rather than relying on a single standardized score (Aston & Brown, 2020). Informal assessments, non-standardized tests, observations, health, developmental histories, and dynamic evaluations can all comprise comprehensive evaluations (Bawayan & Brown, 2022; Lyons et al., 2021). Instead of relying on a single standardized assessment score based on discriminatory bias, the examiner can develop a more realistic picture of the student's skills and abilities by incorporating varied assessment methods.

Researchers suggest changing the lens and approaching the problem from a broader viewpoint to address the persistent unequal representation of minority pupils in special education (Aston & Brown, 2020; Edwards-Gaither, 2018). For instance, the focus on the critical issue at hand, systemic racism, can aid in identifying possible solutions for the unequal representation of students from CLD backgrounds in special education (Aston & Brown, 2020). Additionally, researchers advised recognizing racism as the foundation of the problem, developing fair evaluation processes, and then reinstating present regulations to concentrate on equity throughout the unique education qualifying process (Aston & Brown, 2020).

It is critical to develop unbiased assessment procedures by focusing on minority students from a broader lens to concentrate on equity within special education. This includes considering each student's cultural background, language exposure, immigration status, and family composition, among other aspects that can impact a student's academic performance (Aston & Brown, 2020; Edwards-Gaither, 2018). Furthermore, developing increased accountability practices ensures no differences between best procedures and actual practices in evaluating CLD

students (Powers et al., 2021). Despite training and prior knowledge of best practices, special education evaluators, including SLPs and school psychologists, continue to deliver evaluations containing cultural bias (Powers et al., 2021). Therefore, successfully adopting culturally sensitive assessment procedures must entail accountability, as school-based SLPs have an implicit bias toward immigrants (Nelson & Wilson, 2021). Despite access to the latest research supporting best practices for assessing students from CLD backgrounds, such as immigrants, many SLPs did not prioritize adhering to these practices or regularly employing the best techniques (Nelson & Wilson, 2021).

Including numerous assessments as part of a student's special education assessment, as opposed to earlier methods that relied on the results of one standardized evaluation for eligibility, was a beneficial influence gained from Larry P. v. Riles (1979). In alignment with this positive consequence, adopting a multifaceted strategy when developing a thorough assessment for students from CLD backgrounds can be advantageous (Edwards-Gaither, 2018). To raise awareness of the possibility of linguistic bias in speech-language assessments, SLPs must continue their training in professional development (Edwards-Gaither, 2018). The administration of a case history, informal assessments, a checklist of language skills, tests of language competency, and evaluations in the student's native language or dialect are among the other multifaceted strategies that accurately identify SLI in students from CLD backgrounds (Bawayan & Brown, 2022; Edwards-Gaither, 2018; Powers et al., 2021). Due to various class action lawsuits such as Larry P. v. Riles (1979) and Diana v. Board of Education (1970), there is a push to incorporate multiple assessment methods to create a thorough evaluation of a student's speech-language abilities.

Impact of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

Currently, SLPs are in a transformative role due to the ever-changing composition of caseloads secondary to the growing diversity in the United States. Within the United States, 22% of school-age children speak a language besides English (Parveen & Santhanam, 2021), while only 6% of American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) SLPs are multilingual (2019). Responsively, it is anticipated that the number of English language learners will increase in the future (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009; Prath, 2019). There are three specific ways in which these shifting demographics have directly impacted SLI eligibility. First, increased referrals with difficulty separating learning and communication challenges resulting from language learning tendencies. Second, increased complex assessments with the need to incorporate linguistic and cultural influences. Third, higher and disproportionate caseloads due to the over-identification of SLI (Prath, 2019). Due to the increased population of students from CLD backgrounds, there is a need for freely accessible information on distinguishing a language variation from a disorder because the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of SLPs do not coincide with those of the current population. Furthermore, it is imperative to understand how SLI in students from CLD backgrounds may present differently when compared to SLI in students from monolingual backgrounds (Alfano et al., 2021; Oetting, 2018). Thus, SLPs must analyze cultural and linguistic differences to effectively differentiate between a difference and a disorder.

To appropriately differentiate difference and disorder, SLPs must adopt an approach that considers the diverse, intersectional identities of students from CLD backgrounds when assessing speech-language skills (Alfano et al., 2021; Castilla-Earls et al., 2020). These overlapping

identities include but are not limited to, a student's culture, language, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and other sociodemographic characteristics (Hernandez-Saca et al., 2018; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). SLPs conducting assessments need to be proactive in thinking about how the linguistic needs of CLD students might affect speech and language development. Examining SLPs must also realize that evidence-based and culturally responsive assessment practices do not solely confine to standardized, norm-referenced tests (Alfano et al., 2021; Daub et al., 2021). Instead, the role of the examining SLP is to determine whether additional information is needed to substantiate results regarding a student's linguistic skills (Daub et al., 2021). While obtaining information from these areas is valuable, SLPs are deterred from solely deriving professional decisions based on factors such as race, culture, and disability status (Edge et al., 2016; Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2006).

An SLP's increased knowledge of SLI and how it presents in students from CLD backgrounds is crucial in executing a culturally responsive assessment procedure (Alfano et al., 2021; Counts et al., 2018; Cruz & Rodl, 2018). When SLIs are present in Spanish-English bilinguals, there are apparent L1 and second language (L2) deficits across lexical, semantic, and processing areas (Mendez & Simon-Cereijido, 2019). Lexical skills are referred to the ability to use words and build sentences in written and spoken language that is naturally appropriate for the context (Mendez & Simon-Cereijido, 2019). Furthermore, there are only deficits in L2 when the Spanish-English bilingual students exhibit typical language learning patterns (Arias & Friberg, 2017; Mendez & Simon-Cereijido, 2019). SLPs are encouraged to analyze L1 and L2 for development and performance strengths and weaknesses (Mendez & Simon-Cereijido, 2019). Thorough analysis may aid SLPs in distinguishing language learning difficulties from language disorders (Bonuck et al., 2021).

Analyzing lexical production in L1 and L2 can indicate the presence of SLI (Auza et al., 2018; Mendez & Simon-Cereijido, 2019). Specifically, analysis of lexical matrices can include the calculation of the mean length of utterances, percentage of nongrammatical sentences, total number of words, and the number of different words. This data can be applied to differentiate typically developing monolingual speakers, Spanish-English bilingual speakers, monolingual speakers with SLI, and Spanish-English bilingual speakers with SLI (Arias & Friberg, 2017; Auza et al., 2018; Mendez & Simon-Cereijido, 2019). Students with SLI demonstrate a shorter mean length of utterances, a less total number of words, and a smaller number of words than typically developing students (Auza et al., 2018). Thus, researchers concluded that analysis of lexical matrices, such as integrating story retelling in the assessment process, can be a valuable approach to accurately identify SLI in students exposed to other languages (Auza et al., 2018). Furthermore, students with average language skills in one language but poor language skills in L2 are considered language learners; rather than exhibiting a language disorder, the student presents with a language difference (Auza et al., 2018; Kohnert, 2010). Overall, a bilingual student must have impaired story-retelling skills in both their L1 and L2 to exhibit a true language disorder (Kohnert, 2010; Mendez & Simon-Cereijido, 2019). By analyzing the student's L1 and L2, SLPs can differentiate poor performance on L2 tasks due to a language disorder rather than attributing poor performance to limited exposure in L2 (Levey et al., 2020). Thereby, effectively addressing under-identification of SLI.

SLPs must distinguish the disorder within the diversity framework to appropriately assess the speech-language skills of students from CLD backgrounds for SLI (Oetting, 2018). The disorder within diversity framework indicates utilizing a repertoire of approaches and metrics to increase the accurate identification of SLI in students from CLD backgrounds. For instance, by

adopting a disorder within the diversity framework, there is an influence to adjust the lens employed during the assessment processes to include more dynamic, informal approaches that are not typically embedded into standardized assessment practices. When assessing the speech-language skills of students from CLD backgrounds, including students exposed to distinct dialects, it is paramount for SLPs to broaden their perspectives toward implementing comprehensive assessment practices (Oetting, 2018). To address the long-standing issue of overdiagnosis and underdiagnosis of language disorders in students from CLD backgrounds, SLPs apply the disorder within difference approach, which acknowledges the requirement to diagnose language disorders within the context of linguistic disparities (Oetting, 2018). This approach was applied across CLD groups containing a variety of students who range significantly in locale, language learning profile, and age (Oetting, 2018). Part of the disorder within difference approach includes the evaluation of morphosyntax, which is consistent with the well-known finding that children with developmental language disorders who speak a variety of languages and dialects exhibit pronounced morphosyntactic deficits when compared to peers who speak the same language or dialect and are typically developing (Mendez & Simon-Cereijido, 2019; Oetting, 2018; Oetting et al., 2019). Currently, there is a need to broaden an SLP's perspective when assessing students from CLD backgrounds (Li'el et al., 2019; Oetting, 2018). One method to expand this perspective is for SLPs to create a bilingual profile that appropriately considers interactions across languages and correlations with higher-order cognitive processes (Li'el et al., 2019). Consequently, it is warranted to develop a comprehensive picture of a student's ability across each language and dialect that the student is exposed to have a more in-depth understanding and accurate image of the student's speech and language skills.

Factors Influencing Speech-Language Development

Various factors influence speech-language development. Thus, it is critical to assess students' speech-language skills using several tools to obtain a comprehensive image of their abilities. A valuable tool to incorporate into the assessment process is the notion of cultural competence (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2017). Cultural competence refers to gaining an understanding of how factors such as age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, ancestry, culture, language, dialect, citizenship, national origin, socioeconomic status, immigration status, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status can impact a student's development (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2017; Edwards et al., 2020). To maintain cultural competence, SLPs must engage in continuous self-evaluation and ongoing education to best embed cultural competence within assessment practices. Unfortunately, many SLPs rely solely on standardized assessments to evaluate speech-language skills (Chen & Lindo, 2018; Santhanam et al., 2018). Given case studies, SLPs' clinical decision-making highlighted the gross inconsistencies in clinical decision-making (Selin et al., 2019). Some incorporated a battery of assessments, while others relied heavily on standardized scores to determine SLI eligibility. There was no pattern tied to the case study; instead, SLI eligibility relied on the SLPs' perceived competence for each case study (Selin et al., 2019). Consequently, SLPs' perceived competence can produce underrepresentation and overrepresentation of SLI (Selin et al., 2019). Ultimately, differences in SLI eligibility depict the variance in SLPs' clinical judgment, a general lack of informed clinical decision-making, and a reliance on eligibility based solely on standardized scores.

As part of the SLPs' clinical decision-making process, it is crucial to acknowledge factors that may impact speech and language development. Numerous factors may influence speech and

language development, such as familial composition, cultural views towards communication, dialectal influences, identified gender, cultural gender roles, and developmental milestones (Selin et al., 2019). In addition to factors that separate students from CLD backgrounds from monolingual students, it is crucial to analyze factors that can overlap between the groups. For instance, typically developing bilingual students can have overlapping characteristics with monolingual students with SLI (Mendez & Simon-Cereijido, 2019; Paradis, 2005). The similarity in linguistic traits between typically developing bilingual students and monolingual students with SLI could lead to the incorrect diagnosis of SLI in bilingual students. As a result, administering standardized assessments to students from CLD backgrounds may lead to an over-identification of SLI (Kohnert, 2010; Levey et al., 2020; Mendez & Simon-Cereijido, 2019; Paradis, 2005).

Using alternative assessments can deter an overreliance on standardized assessments and lead to accurate identification of SLI in students from CLD backgrounds. Most SLPs do not generally utilize alternative assessment practices for students who speak AAE (Hendricks & Diehm, 2020). SLPs' knowledge of AAE, and its linguistic features, increased the understanding of AAE and is considered a significant predictor of the frequency to which SLPs report utilizing alternative assessment procedures (Hendricks & Diehm, 2020). The use of alternative assessment procedures follows a converging body of information rather than relying just on one method when making diagnostic judgments about the speech and language abilities of students from CLD backgrounds (Potapova & Pruitt-Lord, 2020). Thus, combining language experience surveys, collecting language samples, utilizing sizable reference databases, evaluating learning potential, and employing standardized assessment to gather data can provide a more in-depth image of the student's speech and language skills (Bawayan et al., 2022; Hendricks & Diehm,

2020; Potapova & Pruitt-Lord, 2020; Oetting et al., 2019; Selin et al., 2022). Using varied assessment techniques, SLPs may evaluate students across settings to identify their communication strengths and weaknesses.

Despite the current research supporting the use of comprehensive assessment batteries for students, standardized testing is currently the most widely used tool (Fulcher-Rood et al., 2019; Robinson & Norton, 2019). Standardized assessments were the most employed tool in childhood language assessment practices throughout case review diagnostic assessment sessions (Fulcher-Rood et al., 2019; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). Given the support for standardized testing in language disorder textbooks and rules enacted at the school district level, this dependence on standardized testing during this case study assessment assignment may be due to external influences impacting the SLP's clinical judgment (Fulcher-Rood et al., 2019; Robinson & Norton, 2019). Following standardized assessments, the next most widely used tools include referencing data obtained from parents and teachers and conducting informal measures (Fulcher-Rood et al., 2019; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). Informal measures can consist of recording, transcribing, and analyzing language samples (Bawayan et al., 2022; Bawayan & Brown, 2022). A language sample is a lengthy assessment to obtain and analyze various quantitative measurements that can be calculated, such as the mean length of utterances (Bawayan et al., 2022; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). It is generally recommended to analyze a 50-utterance sample to gather a wide-ranging view of the student's language sample (Bawayan et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2022). However, collecting, transcribing, and analyzing a 50-utterance language sample is time-consuming (Yang et al., 2022). Referencing data, consequently, was the extent of many assessments, as evaluating SLPs typically did not show an analysis of students' language samples (Bawayan et al., 2022; Fulcher-Rood et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2022). Due to time

restrictions, SLPs and other professionals frequently administer standardized English assessments to students from CLD and utilize the standardized scores to make clinical decisions (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021).

Linguistic and Cultural Influences

Acknowledging linguistic and cultural influences in students from CLD backgrounds can promote the implementation of comprehensive assessment procedures. When analyzing two federal education databases between 2004 and 2014, researchers noted the possibility of linguistic and cultural influences in identifying SLI (Robinson & Norton, 2019). African American students were significantly identified as having SLI, possibly due to an overreliance on standardized scores that led to the disproportionality in SLI eligibility (Aston & Brown, 2020; Edwards-Gaither, 2018; Robinson & Norton, 2019). A standardized score may not represent linguistic influences of dialects such as African American English (Edwards-Gaither, 2018; Oetting et al., 2019; Robinson & Norton, 2019). To illustrate, an African American student who speaks the AAE dialect can be administered a standardized assessment only if the normative sample is representational of the student's background, there is an alternative scoring that allows for responses in Standardized American English (SAE) and AAE, and there is no cultural bias in the assessment questions (Edwards-Gaither, 2018). Even though the African American population is an example of one minority, researchers presume that the significant disproportionality in SLI eligibility is widespread across each minority group due to not having formal guidelines to assess students from CLD backgrounds (Aston & Brown, 2020; Edwards-Gaither, 2018; Robinson & Norton, 2019).

Language development is a complex process influenced by various factors, including cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Students from CLD backgrounds may exhibit differences in

receptive and expressive language due to dialectal influences and cultural practices. Cultural practices can include the use of spatial cognition, choice of lexicon, and cultural behaviors, all of which can affect a child's ability to execute given directions and express themselves (Edwards et al., 2020; McGregor et al., 2018; Melzi et al., 2022).

Caregivers from different cultural backgrounds tend to use different child-rearing methods, which can impact a child's language development (Melzi et al., 2022). For example, Spanish-speaking caregivers tend to use more spatial language in their instructions and emphasize a child's ability to follow directions (Melzi et al., 2022). In contrast, English-speaking caregivers encourage children to ask questions and provide more opportunities for expressive responses (Melzi et al., 2022). These cultural and linguistic factors impact students' speech-language development, and it is essential to consider them when providing educational support to CLD students.

The influence of culture on language development can also be seen in the lexicon used by students. For instance, students in the Taiwanese sample tend to cluster animal names based on their cultural exposure to the Chinese zodiac system (McGregor et al., 2018). A student's lexicon use highlights the impact of cultural heritage on language development, as students learn words based on their cultural exposure to language, cultural objects, and behaviors.

To effectively support CLD students' speech-language development, it is crucial to analyze their cultural influence on their receptive and expressive language. Analyzing cultural influence can involve understanding their cultural background, including child-rearing practices, and how it affects their language development (McGregor et al., 2018; Melzi et al., 2022). SLPs and other educational professionals can also incorporate culturally responsive practices considering the student's cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Alfano et al., 2021; Edwards et al.,

2020; McGregor et al., 2018; Melzi et al., 2022). These techniques can include using culturally relevant materials, incorporating students' cultural traditions and practices into instruction, and providing language support sensitive to the students' dialectal and linguistic backgrounds (Edwards et al., 2020; McGregor et al., 2018; Melzi et al., 2022). Furthermore, students learn words in response to the numerous chances provided by their culture's language, cultural objects, and behaviors as experienced first-hand or through media (Edwards et al., 2020; McGregor et al., 2018; Melzi et al., 2022). Overall, both cultural and linguistic factors play an essential role in students' speech-language development. Analyzing the influence of cultural heritage on language development and incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices can help to support CLD students' language development effectively.

Culturally Responsive Assessment Practices

While no one marker can identify SLI in students from CLD backgrounds, it is imperative to implement a culturally responsive assessment practice to accurately capture the student's speech and language development (Mendez & Simon-Cereijido, 2019; Raben et al., 2019; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021; Selin et al., 2019). Culturally responsive practices adhere to the notion that all students from CLD backgrounds can succeed in academic pursuits when their culture, language, heritage, and experiences are valued (Alfano et al., 2021; Klingner et al., 2005). In addition, using culturally responsive practices supports students' learning and development by analyzing cultural influence on their receptive and expressive language (Klingner et al., 2005). Professionals working with students from CLD backgrounds must teach and demonstrate care, respect, and responsibility. To address concerns of cultural diversity, culturally responsive educational schools establish areas for professional reflection, investigation, and mutual support (Klingner et al., 2005). SLPs' implementation of a

comprehensive assessment process can lead to the appropriate identification of students with SLI, identification of students with proper speech-language development by their linguistic and cultural influences, and adequate identification of students that have another disability that is negatively impacting language development (Levey et al., 2020; Raben et al., 2019; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021; Selin et al., 2019).

Furthermore, culturally responsive assessment practices are necessary to identify SLI in students from CLD backgrounds accurately (Alfano et al., 2021; Chen & Lindo, 2018). However, an evaluation tool is only as good as the professionals utilizing the device (Chen & Lindo, 2018; Fulcher-Rood et al., 2018; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to maintain ongoing professional development to update SLPs about new cultural and linguistic influences to aid in the development of self-efficacy (Bandura & Adams, 1977; Chen & Lindo, 2018; Fulcher-Rood et al., 2018). Implementing a holistic view of a student's performance across contexts, rather than relying on a single standardized score, can effectively represent a student's speech-language abilities.

Focusing on students from CLD backgrounds from a broader lens is vital to execute comprehensive assessment procedures successfully. Conducting a comprehensive assessment includes considering each student's cultural, social, and linguistic influences that can impact a student's current performance. Cultural and social effects can consist of cultural background, language exposure, immigration status, and family composition (Alfano et al., 2021; Aston & Brown, 2020; McGregor et al., 2018). In addition, it is paramount to incorporate information from measured data obtained from language samples, informal language measures, and parent and teacher input.

A review of a pre-intervention process as part of a comprehensive speech-language evaluation of students from CLD backgrounds can increase the accurate identification of SLI (Raben et al., 2019; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). An effective pre-assessment process can improve accuracy in differentiating a difference from a disorder (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). Establishing a pre-intervention process may effectively discern students who benefit from English language development support and those who may require access to direct remediation by an SLP (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). In addition to distinguishing language learning, implementing a comprehensive pre-assessment strategy may aid in determining if a student benefits from a full-team evaluation to look at other disabilities alongside SLI (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021).

Establishing a rigorous pre-intervention process can facilitate SLPs' clinical judgment in determining if a student from a CLD background is appropriate for assessment and later if the student is eligible for SLI. In efforts to create a rigorous pre-intervention process, researchers suggest making a procedure that examines the influence of linguistic and environmental factors (such as socioeconomic status, literacy skills, level of mastery of English skills, and academic exposure) on students' linguistic and educational development (Fulcher-Rood et al., 2018; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). Researchers determined various factors, aside from speech-language skills, can contribute to the student's academic performance (McGregor et al., 2018; Melzi et al., 2022; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). In that case, a thorough pre-assessment will reveal whether the student can improve sufficiently with general education supports or has an underlying language impairment or another suspected disability that may negatively impact their academic progress.

Furthermore, an example of a pre-intervention process is known as response-to-intervention (RtI). RtI is a dynamic assessment approach that can be employed in the general education setting before special education assessment (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2020). The RtI process is a multi-tiered support structure that delivers interventions and services to struggling students (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2020). The benefits are provided in the general education classroom at escalating intensity levels (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2020). Following the effective implementation of RtI, the process may lead to an assessment plan for special education eligibility based on the student's performance over time with increasing levels of support (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2020; Raben et al., 2019). For instance, some students may struggle despite the intensive support received through each tier. These students likely have underlying problems and may be referred for formal special education evaluations (Raben et al., 2019; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021).

Dynamic assessment is an umbrella term covering tests incorporating interaction into the assessment process (Daub et al., 2021; Hunt et al., 2022). A low score on a standardized language assessment may result from a language disorder or may reflect the student's limited exposure to the language being tested. Thus, it cannot accurately represent a multilingual student's linguistic development. On the other hand, a student's abilities, with the assistance of a facilitator (their zone of proximal development, or ZPD), provide information on the student's ability to learn (Hunt et al., 2022; Vygotsky, 1978). Dynamic assessment evaluates a student's capacity for learning, regardless of prior knowledge. It does not rely on comparison to the norms of the monolingual population or prior linguistic or schemata knowledge (Dubasik & Valdivia; Hunt et al., 2022; Orellana et al., 2019). Consequently, dynamic assessment is viewed as an

indicator of the potential to acquire a language than the erroneous assessment results commonly derived through standardized scores.

To accurately evaluate the speech-language skills of students from CLD backgrounds, it is vital to incorporate various components into the assessment procedure. One component that can be analyzed is dynamic assessment, the student's ability to learn over time (Dubasik & Valdivia, 2021). However, self-reported use of dynamic assessment and actual practice of dynamic assessment varies. When assessing English Language Learners (ELLs) for SLI, SLPs self-reported using multiple devices, including case history, observations, and dynamic assessments (Dubasik & Valdivia, 2021; Orellana et al., 2019; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021; Selin et al., 2019). Dynamic assessments were only implemented by 45% of the participants, indicating the need to train SLPs to utilize dynamic assessment on this population as part of their professional development to accurately identify SLI in students from CLD backgrounds (Dubasik & Valdivia, 2021). While using multiple assessment tools is perceived as the gold standard practice for school-based SLPs when evaluating students' speech and language skills from CLD backgrounds, it is not common practice (Dubasik & Valdivia, 2021; Orellana et al., 2019; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2022).

It is imperative to analyze factors that impact a student's language skills to accurately identify SLI in students from CLD backgrounds. An example of a holistic, comprehensive assessment of a student's communication skills in relation to their larger environment is known as a sociocultural approach (De Lamo White & Jin, 2011). A sociocultural approach can be implemented to evaluate students' social and cultural context regarding their speech-language development (De Lamo White & Jin, 2011). Thus, a sociocultural approach is suitable for students from CLD backgrounds as it considers factors that can impact speech-language skills.

Collecting information regarding the student's family, culture, language, and other socio-cultural components is critical as part of the sociocultural approach (Selin et al., 2019). Evaluating SLPs can conduct an ethnographic interview to learn about the family, relationships, the student's language abilities, and the family's cultural viewpoint. Then, the evaluating SLP can assess language in a naturalistic environment across multiple settings and with varied communitive partners (De Lamo White & Jin, 2011; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021; Selin et al., 2022). This comprehensive evaluation helps determine what language the student utilizes in various situations, the extent of communicative expectations, and the student's overall communication skills in each language. However, the sociocultural approach has the disadvantage of being time-intensive (De Lamo White & Jin, 2011). Despite the importance of conducting comprehensive evaluations for students from CLD backgrounds, many SLPs in California are monolingual English speakers, resulting in a small proportion of CLD students receiving appropriate assessment and intervention in their primary language.

Appropriate Identification

Most SLPs in California are monolingual English speakers, and an increasing number of students from CLD backgrounds, so a small proportion of CLD students receive appropriate assessment and intervention in their primary language (Arias & Friberg, 2017; Quach & Tsai, 2017). Therefore, it is critical to focus on appropriate assessment procedures to identify students from CLD backgrounds with SLI accurately. Incorporating preintervention processes and dynamic assessment can lead to the proper identification of students with SLI (Arias & Friberg, 2017; Hulse & Curran, 2020; Orellana et al., 2019). Even further, effective assessment procedures for students in CLD backgrounds can appropriately determine language learners,

those exhibiting appropriate cultural and linguistic influences, those with another disability, and those who show SLI.

The class action litigation of Larry P. v. Riles (1979) aimed to stop the over-identification of African American students as needing special education services. Court decisions from Larry P. v. Riles (1979) unintentionally strengthened the overrepresentation of minority pupils in special education by eliminating the use of IQ assessments on African American students (Woods & Graves, 2021). Even though the prohibition of tests using IQ normative data eliminates one type of assessment, many other standardized assessments are inherently biased against students from CLD backgrounds. Evaluation procedures should be thorough and utilize a wider-lens approach to better capture a student's skills and correctly identify eligibility for special education to eradication bias. With this knowledge, continued work in special education is evident to address discrimination in assessment procedures for students from CLD backgrounds.

With the implementation of a pre-intervention process, there was a noticeable shift in disabilities utilized for special education eligibility (Raben et al., 2019). Rather than having a higher proportion of students eligible under SLI, more students were appropriately qualified under other disability categories, such as autism, other health impairment, specific learning disability, and intellectual disability (Raben et al., 2019). With the active incorporation of various tools, researchers could ensure the appropriate identification of SLI in students from CLD backgrounds (Levey et al., 2020; Raben et al., 2019; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). Implementation of a pre-intervention process accurately identifies students with SLI and can lead to the appropriate identification of students in other disability categories (Raben et al., 2019; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021, 2022; Volkers, 2018). SLPs must implement assessment procedures

that accurately identify differences from disorders as the number of students from CLD backgrounds continues to increase within the California public school system.

Assessment Self-Efficacy

Bandura (1977) provides an integrative theoretical framework in this vital work to explain and evaluate the psychological changes brought about by various treatment modalities. An SLP's confidence level in their ability to successfully conduct assessments on students from CLD backgrounds will impact how likely the task is executed. In addition, this theory contends that psychological processes alter the degree and strength of self-efficacy (Bandura & Adams, 1977). Thus, psychological processes such as accomplishments, experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological conditions can derive expectations of SLPs' personal efficacy. Through experiences of mastery and overall perseverance in tasks, SLPs will develop more significant improvement in self-efficacy. Thereby supporting the hypothesis that behavior changes correlate with self-efficacy perceptions. Furthermore, an increased understanding of the four psychological sources will promote comprehension of self-efficacy in SLPs.

Despite increased resources and willingness to work with students from CLD backgrounds utilizing dynamic assessment, there are barriers, such as limited knowledge of the student's cultural and linguistic influences (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021; Santhanam et al., 2018; Selin et al., 2019). Dynamic assessment is essential in a comprehensive assessment of speech-language skills in students from CLD backgrounds. However, there is an ongoing need for professional development to execute dynamic assessments effectively. Comparably, factors associated with multilingual and monolingual SLPs' self-efficacy when working with clients from CLD backgrounds differ based on the type of experience (Fulcher-Rood et al., 2018; Lugo et al., 2022; Narayanan & Ramsdell, 2022). SLPs who had experience working with clients who

spoke languages other than English had training from multilingual SLPs, or who had received training to become multilingual SLPs reported having more confidence and knowledge to work with clients from CLD backgrounds (Lugo et al., 2022; Narayanan & Ramsdell, 2022). Thus, this highlights a discrepancy between SLPs' perceived attitudes toward supporting clients from CLD backgrounds and their desire to implement the methods (Lugo et al., 2022; Narayanan & Ramsdell, 2022; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021).

Consequently, researchers have proposed exposing graduate students to clinical experience working with clients from CLD backgrounds because of the strong correlations between working with clients who speak languages other than English and SLPs' perceived self-efficacy (Lugo et al., 2022; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021; Santhanam et al., 2018). These clinical experiences should ideally take place under the supervision of a multilingual SLP and in conjunction with education to become a multilingual provider. Since there are not enough multilingual SLPs available to train other clinicians, extending access to simulated clinical encounters with multilingual clients and supervisors may be possible. Clinical simulations supported nursing students in feeling more competent (Liaw et al., 2012). However, additional research is required to pinpoint the precise relationship between these practical experiences. Aside from direct exposure to working with clients from CLD backgrounds, training on the use of interpreters promoted strong positive correlations with self-efficacy (Lugo et al., 2022; Narayanan & Ramsdell, 2022).

When addressing cultural competence in education, it is significant to understand how SLPs' experiences relate to the population served. SLPs shared an increased level of understanding with students of diverse groups because the SLP was able to identify with the group or had prior experience working with individuals from similar backgrounds (Hudnall,

2022; Lugo et al., 2022). Therefore, developing and using one's capacity for empathy is a crucial clinical competency (Burke & Goldman, 2018; Millar et al., 2023; Terrell & Osborne, 2020). Since SLPs work with a variety of intersectional communities and require empathy, it is crucial to think about how one may foster and uphold these abilities (Lugo et al., 2022; Millar et al., 2023). Community involvement can also attest to the importance of marginalized groups' opinions, strengths, and concerns in discussions about cultural competency (Burke & Goldman, 2018; Girolamo et al., 2022). Discussions regarding cultural competency cannot be meaningful and effective without lived experiences and experiential knowledge (Hudnall, 2022; Millar et al., 2023). Consequently, researchers advise for future clinical implications to incorporate more exposure to diverse populations during graduate training programs (Burke & Goldman; Girolamo et al., 2022; Hudnall, 2022).

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the self-efficacy of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) at elementary schools during assessment of speech or language impairment (SLI) in students from culturally and linguistically (CLD) backgrounds. A systematic review of the literature has guided the exploration of the context for which the problem arises and the multicultural influence on speech and language development, which led to the creation of a profile that is not accurately captured with standardized assessments. Additionally, recent literature supports the implementation of pre-intervention processes to differentiate SLI successfully in students from multicultural backgrounds. The literature also supports the use of comprehensive assessment practices, dynamic assessment integration, and various informal measures to effectively create an accurate depiction of the student's speech and language skills. SLI assessment procedures in the public-school setting have been studied, with new research

emerging on appropriate assessment procedures for students from CLD backgrounds. By

examining the level of perceived self-efficacy in evaluating SLPs with current research practices,

one can better understand the proper techniques to identify SLI in students from CLD

backgrounds accurately.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the self-efficacy experienced during multicultural assessments with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students for speech-language pathologists (SLPs) at rural public school districts in California. This chapter provides a detailed description of the phenomenological research design that examined the lived experiences of SLPs who are assessing elementary-aged children enrolled in a public school in a rural community for speech or language impairment (SLI). Next, a discussion of the research setting, participants, procedures, data collection, analysis, trustworthiness, and the ethical considerations for this study are presented.

Research Design

I chose the phenomenological research design to explore the essence of SLPs' self-efficacy toward current assessment techniques for students of CLD backgrounds. Qualitative research is an understanding inquiry process based on a specific methodological approach to inquiry that investigates a social or human problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Constructing a sophisticated, holistic image, analyzing language, recording participants' detailed perspectives, and performing the study naturally are key characteristics of qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For this reason, a qualitative technique was suited for this study by allowing SLPs to share their lived experiences of self-efficacy on current assessment practices.

This study used a phenomenological research approach to understand the self-efficacy of SLPs in current evaluation techniques for SLI in students with CLD backgrounds at the elementary school level. Phenomenology was used in this study to explore SLPs' views based on the combination of their unique narratives of the experience, such that the impact of the texts is

strong to guide readers through the essence of the lived experiences of these professionals. Due to the shared experiences, phenomenology invites individuals to wonder, contemplate, and move closer to joy, love, grief, touch, caring, and all human meanings (Adams & van Manen, 2017). Specifically, hermeneutic phenomenology was applied to focus on describing the participants' experiences and insights (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The hermeneutic phenomenological framework enabled the finding of more in-depth research by exposing individual influences and internal motivational forces that cannot be described by a quantitative study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Further, qualitative research effectively allowed an understanding of the data using a naturalistic method because of its interpretive components (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Incorporating this specific approach substantiated the purpose of this study in describing the SLPs' experiences embracing challenges in accurately identifying students from CLD backgrounds.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is based on the idea that the researcher should set aside preconceived notions and ideas for the genuine meaning of the phenomenon to emerge naturally (Friesen et al., 2012; Moustakas, 1994). Understanding the lived experiences through a hermeneutic approach enabled one to interpret and comprehend by shifting from specific to general, making the researcher thoughtfully aware of the participants' experiences while also reflecting on one's own (Friesen et al., 2012; Moustakas, 1994). This process continued circling through specific and general questions until the phenomenon is understood (Friesen et al., 2012; Moustakas, 1994), thus, emphasizing the significance of identifying the experience's distinct essence (Friesen et al., 2012). Also, hermeneutic phenomenology offered investigation through participants' experiences and the themes that connect them (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moreover, hermeneutic phenomenology focused on describing the phenomenon while highlighting

knowledge and description (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Research Questions

This hermeneutic phenomenological study sought to understand the lived experiences of SLPs conducting assessments of CLD students enrolled in kindergarten through sixth-grade public school district in a rural county within California. The goal of a hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand the genuine meaning of the phenomenon and allow the lived experiences of SLPs to emerge naturally (Moustakas, 1994). The central research question and sub-questions this study sought to answer are as follows:

Central Research Question

How do elementary school SLPs describe their self-efficacy during multicultural assessments for culturally and linguistically diverse students?

Sub-Question One

How do elementary school speech-language pathologists describe influential experiences of multicultural assessment?

Sub-Question Two

How do elementary school speech-language pathologists describe vicarious experiences of multicultural assessments?

Sub-Question Three

How do elementary school speech-language pathologists describe physiological feedback of multicultural assessments?

Sub-Question Four

How do elementary school speech-language pathologists describe performance feedback of multicultural assessments?

Setting and Participants

The setting for this research study included public school districts in a rural county located in Central California. The participants were SLPs working in the public school district with grades ranging from kindergarten to sixth grade. The following section describes the setting and participants in greater detail.

Setting

The setting chosen for this study included public school districts in a rural county in the Central region of California. All 20 districts within the county participate in a special education local plan area (SELPA) that provides special education and related services to students within the geographic area (California Department of Education, 2022). The SELPA services approximately 7,300 individuals with exceptional needs (California Department of Education, 2022). Although the SELPA services children from birth to 22 years of age, only SLPs working with students of elementary school age, ranging from kindergarten to sixth grade, were included in this study. Furthermore, the SELPA reported 2,555,951 public school students who speak a language other than English, representing about 43% of California's public-school enrollment (California Department of Education, 2022). In addition, the SELPA earned an Ethnic Diversity Index of 26 for the 2021-2022 school year (California Department of Education, 2022). The Ethnic Diversity Index seeks to quantify the degree of diversity among the various ethnic groups represented in the student body among the eight distinct ethnic categories (California Department of Education, 2022). Consequently, the greater the number, the more evenly spread the student body is. Participants in my phenomenological study were from any area within the specified region and had firsthand knowledge of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Participants

The purposive sampling approach considered three factors: choosing participants, the sampling strategy, and the sample size (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I disclosed the nature of the study to every participant, acquired their informed consent, ensured their confidentiality, and outlined my and the participants' obligations (Moustakas, 1994). All participants were given pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. Participants with the necessary credentials were sought out from the selected special education local plan area (SELPA) using a convenience sample for contact information of SLPs who may meet inclusion criteria to establish a population sample representing a wider sample pool (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As a method of snowball sampling, the email invitation encouraged participants to forward the invitation to other individuals who may qualify and be interested in participating in the study. In the email invitation, I offered a link for participants to respond and express their interest in joining (see Appendix C). Participants were then able to access the informed consent forms by clicking the hyperlink in the recruitment email (see Appendix C).

In this study, the participants were Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) employed by public school districts within a rural county in Central California. The study sample was selected from public school districts located within a rural county in Central California, overseen by a Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) comprising 20 school districts. The SELPA served students from culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse populations, aiming to include a heterogeneous group of potential participants ranging from 12 to 15 individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Liberty University, 2022).

Individuals had to meet specific criteria to be eligible for participation, including being fully licensed and fully credentialed SLP. Responsively, participants held a master's degree with

at least two years of post-graduate school experience. Additionally, participants were required to work with students in the kindergarten to sixth-grade age group within the specified SELPA. The study emphasized voluntary participation, with individuals being able to withdraw without concern or fear of personal or professional consequences. The participation was purely voluntary, and an online screening survey hosted on Survey Monkey was used to determine the eligibility of potential participants.

Researcher Positionality

This study's purpose aligned with the social constructivist paradigm, which holds that one learns from one's experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The connection of the social construction framework to the selected subject—SLPs' lived experiences in assessing students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds—was discussed in this section. The reader was able to comprehend my reasons for conducting this research and how my perspective on this issue fits with the interpretative framework and philosophical assumptions by including a summary of the framework and underlying assumptions.

Exploring elementary school SLPs' perceptions of self-efficacy throughout the multicultural assessment practices is significant in supporting effective learning environments for kindergarten through sixth grade students. Through exploring this topic, my position and perceptions of reality must be examined to communicate best the view from which this study is developed, explored, and presented. I contributed to this investigation's ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions. As a researcher, I realized that each participant in the study would see their experience through a distinct reality. I reported on several realities from various viewpoints as trends emerge in the results (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I examined my interpretative and philosophical assumptions to frame this hermeneutic phenomenology study.

Interpretive Framework

An interpretive framework was applied to explore how participants make sense of their environment (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this case, social constructivism was used as the research paradigm to guide this study on the experiences of SLPs assessing students from CLD backgrounds. Social constructivism promotes individuals to perceive, interpret, and comprehend their environments (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The foundation of social constructivism is that people develop meanings about the environment by connecting it to their own experiences rather than relying solely on evidence (Patton, 2015). Gathering the lived experiences of elementary school SLPs through multicultural assessment practices lent me the ability to interpret the phenomenon's essence.

Philosophical Assumptions

Philosophical assumptions are occasionally and unintentionally introduced to our study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study examined the ontological, epistemological, and axiological philosophical assumptions. My life experiences, education, and guidance may profoundly impact the questions asked and the methods used to gather data. Thus, recognizing my philosophical assumptions guided the understanding from which the collected data is analyzed. By interweaving a discussion of the framework and underlying assumptions, the reader was able to comprehend my reasons for conducting this research and how my perspective on this topic fits with the interpretative framework and philosophical assumptions.

Ontological Assumption

Within ontological studies, realities are interpreted from many viewpoints of individuals who witness the same experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative researchers aim to discover the many realities that individuals encounter. Therefore, the realities that one currently

understands and holds to be true are entirely the result of the experiences one has had thus far in one's life. As educators, the perception of the truth about the classroom and experience is shaped by interactions with others (Damico & Simmons-Mackie, 2003). The knowledge I have and what I have come to understand regarding multicultural assessment practices is derived from my education, firsthand experience in clinical practice, and learned material from graduate school and current research articles. Together, these created my reality to formulate my understanding of multicultural assessment practices. My ontological assumption is that students from CLD backgrounds are more challenging to identify with SLI than their peers. Although SLPs may be committed to students' overall success, they have a significant role in the execution of appropriate assessment procedures. At times, it may have been beneficial to collaborate on effective and culturally sensitive assessment practices. Therefore, my goal was that this research may help understand SLPs' viewpoints towards assessment practices in students from CLD backgrounds. Encounters with others in our immediate environment, whether students, teachers, parents, or other school professionals, help shape reality, what is known, and what is understood about education (Damico & Simmons-Mackie, 2003). Although one may experience the same phenomena in its entirety or in part, the reality each individual encounter is unique.

Epistemological Assumption

My epistemological assumption was based on the concept that knowledge resides in the participants; thus, I need to become close to the participants to learn from their experiences. Therefore, I worked closely with the research participants to overcome my prejudices. I interacted with the participants and spend time with them to get firsthand information about their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). When examining the participants' unique experiences, knowledge was defined as information participants have about the phenomenon or experiences

that enabled me, the researcher, to learn more about the phenomenon from their perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This proposed study aimed to investigate SLPs' experiences with the assessment practices of students from multicultural backgrounds. Using one-on-one interviews, a focus group, and a survey, I thoroughly immersed myself in the lives of SLP participants to understand the epistemological premise and how their claims are supported.

Axiological Assumption

Within a qualitative study, the axiological assumption includes intuition and acknowledgment of biases (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My axiological assumptions are linked to my ideals about assessing students from CLD backgrounds. I shared my experiences, values, and understanding of this demographic as a current SLP working for the public school system. As I shared the participants' perceptions of their experiences, I situated myself in this study by accepting my values (Creswell & Poth, 2018). At the start of the research project, I clarified my experiences to the participants. My social status was also disclosed along with political opinions, personal experiences, and professional convictions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I consciously put aside my prejudices, considering my own experiences as an evaluating SLP.

Researcher's Role

As a previous student who received speech-language services, I can now speak from my experience as an SLP. My position was empathetic since I had personally experienced both sides of the phenomenon being researched. My objective, as the human instrument, was to put the participants at ease to feel comfortable during the interview process; my role as the researcher was to be open, honest, and impartial during the entire process. Creswell and Poth (2018) contend that researchers must be aware of their experiences, convictions, or assumptions about the subject under study. I am a Spanish-English bilingual licensed SLP with a certificate of

clinical competence working in a public school district. Responsively, I have an increased interest in conducting this study as I was working with many students from CLD backgrounds who do not fit the normative sample of many standardized assessments. The site principals from each school location may support the need for this research as they were keen on how to serve a growing CLD student population better.

As a researcher with ample experience, both personal and professional, in the field of speech-language pathology, the study allowed me to gain a system of rapport to gather pertinent and detailed information applicable to describe the essence of the lived experiences of my participants. As a professional with expertise conducting assessments on CLD populations, my biases are that SLPs do not have enough knowledge, time, or resources to properly assess students from CLD backgrounds. Moustakas (1994) also focused on one of Husserl's notions of bracketing, in which investigators set aside their prior experiences and prejudices as much as possible to approach the subject under investigation with a new viewpoint. There was a risk that my experiences would have taken precedence over the affairs of the research participants if not bracketed.

As the human instrument within this hermeneutic phenomenological research design, I was responsible for demonstrating sufficient recording means, conducting in-depth research questions, and executing a method for processing and interpreting the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It was also my role as the researcher to adhere to the strict guidelines of phenomenological research to ensure that data gathering and analysis are ethical (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As an SLP, I contributed my experiences working with CLD students. Even though I have my views, I used the hermeneutic circle to collect, review, and analyze the data.

Procedures

In qualitative research, the procedures section contains specific and technical information about the mechanics and management of data collecting (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In addition, this section explored the permissions and recruitment plan to explore the lived experiences of SLPs regarding CLD assessment practices. Specifically, the preparations for securing institutional review board approval, soliciting participation, and the data collection plans were explored.

Permissions

Before conducting this research study, I sought approval from Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A). Once permission was granted, I contacted the special education local plan area (SELPA) for the contact information of SLPs who may meet inclusion criteria via email (see Appendix E). As a method of snowball sampling, the email invitation encouraged participants to forward the invitation to other individuals who may qualify and were interested in participating in the study. In the email invitation, I offered an online link for participants to respond to and express their interest in joining (see Appendix C). Participants were then able to access the informed consent forms via the survey hyperlink (see Appendix B). If applicable, I sent a follow-up email in a week (see Appendix D). I communicated with SLPs I know professionally but have no authority over (see Appendix A). I gained permission from the SELPA (see Appendix E). I requested permission formally through a written letter (see Appendix F).

Recruitment Plan

The recruitment process began by emailing the special education local plan area (SELPA) director (see Appendix E) the IRB approval along with the recruitment email that includes a

survey hyperlink to the participant consent forms (see Appendix B and Appendix C). The

SELPA director was asked to forward the recruitment documents using a convenience sample for

contact information of SLPs who may meet inclusion criteria (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As a

method of snowball sampling, the email invitation encouraged participants to forward the

invitation to other individuals who may qualify and were interested in participating in the study.

In the email invitation, I offered an online link for participants to respond to and express their

interest in joining. Participants must be an SLP working for a public school district within the

specified SELPA servicing the kindergarten to sixth grade age group. Only fully licensed and

fully credentialed SLPs were included in this study. Responsively, each SLP must have at least

two years of experience practicing post-graduate school. Purposeful criterion sampling was used

to choose 12-15 participants based on the criteria necessary for the study (Creswell & Poth,

2018; Liberty University, 2022; Patton, 2015).

Following receipt of interest from a potential participant who met inclusion criteria, an

informed consent form was presented electronically to each person who consented and expressed

interest in participating. I included the participants' rights and consent forms in the paperwork

(see Appendix B). I gathered information by conducting interviews, facilitating focus groups,

and reviewing journal prompts. The data was recorded via field notes, audio recordings, written

interview transcripts, written focus group transcriptions, and journal entries (Creswell & Poth,

2018). When saturation was reached, no new themes or codes are found, and data collecting was

stop (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Collection Plan

This qualitative inquiry included applying various data collection strategies (Creswell &

Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The data collection strategies within this study consisted of semi-

structured individual interviews, focus group discussions, and journal prompts. A hermeneutic phenomenological data analysis then involved viewing the experience, extracting themes into smaller portions, then synthesizing those themes once more to develop a new understanding of the experiences (Friesen et al., 2012). The application of the hermeneutic circle continued as many times as necessary until the researcher understood the phenomena (Friesen et al., 2012).

Individual Interviews Data Collection Approach

Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted to learn about each participant's lived experiences regarding CLD assessment practices (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Semi-structured interviews facilitated researchers to gather information from each participant using predeveloped interview questions while allowing for follow-up questions to investigate further (Mack et al., 2005). The semi-structured interview technique allowed me to follow any new lines of conversation that may come up throughout the interview. Face-to-face interviews effectively obtain sufficient information for researchers (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). Face-to-face and online video interviews were compelling as they allowed me to recognize and comprehend the interviewee's reaction to the interview questions (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995).

The interview procedure questions were created to reduce bias by giving participants a wide range of options for answering the questions. The interview questions were guiding questions written in a neutral and non-threatening tone. The guiding questions were based on SLPs' experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and variables that influence the execution of assessment procedures. The semi-structured and open-ended interview questions were verbally communicated to interview participants. Using face-to-face interviews and an online video format allowed for the collection of verbal and non-verbal communication. Since communication is 60% non-verbal (Edwards et al., 2020), attention to non-verbal movements provided insight to

inquire further when necessary. I employed informal methods to track materials, including memos, daily journals, and detailed summaries. The interviews consisted of 14 semi-structured questions and were conducted either face-to-face or digital option as chosen by the participant (McCracken, 1988). To create the interview protocol, I followed the responsive interview model. The responsive interview model, as described by Rubin and Rubin (2005), is an interactive approach where the interviewer adapts questions based on the interviewee's responses. It allows for a dynamic exchange of information, leading to a deeper understanding of the researched topic. The responsive interview aided the researcher in comprehending the researched topic (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Individual Interview Questions

1. Please describe your experience as an SLP from your first position until your current role. CRQ

2. What positive experiences have you had in conducting multicultural assessments with students from CLD backgrounds? SQ1

3. What negative experiences have you had in conducting multicultural assessments with students from CLD backgrounds? SQ1

4. Describe a time when you felt confident conducting multicultural assessments with students from CLD backgrounds. SQ1

5. How does your knowledge of a student's demographic affect the multicultural assessment process? SQ2

6. How does preintervention data of a student from a CLD background affect the multicultural assessment process? SQ2

7. How does parental or guardian involvement affect multicultural assessment? SQ2

8. How would you describe your feelings when conducting multicultural assessments with students from CLD backgrounds? SQ3

9. How does stress affect the multicultural assessment process? SQ3

10. Describe the feelings associated with appropriately identifying a speech or language impairment from CLD backgrounds. SQ3

11. What encouraging experiences have you had when presenting multicultural assessment with the individual education plan team? SQ4

12. What discouraging experiences have you had when presenting the multicultural assessment with the individual education plan team? SQ4

13. How have the experiences of presenting multicultural assessments with individual educational plan teams affected future perceptions of your ability to conduct appropriate identifications? SQ4

14. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences conducting multicultural assessments with a student from CLD background? CRQ

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

Analysis of semi-structured interviews involved the systematic organization and interpretation of data that were gathered. Analyzing interview data required attention to detail communicated in verbal and non-verbal form (Edwards et al., 2020). I exercised epoché at each step of the data analysis stage by putting aside or abstaining from passing judgment on any previous preconceptions (Moustakas, 1994; Neubauer et al., 2019). My own experiences may taint the findings so that the reader is led to accept the author's desired conclusion (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thus, the epoché is required to explain a novel perspective on concepts (Moustakas, 1994). Bracketing allows the investigator to set their personal experiences aside (Husserl, 1970).

The interviews with the participants lasted around 60 minutes each (McCracken, 1988). Participants were asked to explain their experiences with the phenomena during the interview (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The interview protocol form was used to record the interview replies during data collection. Then, the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed digitally. When transcribed, irrelevant information was removed, and then the participants then checked the transcripts for correctness (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moules et al., 2015; Moustakas, 1994). Next, the hermeneutic circle was employed during the analysis, which involved searching for meaningful statements, words, or phrases and interpreting them from the researcher's perspective (Moules et al., 2015). Codes were then grouped into relevant themes to the studied phenomenon (Moules et al., 2015; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015). The hermeneutic circle was also used to understand how participants experience the phenomenon (Moules et al., 2015). This new understanding was then used to revisit the phenomenon, resulting in new insights or perspectives. The entire analysis process was documented using a spreadsheet and a narrative that includes all major themes.

Focus Groups Data Collection Approach

Following the individual interviews, SLPs were requested to join a focus group conducted online via Zoom. The interviewer's role in the focus group was more of a facilitator to develop the conversation and ensure responses remain on the topic (Patton, 2015). Participants were encouraged to remark and reply to the comments of other group members (Patton, 2015). Focus groups are appropriate when the interactions between participants as they aid in discovering cultural norms and topics of concern within a group where everyone has encountered the same phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Focus groups are advantageous because they facilitate identifying themes by employing closely focused subjects, requesting replies from

participants, and keeping responses on the topic (Patton, 2015). The virtual meeting platform Zoom recorded the focus group interview. Screencastify was utilized as a back-up recording device. The recording was manually transcribed. In addition, I took field notes throughout the focus group interview. This method is a valid data collection technique for this study as it sought to gather information from a group of individuals who have had a shared experience (Moustakas, 1994). Participants were allowed to debate, share, propose, and reflect on the questions during the focus group discussion (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The semi-structured format began with several prompts before expanding into other areas of relevant discussion brought forward by the participants. The following list contains the focus group questions for this phenomenological investigation.

Focus Group Questions

1. Please describe your experience as an SLP from your first position until your current role. CRQ

2. What type of experiences have you had in conducting multicultural assessments with students from CLD backgrounds? SQ1

3. How have your previous experiences impacted your execution of multicultural assessments? SQ2

4. Describe the feelings associated when conducting multicultural assessments with students from CLD backgrounds. SQ3

5. Describe how your previous collaborative experiences when presenting results impacted your assessment of students from CLD backgrounds? SQ4

6. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences conducting multicultural assessments with a student from a CLD background? CRQ

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan

The analysis plan for the focus group data incorporated the method of imaginative variation, which involved drawing on intuition and exploring multiple variations of a single phenomenon to extract the desired essence from the data (Neubauer et al., 2019). This method allows researchers to creatively explore different perspectives and possibilities, fostering a deeper understanding of the subject under study (Moustakas, 1994; Neubauer et al., 2019). The recordings of the focus groups were turned into a structural description using the Stevick-Colaizzi Keen approach to consider the setting and context of the phenomena being examined (Moustakas, 1994). The goal was to determine the essence of the responses. The imaginative variation must be carried out utilizing a variety of lenses, viewpoints, and frames of reference (Moustakas, 1994). The stages of creative interpretation include highlighting structural meanings, identifying underlying themes, considering the place, time, and relationships about the phenomena, and looking for examples that develop the sub-themes (Moustakas, 1994).

Journal Prompts Data Collection Approach

All research participants were requested to maintain a participant journal. I offered each participant an individual Google Form link to serve as an electronic journal after the interviews. After one week, I received the electronic journal entries back. When analyzing the experiences, difficulties, and attitudes of SLPs, understanding how SLPs manage assessment and caseloads was crucial (Santhanam et al., 2018; Selin et al., 2019; Selin et al., 2022). Events that impact participants' ability to evaluate students from CLD backgrounds appropriately were also noted. Keeping participant journals during a study is an appropriate method of gathering data for qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Over the week, each participant was required to respond to the five questions below in their journal entries.

Participant Journal Instructions

1. Describe a memorable experience, either positive or negative, that had a significant influence on your confidence in conducting multicultural assessments with students from CLD backgrounds. SQ1

2. Describe a time when previous experiences influenced your execution of a multicultural assessment. SQ2

3. Describe typical feelings that arise when conducting assessments of students from CLD backgrounds. SQ3

4. Describe a time when other's words, either encouraging or discouraging, impacted your assessment of a student from a CLD background. SQ4

5. What other comments would you like to include that focus on your experiences conducting multicultural assessments with a student from a CLD background? CRQ

Journal Prompts Data Analysis Plan

Following the participants' journals' submission, the data analysis for the journal started with creating a list of significant statements from the journal entries to create horizontalization. Every assertion was considered equally valuable (Moustakas, 1994). Avoiding repetition and duplication of sentences was the goal. The meaning units were then clustered based on the data to produce themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Finding themes from reduced data depended on the researcher's clarity and reflectiveness (Moustakas, 1994). The findings of the study included examples of significant statements.

Data Synthesis

The final step in the data analysis process, synthesis, combined the most basic textual and structural descriptions from every data source to create a coherent statement that captures the

core of the phenomena under study (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl (1970) defined essence as the prerequisite for anything to exist as it does. The essence explains the individual researcher's investigation into a specific time and place, but synthesis is aware that the essence of any circumstance or experience is never exhausted (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological data analysis, which started after participants finished the member verification phase, draws on the information from research questions and identifies themes in the transcripts of the interviews (Moustakas, 1994). Epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis were the main techniques. Phenomenological reduction, specifically horizontalization, was applied to find statements of significance that connected commonalities in how the participants experienced the phenomenon. Combining textural and structural descriptions created the phenomenon's meaning and essence (Moustakas, 1994). In Chapter Four, the outcome of this phenomenological reduction was presented in the form of a table with the essential words, phrases, main themes, and subthemes. Irrelevant comments were removed or turned into outliers (Moustakas, 1994).

Trustworthiness

During the research, I confirmed data validity by ensuring trustworthiness. Qualitative researchers must instill trust in the study's findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, at every investigation stage, researchers and scientists must have faith in the participants (Philips et al., 2019). Credibility, reliability, confirmability, and transferability are examples of research trustworthiness (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Therefore, as the researcher, I must establish trustworthiness using credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability strategies.

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research is defined by the level of trust that may be placed in the study's findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Credibility was established if the research findings are a true interpretation of the participants' original perspectives and give plausible information derived from their original data (Stahl & King, 2020). Active participation, continuous observation, triangulation, and member checks are methods for ensuring trustworthiness (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study used active participation, triangulation, and member checks. Active participation was attained during the interview and focus group discussions. Triangulation was addressed using various data sources and data collection techniques (Stahl & King, 2020). Specifically, method triangulation was accomplished by utilizing numerous techniques to ensure overall trustworthiness. A member verification technique also improved the research's dependability (Carlson, 2010). Participants were allowed to examine the data and interviews using the member-checking process. Participants maintained active participation by discussing the textural-structural descriptions of the participants' experiences. Participants' textural and structural description recommendations, such as additions and corrections, were considered. I used the credibility technique to determine whether an answer is plausible or accurate.

Transferability

As the researcher, I empowered readers to decide on transferability through the detailed discussion of the participants and locations under investigation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researchers contribute to the study's transferability by providing a comprehensive, complete description of the setting, place, and persons investigated and being open about the analysis and reliability (Connelly, 2016). A thorough description is required to guarantee that the study may be transferred to various contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, I included specifics while

describing a case or writing on a subject. I used bracketing to reduce biases by putting my judgment aside to achieve transferability. As a result, I was conscious that the information presented was based on the participants' reports of their experiences rather than my own.

Dependability

The study methodologies were repeatable through extensive documentation to ensure dependability. I provided details of data gathering procedures, audio recordings, background, and a sample of the population (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interviews were recorded and afterward were transcribed using a recording device. Field notes were also gathered during the interviews and focus group discussions. Due to careful adherence to research protocols, other researchers can access, review, and reproduce the research.

Confirmability

Explaining the study techniques can help researchers establish reliability (Ary et al., 2006). Confirmability is the degree to which research is devoid of bias (Ary et al., 2006). The interviews, focus group discussions, and interpretation will all be available for participants to examine. All types of discrimination were removed, and participants' opinions, recommendations, and adjustments related to the topic and objectives were considered.

Ethical Considerations

Typically, ethical difficulties are connected to three principles that guide ethical research: respect for individuals (i.e., privacy and consent), concern for welfare (i.e., limit damage and increase reciprocity), and justice (i.e., fair treatment and inclusion) (Creswell & Poth, 2018). First and foremost, I acquired permission to perform a research study, considering the rules and processes and ethical and professional standards. It was also critical to incorporate cultural awareness while respecting the participants and informing them that they may withdraw at any

moment without penalty or risk of adverse repercussions. The appropriate permission and consent were obtained from the participants (see Appendix B). Participants' privacy was protected; therefore, they were presented under pseudonyms to preserve their identities. Patton (2015) recommended making copies of the data as it is collected, with one copy kept in a secure location where it would not be disturbed and could not be lost or stolen. As a result, electronic data were password-protected for three years and destroyed following that period. Finally, accounts were kept strictly confidential, participation did not impact their current professional roles, and there were no repercussions in participating or withdrawing from the study.

Summary

For phenomenological research, gathering descriptive narratives and other experience material is merely the beginning (Adams & van Manen, 2017). The methodologies in this chapter included the design, study questions, setting, participants, processes, and the researcher's role. Furthermore, the data-gathering procedure was described by ethical research guiding principles. Data analysis was also included highlighting the process of bracketing, horizontalization, delimiting horizons or meaning, grouping horizons into themes, individual textural and structural descriptions, and cohesive textural and structural descriptions. This hermeneutic phenomenological research study is developed to understand the self-efficacy from the lived experiences of SLPs toward the assessment of CLD students enrolled in kindergarten through sixth-grade public schools within Central California.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the self-efficacy experienced during multicultural assessments with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students for elementary school speech-language pathologists (SLPs) at rural public school districts in California. In this chapter, SLPs discussed their lived experiences regarding multicultural assessment practices with grades ranging from kindergarten to sixth grade. The study's theoretical framework was Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory. This study answered how elementary school SLPs describe their self-efficacy through their account of influential experiences, vicarious experiences, physiological feedback, and performance feedback when conducting multicultural assessments of students from CLD backgrounds. This chapter includes descriptions of the participants, themes from the data, and research question responses from the participants.

Participants

The 13 participants in this study were drawn from a convenience sample and snowball sampling of SLPs who service the selected special education local plan area (SELPA). All participants were SLPs working for a public school district within the specified SELPA servicing the kindergarten through sixth grade age group. All participants were fully licensed and fully credentialed; responsively, each participant held a master's degree and at least two years of experience practicing post-graduate school. A recruitment email was sent to the director of the selected SELPA. The director then provided the emails of SLPs working for districts within the SELPA. In the email invitation, I offered an online link for participants to respond to and express their interest in joining. Following receipt of interest from a potential participant who met

inclusion criteria, an informed consent form was presented to each person who consented and

expressed interest in participating. I assigned pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of

participants. For this study, 92% of the participants identified as female and 8% as male. This

study also included participants who identified as Caucasian/White (54%), Hispanic/Latino/a

(23%), African American/Black (7.67%), Asian (7.67%), and Other (7.67%), specifying

Mexican and Pacific Islander.

Table 1

Speech Language Pathologist Participants

Participant	Years of Experience: General SLP	Years of Experience: School SLP	Current Languages Spoken	Multicultural Assessment Practice Professional Development Participation
Alex	28	28	English	No
Bailey	3	3	Korean, English	No
Casey	7	6	English, Spanish	No
Finley	11	11	English, Spanish	No
Harper	5	3	English, Spanish, Korean	Yes
Jamie	5	5	English, Spanish	No

Kendall	3	3	English, Spanish	Yes
Morgan	11	11	English	No
Peyton	5	4	English	Yes
Quinn	6	6	English, Spanish, Latin	Yes
Riley	12	3	English	Yes
Skylar	9	6	English	Yes

Note. Multicultural assessment practice professional development participation must have occurred within the year of the data collection for this study.

Alex

Alex has had 28 years of experience as an SLP in a school setting. Alex reported additional per diem positions working as an SLP in skilled nursing and home health settings. Alex is an English-only speaker. Alex earned a bachelor's degree in communicative disorders and a master's of arts degree in communicative disorders. Alex's descriptions across the journal prompts and individual interviews reflected mixed self-efficacy in conducting multicultural assessments. While Alex appreciated positive experiences involving active family participation, Alex expressed challenges related to language barriers and limited understanding of cultural nuances. Alex also conveyed stress and feelings of inadequacy but acknowledged the importance of completing multicultural assessments as part of their job. Alex disclosed, "A lot of just kind of inadequacy, you know, there's so many variables that sometimes I mean this that I genuinely worry that I'm missing a piece of the puzzle."

Bailey

Bailey reported three years of experience as an SLP in a public school setting. Although the full-time experiences were in the school setting, Bailey reported additional per diem positions working as an SLP in skilled nursing. Bailey is a bilingual, native speaker fluent in Korean and English. Bailey earned a bachelor's degree in English and a master's of science in speech-language pathology. Bailey's descriptions reflected a growing self-efficacy in conducting multicultural assessments. Bailey revealed valuing positive experiences, such as collaboration with parents and professionals. Bailey also acknowledged challenges in contacting parents and addressing the complexity of multicultural and multilingual cases. Regarding multicultural assessments, Bailey shared, "It's not black and white but it is something we can figure out by gathering more information. Once I had done the parent interviews, gotten language samples, and gathered all this data, I felt that my assessment was complete." The need for support, training, and comprehensive assessments to accurately identify and address the needs of students from CLD backgrounds was also important to Bailey.

Casey

Casey reported seven years of experience as an SLP, with six years of experience in a public school setting. One year of full-time experience was in an outpatient and inpatient adult clinic that occasionally serviced the pediatric population. In addition to these full-time positions, Casey reported a per diem position working in early intervention. Casey is a bilingual, native speaker fluent in Spanish and English. Casey earned a bachelor's degree in communicative disorders and a master's of science in speech-language pathology. Casey's descriptions reflected a growing self-efficacy in conducting multicultural assessments, particularly with Spanish-speaking students. Casey declared valuing language samples and assessments tailored to specific

languages. In addition, Casey emphasized the importance of considering cultural and linguistic factors in assessment practices. However, Casey expressed less confidence when working with students from other language backgrounds. Casey revealed, "The Hmong community, I felt like I didn't have a lot of understanding of their language with pragmatics. It's really hard to tell if lack of eye contact is because of the culture or because of deficits in pragmatics." Casey continuously emphasized the need for more training and resources to support assessments in diverse languages.

Dakota

Dakota reported nine years of experience as an SLP in a public school setting. In addition to full-time positions in the school setting, Dakota reported per diem positions in acute with adult populations. Dakota is an English-only speaker. Dakota earned a bachelor's degree and a master's of arts in communicative disorders. Dakota's descriptions reflected a limited self-efficacy in conducting multicultural assessments independently. Rather, Dakota highlighted the importance of collaboration. Dakota valued the support of bilingual colleagues. Across the journal prompt and the individual interview, Dakota reiterated the importance of relying on other colleagues for multicultural assessment sharing, "I'm lucky enough to work with a diverse group of SLPs that are always willing to help in this area." Dakota expressed increased confidence over time but also mentioned the challenges faced in the early stages of the SLP career. Particularly challenges with limited supervision in their clinical fellowship year, only half a semester of training on assessment practices, and difficulty working with interpreters.

Finley

Finley reported 11 years of experience as an SLP; all 11 years were in a public school setting. Finley is a bilingual, native Spanish-English speaker. Finley earned a bachelor's degree

in psychology and a master's of arts in communicative disorders. Finley's descriptions reflected a growing self-efficacy in conducting multicultural assessments, particularly with Spanish-speaking students. Finley valued the ability to relate to Spanish-speaking families by understanding cultural factors and being able to differentiate between language differences and disorders. Finley recalls feeling confident in conducting assessments when there is a clear language difference rather than a language disorder. In particular, she highlighted a case of a middle school student who recently arrived from Mexico, where the assessment process was smoother due to the knowledge of understanding that it was a language difference and not a disorder. This reportedly led to increased confidence in their assessment skills. Finley acknowledged the importance of understanding Mexican cultural influences during assessment and provided examples in the individual interview, stating:

> Sometimes you see the cultural impact when parents are involved they'll say their child is not talking "*porque es berrenchudo*" (stubborn, spoiled) or will tell the child to talk to the teacher. It is common for children to associate bread with coffee and when you ask for functions for things like a shovel, they may say it's for picking up the dog poop instead of for digging holes. Or when you asked them what they did that weekend it's typical for many of them to share that they went to the *callejones* or *al remate* (flea market).

Finley expressed confidence in their abilities when the language difference is evident and felt a sense of pressure when determining the appropriate identification for students. However, Finley also recognized the challenges of limited resources and the need for tailored assessments for students from diverse backgrounds.

Harper

Harper reported five years of experience in SLP. Of the five years, three years were in the public school system, one year in a worker's compensation clinic, and one year in a private practice working mainly with adults but also serving the pediatric population. Harper is a multilingual speaker fluent in English, Spanish, and Korean. Additionally, Harper claimed, "I have studied various languages from different regions and maintain varying levels of fluency with them." Harper earned a bachelor's degree in communicative sciences and disorders. Harper also earned a master of science in speech-language pathology. Harper provided an overview of their previous experiences as an SLP and how they have developed their self-efficacy over time. Harper mentioned challenges faced in their early career but also demonstrated the ability to use their linguistic and cultural diversity as strengths to provide adequate assessment practices. Furthermore, Harper described a positive experience of helping a family understand and accept their linguistic and cultural differences, promoting acceptance and inclusion.

On the contrary, Harper shared a perceived negative experience where parents expected their child to receive speech services to learn English without considering their language differences, highlighting the importance of educating parents about differentiating bilingual language development and language disorders. Harper discussed how their knowledge of the student demographic, mainly how Harper's familiarity with the language and culture, affects the multicultural assessment process. Specifically, Harper mentioned that more familiarity requires less legwork and research, while less familiarity requires more effort to ensure accuracy and understanding in the assessment process. Harper explained how positive experiences encouraged them to continue their approach, while negative experiences motivated them to learn from mistakes and seek improvement. Harper shared experiences of conducting CLD assessments in

students from Spanish backgrounds from the perspective of an individual who was not a native speaker and has learned Spanish, stating:

> It's sometimes difficult, like dealing with dialects I'm not familiar with. Like I remember in an assessment, I showed them a picture of [a] banana and I was expecting either say like 'platano' or 'banana,' but they said 'guineo.' And I was like, uhh I don't know if it's right or wrong, I don't know. So it's just, you know, it's constantly growing experience. Not just for individuals but, I think, even just for us in the field. So yeah, I mean, you know, I think the great thing is that we have leeway as SLPs to, you know, use that freedom, use alternate forms of assessment, and do what we have to do.

Harper reiterated the importance of continuous learning, not letting limited knowledge be a discouragement, and using positive and negative experiences as motivation to improve assessments for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Overall, Harper's responses demonstrated a growing self-efficacy in conducting multicultural assessments, their awareness of the impact of cultural and linguistic diversity on assessments, and their commitment to continuous learning and improvement in their practice.

Jamie

Jamie reported five years of experience as an SLP, with five years of experience in a public school setting. Additionally, Jamie reported a per diem position working in a private practice servicing mainly the pediatric population with some adult patients. Jamie is bilingual, fluent in English and has an intermediate knowledge of Spanish. Jamie earned a bachelor's degree in health sciences, a bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology and a master's of science degree in speech-language oathology. When asked about the feelings towards conducting multicultural assessments with students from CLD backgrounds, Jamie described feeling both

uncomfortable and stressed when conducting multicultural assessments revealing, "I'm uncomfortable especially if others are involved [I] feel slightly stressed just based on the parameters that we have in the school like the 60-day timeline and all of the other paperwork and therapy that we have to do." Jamie's responses indicated a developing self-efficacy in conducting multicultural assessments, an awareness of the challenges and benefits of working with CLD students, and a commitment to continuous learning and improvement in their practice.

Kendall

Kendall reported three years of experience as an SLP, with all three years of experience in a public school setting. Kendall is bilingual, fluent in English and Spanish. Kendall earned a bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology and a master's of science in speech-language pathology. Kendall conveyed feeling confident and knowledgeable when conducting assessments with Spanish-speaking students. Kendall described encouraging experiences when presenting assessment results to the IEP team, particularly when she was able to demonstrate and explain the difference between language differences and speech impairments to team members and parents. However, she disclosed feelings of uncertainty and lost when working with students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds due to limited resources and difficulties in pinpointing specific language disorders or differences. Kendall mentioned that her experiences with multicultural assessments have slowly built her confidence and improved her ability to conduct appropriate identifications. Kendall expressed:

> Say if it was an encouraging experience, I feel more confident in my ability to accurately
>
> identify SLI, or say if it was like a discouraging experience, I'm more careful for future
>
> assessments. I feel like the majority of my experiences have been more positive, so I feel
>
> like it slowly has been building my confidence. Even though I feel kind of lost in the

beginning, I end up making it work. I find how to assess and find out if it's a disorder or

difference. Each time I feel like I'm getting a little bit better and preparing better for the

next IEP.

Despite initial challenges and uncertainties, Kendall annouced feeling more confident and better

prepared for future assessments.

Morgan

Morgan reported 11 years of experience as an SLP; all 11 years of experience were in a

public school setting. Morgan is an English-only speaker. Morgan earned a bachelor's degree in

communicative disorders and sciences and a master's of arts in communicative disorders and

sciences. Morgan mentioned feeling overwhelmed at times due to language barriers and needing

careful analysis to ensure accurate assessments. She expressed, "There's areas where I could

grow and get better honestly, my most strong feelings when I'm conducting the assessments is

wishing that I'm bilingual because then I feel like I could just do such a better job." Morgan also

discussed feeling discouraged when language factors are solely blamed for various difficulties

experienced by students without considering other possible contributing factors. Morgan

mentioned challenges related to finding appropriate assessments for specific languages and

cultural aspects impacting communication.

Peyton

Peyton reported five years of experience as an SLP, with four years of experience in a

public school setting. Peyton is an English-only speaker. Peyton earned a bachelor's degree in

communicative disorders and sciences and a master's of arts in communicative disorders and

sciences. Peyton declared their experiences with multicultural assessments have been influenced

by the diverse populations they have worked with, including Somali, Spanish-speaking, and

Filipino backgrounds. Peyton acknowledged the challenges, time constraints, and stress associated with conducting multicultural assessments but emphasized the importance of seeking support from parents. With regards with parental involvement, Peyton voiced, "Just knowing where the kids are from or how their parents speak, what I would expect to be the 'error' for the kids, and then I can look up to see what the language differences there would be." Peyton also emphasized the importance of continuous learning and colleague collaboration to improve their skills in CLD assessment. Peyton revealed, "I have a network of coworkers who have been really helpful in making me feel more confident, having them to kind of back up what I'm thinking or doing and the ideas."

Quinn

Quinn reported six years of experience as an SLP; all six years were in the public school setting. Quinn is multilingual, fluent in English, Spanish, and Latin. Quinn also reportedly studied Greek, Hebrew, and Italian. Quinn earned a bachelor's degree in communication sciences and disorders and a master's of science in communication sciences and disorders. Quinn expressed enthusiasm for serving diverse students and recognizing the importance of accurate assessments based on CLD backgrounds. However, Quinn also highlighted the challenges of limited resources, time constraints, language barriers, and the need to better understand and accept non-standardized measures in the assessment process. Quinn relayed,

> I wasn't expecting a ton of students from tiny islands and there are three different, entirely different languages that I had no sense of. It was a crash course in being an SLP and conduct because that was about 70% of the caseload. And there were no translators available because these are languages that are not written down. Often, they'll be a six- or seven-year-old translating during the IEP meeting. Just to get the parent for that parent

interview, which is obviously not ideal, but there's there was no other way. It was also very difficult to get a hold of their parents because they were migrant workers. So, I started off with just this huge deficit and probably did very poor assessments, but I'm just trying to do the best they could at the time.

Quinn emphasized the significance of collaboration, research, and support from the team to enhance their confidence and effectiveness in conducting multicultural assessments.

Riley

Riley reported 12 years of experience as an SLP, with the last three years of experience in a public school setting. Riley is an English-only speaker. Riley earned a bachelor's degree in political science and two master's degrees in speech-language pathology and healthcare administration. In relation to self-efficacy, Riley's responses reflected a range of experiences, both positive and challenging. Riley demonstrated a growing confidence in understanding and addressing the language needs of CLD students. However, there are also indications of self-doubt and concerns about accurately diagnosing students and providing appropriate intervention due to the low socioeconomic status of the district and the implementation of a dual language immersion program. Riley described that students identified as English-only speakers at home are exposed to bilingual Spanish-English environments through the dual language immersion program. Therefore, Riley concluded the following, "Some of those articulation differences are carrying over to our English-only students, so like the /d/ substitution for /th/ but that's a completely normal articulatory pattern or substitution for a Spanish predominantly Spanish-speaking student and this is what they're hearing all day." Contributing factors such as language and disagreement with contracted SLPs influenced Riley's self-efficacy in conducting

multicultural assessments and making decisions regarding speech therapy services for CLD students.

Skylar

Skylar reported nine years of experience as an SLP, with six years of experience in a public school setting. Skylar is an English-only speaker and reported as a speaker of the Midwest English dialect. Skylar earned a bachelor's degree in communication disorders and a master's of science in speech-language pathology. Skylar's experiences, including positive experiences, challenges, support from colleagues, and understanding of student demographics, contributed to their self-efficacy in conducting multicultural assessments. With regards to student demographics and parental involvement before assessment, Skylar shared the importance of being sensitive sharing,

> If a student is living in a foster family, you know not to come a parent that might be in question for the data like being able to take into account their home life or if a student has parents that speak Spanish only or I had a family that spoke Mandarin only being able to make sure that you don't just call and assume that they're gonna speak English and then become also it helps you really prepare.

Overall, Skylar conveyed growing confidence and competence in discerning between difference and disorder and navigating the complexities of cultural and linguistic diversity in assessment processes.

Results

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the self-efficacy experienced during multicultural assessments with CLD students for elementary school SLPs at rural public school districts in California. This study was guided by one central research question

and four sub-questions. Data were collected from individual interviews, focus group discussion, and electronic journal prompts, which provided the data for analysis. All participants engaged in the interview process. Seven participants completed the focus group discussion, and all participants completed the journal prompts. Three themes were generated from the data collection and analysis that guided an understanding of language and cultural sensitivity, the influence on confidence, and the effects of collaborative experiences when conducting multicultural assessments. Each of the three themes encompassed two subthemes. Within the language and cultural sensitivity theme, there were subthemes of continual training and limited resources. Under the theme of influence on confidence, there were subthemes of pressure and uncertainty and balancing language difference versus disorder. For the theme on the influences of collaborative experiences, the subthemes included team assessment and colleague collaboration. Through a detailed exploration of SLPs' experiences, this study provides valuable insights into the lived experiences of SLPs when conducting multicultural assessments of students from CLD backgrounds.

Language and Cultural Sensitivity

Language and cultural sensitivity play a crucial role in speech-language pathology, particularly when conducting assessments on students from CLD backgrounds (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2022; Selin et al., 2022). Through the data, participants of this study recognized the importance of continual training to navigate the complexities of multicultural assessments effectively. Surprisingly, 12 out of 13 participants mentioned the need for increased language and cultural sensitivity in their journal entries. These entries revealed that the participants were aware of the significance of language and cultural sensitivity in their practice, emphasizing the need for ongoing professional development. Bailey emphasized the need for more specific

training, stating, "It would be nice to have more specific training related to that so that I can make sure that I myself am identifying these kids with different backgrounds and things like that." In the focus groups, a particular theme became apparent as participants openly discussed with each other the barriers to increasing language and cultural sensitivity. This open discussion revealed the challenges faced due to limited resources. Casey, acknowledged the challenges of limited resources, saying, "I feel like there needs to be more...more research and more training on how to use non-standardized [assessments]...there needs to be more structured informal assessments." This training enables SLPs to acquire the necessary knowledge and resources to conduct appropriate assessments for students who speak different languages and dialects or come from diverse cultural backgrounds. However, SLPs often faced challenges due to limited resources that hinder their ability to provide comprehensive and culturally sensitive assessments.

Continual Training

When conducting multicultural assessments in students from CLD backgrounds, SLPs relied heavily on actively participating in continual training to effectively execute appropriate assessments. Quinn expressed continuous training as the need arises. For example, Quinn shared having an assessment for a student that spoke Farsi. Having no previous knowledge of Farsi, Quinn created resources stating, "Now I have a beautiful folder on my desktop that has articles from SLPs, linguistic studies, and cultural background [on] Farsi so that if another child who speaks Farsi comes to me then I can just pull that up." On a similar note, Harper discussed the need for ongoing training as an SLP and shared:

> You never know everything. You're probably never going to know everything but don't let that be a discouragement toward learning and doing as much as you can with what resources you do have, if any, and you know, take every positive and negative experience

and use that as fuel to make your assessment better cause you know, we have a very

selfless job it's really all about the child and you know their family and how they're gonna

develop how they're going to contribute to this world and a lot of it is in your hand right.

You have a responsibility. You signed up to provide these kinds of things and so you

know, try not to lose sight of that. Let the potential of that child be an encouragement to

you as you continue to develop your understanding and knowledge of cultural linguistic

diversity, it's role in assessment, and the effects of a good assessment and treatment for

these kids from cultural linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Other participants agreed that if not for their individual search for continuous professional

development, they would not have experienced success with assessment practices with students

from CLD backgrounds. In agreement with Harper, Riley shared, "Because our grad programs

do not prepare us enough to work in a multicultural world as speech therapist[s], as the subject

matter experts, we are over diagnosing and misdiagnosing. Professional development is the bare

minimum to address this." This acknowledgment of the need for ongoing learning aligns with

Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy, where individuals recognize the importance of

continuously acquiring new knowledge and skills to effectively adapt to diverse contexts.

Limited Resources

Most SLPs agreed limited resources created an increased level of difficulty when

conducting multicultural assessments on students from CLD backgrounds. Morgan asserted,

"The tools we are provided just don't cut it." Similarly, Skylar shared, "I only had one Spanish

assessment available to administer to bilingual students, and it was a picture vocabulary test."

Furthermore, Morgan explained, "It is discouraging to me because even administering the

assessment in both languages isn't always enough; it feels invalid." Even with available

resources, SLPs expressed difficulty with conducting multicultural assessments. Riley discussed limited time, staffing, and resources warranted to establish a preintervention process. Riley stated, "I'm the only speech service there; we are not doing a whole lot of pre-intervention at this time. That's our goal is to move towards more of an RTI process; we just don't have the staffing to support that."

Influence on Confidence

The influence of confidence on SLPs when conducting multicultural assessments on students from CLD backgrounds is crucial, as reported pressure and uncertainty can potentially influence the delicate balance between distinguishing language differences from language disorders. In the individual interviews, a recurring theme regarding the effect of confidence emerged among 11 out of 13 participants. Harper highlighted the importance of parental involvement, stating, "I feel much more effective and confident if I have their engagement...it answers a lot of the why questions." The focus group discussions further emphasized the importance of confidence and collaboration in conducting multicultural assessments. Skylar emphasized the significance of collaborative experiences, stating, "Trust in the professionalism and expertise of your coworkers...trust that they're gonna do their best...that has been really encouraging." These quotes reflect the participants' recognition of the impact of confidence and collaboration in conducting practical multicultural assessments for students from CLD backgrounds. Understanding the emotional experiences of SLPs and their confidence levels is essential in navigating the complexities of accurately identifying and supporting students from CLD backgrounds.

Pressure and Uncertainty

SLPs conduct multicultural assessments on students from CLD backgrounds and often experience significant pressure and uncertainty. Skylar vividly described their emotions, stating, "I feel unprepared, unsupported, uncertain, and nervous" when questioning the possibility of over or under-identifying SLI. Riley echoed comparable sentiments, acknowledging that anxiety arises due to time constraints and the overwhelming paperwork demands. Finley recognized, "I feel added pressure with assessing children from CLD backgrounds while also adhering to deadlines." Similarly, Quinn expressed, "When I'll see the parent input page and they'll list language that I didn't know, there is an element of guilt there…it's really stressful to know that we don't have the time to properly serve the child." Collectively, these SLPs highlighted the heightened pressure and uncertainty, underscoring the challenges inherent in conducting culturally sensitive assessments.

Balancing Language Difference versus Disorder

Maintaining a balanced approach between identifying language differences and language disorders poses a challenge to SLPs' perceived self-efficacy when conducting multicultural assessments on students from CLD backgrounds. Although there are standardized assessments geared towards Spanish-English bilinguals, Finley acknowledged the limitation of using a standardized assessment incorporating Spanish and English, such as the CELF-4, with a student exposed to Spanish without academic exposure. Finley reported the student demonstrated appropriate Spanish in conversation but had limited exposure to English and limited education; therefore, Finley deduced, "I refused to give the CELF to him because even just talking to him his language was appropriate, but the CELF is so sophisticated for a mainly Spanish-only student with limited education." Finley's experience led Finley to recognize the importance of

incorporating informal measures for multicultural assessments. Furthermore, Peyton attested, "I learned the need to be cognizant of dialectical and cultural influences; even if the student meets the profile on the normative sample, there are many factors that can impact their speech and language development."

Similarly, Skylar expressed the need for non-standardized assessments to measure language acquisition and differentiate language differences from disorders effectively. While acknowledging the need to create a comprehensive image of the student's speech-language ability, Casey and Morgan delineated the time constraints of analyzing language samples while adhering to the assessment timeline. These insights further contribute to the complexities of conducting culturally sensitive assessments and the impact on SLPs' confidence in their multicultural assessment practices.

Collaborative Experiences

SLPs shed light on the significant impact of collaborative efforts on perceived self-efficacy when conducting multicultural assessments on students from CLD backgrounds. SLPs recognized the value of teamwork and collaboration in enhancing confidence and competence in conducting accurate assessments. In the focus group discussion, reoccurring themes surfaced as the participants openly explored the significance of collaboration on their confidence levels. The collective discussion further highlighted how a collaborative approach bolstered SLPs' confidence and strengthened the overall quality and effectiveness of assessments for students from CLD backgrounds. Jamie shared, "Working more often in a team...it's giving me new ideas or ways to approach these assessments in the future by providing me with more awareness and practice." A collaborative approach bolstered SLPs' confidence and strengthened the quality and effectiveness of assessments for students from CLD backgrounds.

Team Assessment

Through collaboration with parents, colleagues, and diverse professionals, SLPs gain support, guidance, and valuable insights that contribute to understanding language differences and disorders in CLD students. Positive collaborative experiences with parents can alleviate worries and lead to more accurate assessments. Kendall emphasized parental involvement and the effect it has on the accuracy of assessments, noting, "Parental involvement is really important…they could give more information about home environment, culture, race, language, dialect." Morgan mentioned the importance of collaboration with interpreters, parents, and other professionals stating, "Knowing that information is super helpful... I don't wanna misdiagnose somebody having a language disorder when it's language difference or lack of exposure." Jamie shared a collaborative approach adopted at their site, conducting multidisciplinary assessments with a team to ensure all professionals can access the parent, student, and translator on similar days. Jamie's experience influenced their assessment process, streamlining it and avoiding multiple lengthy assessment sessions. Harper also highlighted the value of team assessment and shared, "Trust in the professionalism and expertise of your coworkers like the school psychologist, the teachers, the parents, you know, trust that they're gonna do their best, provide as much information and education, and hope for the best." The shared experiences and perspectives within a collaborative framework provided SLPs with a broader knowledge base, innovative approaches, and validation of their assessment practices.

Colleague Collaboration

Colleague collaboration was highly valued by the participants in the study. Bailey emphasized the importance of collaborating with an SLP who was a native Spanish speaker and a non-SLP interpreter who spoke Russian, stating, "It was really nice to have all these different

people support my assessment." Peyton highlighted the support and encouragement received from coworkers, saying, "Having a network of coworkers... was really encouraging... giving ideas and backing up what I was thinking or doing." Morgan also discussed the positive impact of collaborating with interpreters and SLPs who spoke the same language during assessments, mentioning, "I liked it a lot when I worked at a bigger school district and I had a speech therapist who spoke the language who was administering a lot of the tests... having that collaboration time helped immensely."

Outlier Data and Findings

Participants' lived experiences in this study were characterized by complexity and a range of perspectives, with some experiences deviating notably from the typical. While these outlier findings may appear inconsistent with the majority, they yielded valuable insights into the intricacies and nuances of multicultural assessment practices. Delving deeper into these exceptional experiences unveiled novel viewpoints and concepts that deepened the understanding of the topic.

Defeat

A significant outlier finding from this study was an SLP admitting to feeling defeated due to inadequate support. This could affect the quality of assessment provided to students from CLD backgrounds. For example, Dakota revealed repeated difficulty in training interpreters to aid in administering assessments. Dakota described, "I knew like what they were giving them wasn't right…I felt like I had front-loaded them and given enough training, but they still made mistakes." Considering the inadequate support for assessment administration, Dakota resorted to conducting assessments only in English unless a bilingual SLP was accessible. Dakota shared, "It's frustrating feeling defeated and not worth the extra effort. It is what it is…I won't qualify

kids now if I know it's due to exposure or things like that." The outlier experience shared by Dakota sheds light on the challenges faced by some SLPs due to inadequate support, which can have a detrimental impact on the quality of assessments for students from CLD backgrounds. Dakota's frustration with training interpreters and the resulting mistakes made during assessments highlights the importance of proper support and resources. This outlier finding emphasizes the significance of providing SLPs with the necessary support and resources to enhance their perceived self-efficacy in conducting multicultural assessments.

Disagreement

While the majority of SLPs depicted the positive impact of colleague collaboration, an SLPs' experience with contracted, online SLPs brought about unexpected obstacles. Riley, the only district-hire and in-person SLP in their district, explained, "Here I am like this newbie in the school telling these online therapists this student does not need speech therapy, and they argue." Riley continued:

> Part of it is that their [contracted SLPs] paycheck is dependent on the number of students they're seeing and its per session like session-based reimbursement, so they have a vested interest in keeping as many students on caseload as possible but then they will fight about the assessment results or that somehow my assessment is invalid for X-Y-Z.

In contrast to the collaborative experiences described by most SLPs, Riley's encounter with contracted, online SLPs highlighted the challenges faced in asserting their professional judgment. Despite these obstacles, Riley's perceived self-efficacy remained intact as they stood firm in their assessment decisions based on their expertise and commitment to providing appropriate services to students.

Research Question Responses

This hermeneutic phenomenological study sought to understand the lived experiences of SLPs conducting assessments of CLD students enrolled in kindergarten through sixth-grade public school district in a rural county within California. The goal of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand how elementary school SLPs describe their self-efficacy through their account of influential experiences, vicarious experiences, physiological feedback, and performance feedback when conducting multicultural assessments of students from CLD backgrounds. The subsequent sections present the participant's responses to the research questions.

Central Research Question

How do elementary school SLPs describe their self-efficacy during multicultural assessments for culturally and linguistically diverse students? Elementary school SLPs described their self-efficacy during multicultural assessments for CLD students as variable, influenced by factors such as language proficiency, resources, and collaboration with colleagues. Morgan and Finley shared feeling more confident when there is access to bilingual SLPs and resources, but Morgan, Casey, and Peyton also acknowledged the challenges and time-consuming nature of conducting these assessments. Peyton said, "It is exciting to connect with other SLPs, but there's a lot of work that needs to be done just taking the time to look up what sounds are normal…it's encouraging when I have the team on board… it is discouraging when the team is against your decision." These experiences have significantly shaped the participants' perceptions and abilities in conducting assessments for diverse student populations.

Sub-Question One

How do elementary school speech-language pathologists describe influential experiences of multicultural assessment? Elementary school SLPs described influential experiences of multicultural assessment as positive and rewarding when able to accurately identify language differences and provide appropriate support. SLPs reported feeling confident when connecting with other SLPs and collaborating to ensure proper assessments. When assessing a student from a CLD background, Quinn shared, "They had a language delay, not a language disorder because they were emerging bilingual, and it was really positive when using the right tools and exciting to connect with other SLPs who are really passionate about providing the proper assessments."

Sub-Question Two

How do elementary school speech-language pathologists describe vicarious experiences of multicultural assessments? Elementary school SLPs describe vicarious experiences of multicultural assessments as positive and negative. Positive experiences are related to familiarity and advantage, while negative experiences stem from limited resources and challenges in identifying appropriate assessments. Positive experiences included having an advantage when assessing students who share the same cultural or linguistic background as Kendall stated, "It's kind of like having an advantage from being like Hispanic and being bilingual myself." However, negative experiences arise from limited resources and the challenge of finding appropriate assessments for students from diverse backgrounds. Kendall shared, "There hasn't been like a certain assessment or certain things that we can use that be like OK for sure we could use this for this language or this culture or this background."

Sub-Question Three

How do elementary school speech-language pathologists describe physiological feedback of multicultural assessments? Elementary school SLPs described the physiological feedback of multicultural assessments as exhausting and stressful. The time-consuming nature of conducting multicultural assessments and the challenges of language barriers led to increased stress levels. Alex denoted, "It's so exhausting, especially for those students. It's adding another extensive assessment with our wildly high caseloads, paperwork, and workloads; it's just really stressful to know that we don't have the time to properly serve this child."

Sub-Question Four

How do elementary school speech-language pathologists describe performance feedback of multicultural assessments? Elementary school SLPs described performance feedback of multicultural assessments as both encouraging and discouraging. Positive feedback and support from the IEP team and colleagues reportedly boosted SLPs' confidence. However, encountering resistance from the team or facing challenges in accurately identifying language differences can be discouraging. Quinn described, "It is encouraging when your team supports you on decisions whether the child qualifies or not... or when someone says, 'Wow, I learned something new about this child's language.' It is discouraging when the team is against your decision."

Summary

This chapter discussed the lived experiences of elementary school SLPs when conducting multicultural assessments for CLD students in rural public school districts in California. The findings indicated the importance of language and cultural sensitivity, continual training, limited resources, the impact of confidence, and collaborative experiences in the assessment process. However, unexpected findings portrayed the additional challenges SLPs face when dealing with

inadequate support and skepticism from colleagues. Participants emphasized the need for

ongoing professional development, access to appropriate resources, and supportive teamwork to

navigate the complexities of multicultural assessments. The findings of this study contribute

valuable insights into the lived experiences of SLPs and can inform future practices in assessing

students from CLD backgrounds.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the self-efficacy experienced during multicultural assessments with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students for elementary school speech-language pathologists (SLPs) at rural public school districts in California. This chapter includes a discussion of the interpretations of the findings, the implications for policy and practice, theoretical and methodological implications, the limitations and delimitations, and recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with an overall summary.

Discussion

The purpose of this section is to discuss the study's findings considering the developed themes of language and cultural sensitivity, influence on confidence, and effects of collaborative experiences. Through my participants' lived experiences, I learned about SLPs' experiences in identifying SLI in students from CLD backgrounds. This section discussed the synthesis of the findings, suggestions for stakeholders, connections to theory, the study's limitations, and recommendations. The discussion section has five major subsections, including (a) Interpretation of Findings; (b) Implications for Policy or Practice; (c) Theoretical and Empirical Implications; (d) Limitations and Delimitations; and (e) Recommendations for Future Research.

Interpretation of Findings

This section provides an overview of the thematic findings discussed in Chapter Four, which include the themes of language and cultural sensitivity, impact on confidence, and effects of collaborative experiences in multicultural assessments. The interpretations presented here are

derived from the interviews, focus groups, and other data collected, reflecting the participants' lived experiences.

Summary of Thematic Findings

The participants provided insights into their experiences and perceived self-efficacy of multicultural assessment practices on students from CLD backgrounds. The results of the data were themes of relationship language and cultural sensitivity, growth mindset, and effects of collaborative experiences when conducting multicultural assessment practices. These thematic findings underscore the multifaceted nature of SLPs' perceived self-efficacy in conducting multicultural assessments. By embracing a sense of linguistic and cultural sensitivity, cultivating a growth mindset, and actively engaging in collaborative experiences, SLPs can enhance their confidence and effectiveness in providing culturally responsive assessments to students from diverse backgrounds. These findings highlight the importance of ongoing professional development, self-reflection, and collaboration within speech-language pathology to promote equitable and inclusive assessment practices.

Sense of Linguistic and Cultural Sensitivity. One prominent theme that emerged from the data is the SLPs' sense of linguistic and cultural sensitivity when conducting multicultural assessments. Bailey and Harper expressed the importance of understanding and valuing the CLD backgrounds of their students. Finley and Morgan recognized the need to approach assessments with cultural humility and adapt their strategies to meet the unique needs of each student. The need for cultural humily and adaptation included being mindful of dialectal variations, language differences versus disorders, and cultural influences on communication development. SLPS must adopt a culturally responsive assessment approach that considers students' diverse, intersectional identities, including their culture, language, ethnicity, and other sociodemographic characteristics

(Hernandez-Saca et al., 2018; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). By recognizing and addressing linguistic and cultural influences, SLPs can enhance their assessment practices and provide more accurate and culturally responsive services to students from CLD backgrounds (Robinson & Norton, 2019; Edwards et al., 2020). SLPs who exhibited a strong sense of linguistic and cultural sensitivity demonstrated greater confidence in their ability to provide appropriate assessments for students from diverse backgrounds.

      Creating a Growth Mindset. Another key theme that emerged was the importance of cultivating a growth mindset among SLPs when conducting multicultural assessments. Implementing a growth mindset in the assessment process is crucial for SLPs when evaluating students from CLD backgrounds. A growth mindset emphasizes the belief that abilities can be developed through dedication and effort (Dweck, 2006). SLPs should view the assessment process as an opportunity for growth and learning for themselves and their students. By adopting a growth mindset, SLPs can approach assessment with an open mind and a willingness to explore different assessment tools and strategies (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2021). Jamie and Kendall described the need for continual learning and professional development to enhance their knowledge and skills. They recognized that multicultural assessments require ongoing self-reflection, open-mindedness, and a willingness to adapt their approaches based on new information and evolving best practices. Peyton and Skylar engaged in ongoing professional development to update their knowledge and skills, especially in understanding the cultural and linguistic influences that can impact students' speech and language development (Chen & Lindo, 2018; Fulcher-Rood et al., 2018). SLPs who embraced a growth mindset viewed challenges as opportunities for growth and saw each assessment as a chance to expand their cultural competence and refine their assessment techniques. By embracing a growth mindset, SLPs

created an environment that fosters resilience, adaptability, and continuous improvement, ultimately leading to more effective assessment practices for students from CLD backgrounds.

Delving into Collaborative Experiences. Collaboration was identified as a significant theme influencing SLPs' perceived self-efficacy in conducting multicultural assessments. Collaborative experiences are crucial in supporting the speech-language development of CLD students. Alex, Morgan, and Casey highlighted the benefits of collaborating with colleagues within and outside their immediate assessment team. Collaborative experiences provided a platform for exchanging knowledge, sharing resources and expertise, and learning from one another's experiences. SLPs who engaged in collaborative practices reported increased confidence and a broader perspective on multicultural assessment practices. SLPs and other educational professionals can incorporate culturally responsive practices that value students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, such as using culturally relevant materials and providing language support sensitive to their dialectal and linguistic backgrounds (Alfano et al., 2021; Edwards et al., 2020; McGregor et al., 2018; Melzi et al., 2022).

Moreover, understanding the cultural context and incorporating sociocultural factors into the assessment process is critical (Selin et al., 2019). As Morgan shared, SLPs may not navigate cultural context and sociocultural factors independently; thus, it is crucial to engage in collaboration with other professionals. Collaborative experiences also fostered a sense of support and validation, allowing SLPs to navigate challenges more effectively and feel more empowered in assessment decisions.

Implications for Policy and Practice

SLPs' perceived self-efficacy for conducting assessments with CLD students can be significantly influenced by various factors, and it is essential to address these factors to enhance

their confidence and effectiveness. School districts can support SLPs' self-efficacy by implementing policies that provide training programs, assessment support, collaboration opportunities, and professional development tailored to conducting assessments with students from CLD backgrounds. Regular communication and collaboration with colleagues, such as other SLPs or other team members, can also contribute to SLPs' self-efficacy. Moreover, equipping SLPs with tools that enhance the assessment process, such as support and resources, can further boost their confidence and effectiveness in conducting assessments with CLD students. By focusing on these policies and practices, school districts can foster SLPs' self-efficacy and create a supportive environment for conducting assessments with CLD students.

Implications for Policy

School districts can implement specific policies and guidelines to enhance the perceived self-efficacy of SLPs in conducting culturally sensitive assessments for CLD students. For instance, school districts can provide professional development opportunities focused on improving SLPs' cultural competence and knowledge of culturally sensitive assessment practices (Alfano et al., 2021). These training programs can include strategies for gathering culturally relevant information, using appropriate assessment tools for diverse populations, and interpreting assessment results in a culturally sensitive manner. Additionally, school districts can establish clear expectations and guidelines for SLPs conducting assessments with CLD students, emphasizing the importance of considering cultural and linguistic factors in the assessment process (Selin et al., 2019). By providing SLPs with access to culturally appropriate assessment materials, resources, and support, school districts can further enhance SLPs' perceived self-efficacy in conducting culturally sensitive assessments for CLD students (Alfano et al., 2021; Selin et al., 2019). By implementing these policies and guidelines, school districts can create a

supportive and empowering environment that promotes cultural sensitivity and improves the quality of assessments for CLD students.

Implications for Practice

The research results indicated that fostering SLPs' perceived self-efficacy in conducting culturally sensitive assessments for CLD students involves being mindful of the challenges and proactively addressing them. SLPs can benefit from dedicated collaboration time, such as scheduling regular check-ins with site teams and other SLPs. By prioritizing ongoing support and resources for SLPs, school administrators can help minimize feelings of overwhelm and burnout (Alfano et al., 2021). Providing adequate support includes considering the workload and stress of conducting culturally sensitive assessments for CLD students and adjusting expectations accordingly (Alfano et al., 2021). Principals and administrators can play a crucial role by incorporating regular check-ins with SLPs to ensure they feel supported, valued, and equipped to provide culturally sensitive assessments (Alfano et al., 2021; Selin et al., 2019). It is essential to recognize that the implications for practice may vary depending on each school's specific context and circumstances and its SLPs. Therefore, a flexible and adaptable approach that considers the unique needs and challenges of each student and SLP is essential to foster SLPs' perceived self-efficacy in conducting culturally sensitive assessments for CLD students (Alfano et al., 2021; Selin et al., 2019). By embracing a range of instructional approaches and modalities, educators can ensure high-quality assessment practices that meet the diverse needs of CLD students.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy was used to describe the lived experiences of SLPs in conducting assessments for CLD students. The empirical implications of this research provide valuable insights into the challenges and successes faced by SLPs in conducting

assessments for CLD students. Due to the gap in the literature, it is essential to acknowledge and research the experiences of SLPs' multicultural assessment practices.

Theoretical Implications

This study aligned with existing theories that emphasized the importance of belief in one's own capabilities, such as Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy, which underscored the impact of one's capabilities influenced performance and behavior. The thematic findings, including linguistic and cultural sensitivity, growth mindset, and collaborative experiences in multicultural assessments, were consistent with Bandura's framework. SLPs who demonstrated a strong sense of linguistic and cultural sensitivity exhibited greater confidence in conducting assessments for culturally and linguistically diverse students. SLPs also embraced a growth mindset, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth and actively engaging in ongoing professional development. Collaborative experiences with colleagues further enhanced their confidence and provided a broader perspective on multicultural assessment practices. By aligning with Bandura's self-efficacy theory, the study underscored the importance of fostering SLPs' self-efficacy beliefs to enhance their assessment practices. It highlighted the need for interventions and strategies that promote SLPs' confidence in conducting culturally sensitive assessments, such as targeted training, resources, and collaborative opportunities. These findings contribute to the field by providing a theoretical framework for understanding how SLPs' beliefs in their own capabilities influence their assessment practices, thereby improving outcomes for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Empirical Implications

Empirically, the study findings confirmed and aligned with previous research on the importance of linguistic and cultural sensitivity in conducting assessments with CLD. The theme

of linguistic and cultural sensitivity echoed existing literature that emphasized the need for SLPs to consider the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students when conducting assessments (Hernandez-Saca et al., 2018; Robinson & Norton, 2019). The study extended previous research by providing specific insights into how SLPs developed a sense of linguistic and cultural sensitivity through their experiences and the impact it had on their perceived self-efficacy in conducting multicultural assessments.

Additionally, the findings of the study highlighted the significance of cultivating a growth mindset among SLPs when conducting multicultural assessments. The findings aligned with the existing literature on the importance of continuous learning and professional development in enhancing cultural competence and assessment practices (Chen & Lindo, 2018; Fulcher-Rood et al., 2018). The study added to the field by emphasizing the role of a growth mindset in fostering resilience, adaptability, and continuous improvement in assessment techniques for CLD students. In terms of methodology, the study utilized interviews, focus groups, and other data collection methods to explore SLPs' experiences and perceived self-efficacy. The methodology allowed for a rich and comprehensive understanding of the participants' lived experiences and perspectives. The findings suggested that such qualitative methods provided valuable insights into the complex nature of conducting culturally sensitive assessments and could be further utilized in future research to explore similar topics.

It is important to acknowledge that the study may have had limitations and areas where the methodology or theoretical framework could have been further refined. Further research could explore additional theoretical frameworks that may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic or refine the methodology to include a larger sample size, diverse sample size, or varied settings.

Limitations and Delimitations

One limitation of this study is that the participants were drawn from a single SELPA, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. The specific challenges and experiences reported by these SLPs may be influenced by local factors such as SELPA policies, SLP shortages, or student demographics, which may differ in other school districts. Future research could include participants from multiple districts, states, or regions to enhance the external validity of the findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of SLPs' perceived self-efficacy in conducting culturally sensitive assessments for CLD students. Another limitation of this study is the small sample size of 13 SLPs, which may limit the breadth of experiences and perspectives captured. While efforts were made to recruit participants across the SELPA, the perspectives of these SLPs may only represent a fraction of the larger population of SLPs working with CLD students. In addition, it is essential to note that the findings may be specific to SLPs employed by public school districts and may not be generalizable to contracted SLPs. Future research could use larger sample sizes or alternative sampling methods to ensure a more diverse and representative sample, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of SLPs' perceived self-efficacy in culturally sensitive assessments for CLD students. Despite these limitations, the study's focus on individual experiences and perspectives can still provide valuable insights into the lived experiences of SLPs conducting culturally sensitive assessments for CLD students.

The delimitations of the study were purposefully set to define the scope and focus of the research. First, the study focused specifically on SLPs and their experiences in conducting multicultural assessments for students from CLD backgrounds. By narrowing the participant group to SLPs, the study aimed to gain in-depth insights into their perspectives, challenges, and

strategies related to multicultural assessments. Second, the study focused on the themes of language and cultural sensitivity, influence on confidence, and effects of collaborative experiences as the primary areas of investigation. These themes were selected based on their relevance to self-efficacy and their potential impact on SLPs' assessment practices. By delimiting the study to these specific themes, the research aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how SLPs' self-efficacy is influenced by linguistic and cultural sensitivity, growth mindset, and collaboration in the context of multicultural assessments. Additionally, the study was conducted within a specific geographic area, and the findings may not be generalized to other regions or cultural contexts. The delimitation to a specific geographic area allowed for a focused examination of the experiences of SLPs in that context. It is important to acknowledge these delimitations as they help provide a clear framework for the study and establish the boundaries within which the findings and recommendations can be interpreted. By understanding the specific challenges, successes, and perceptions of SLPs, the findings can inform practice and interventions to enhance their perceived self-efficacy in conducting culturally sensitive assessments.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future researchers should aim to expand the scope of their studies to examine SLPs' perceived self-efficacy in conducting culturally sensitive assessments for CLD students. Future studies could involve comparing the experiences of SLPs in different assessment settings, such as full-team and speech-only assessments, to identify similarities and differences in assessment practices, student outcomes, and SLP well-being. Furthermore, the effectiveness of specific resources can be examined, such as using artificial intelligence to facilitate the analysis of language samples. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to track the long-term impact of

SLPs' self-efficacy in culturally sensitive assessments, collaboration, and SLI identification. Given the importance of cultural competence in assessment, it is crucial to continue researching effective assessment practices in diverse and inclusive settings. By broadening the scope and duration of research on SLPs' self-efficacy in conducting culturally sensitive assessments for CLD students, educators and policymakers can gain valuable insights to support SLPs better and promote positive outcomes for diverse learners.

Conclusion

The present study applied Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977) to understand the lived experiences of SLPs in assessing students from CLD backgrounds. The findings revealed the importance of linguistic and cultural sensitivity, adopting a growth mindset, and applying collaboration. Moreover, through professional development and implementing culturally responsive practices, SLPs demonstrated growth in their self-efficacy and ability to assess CLD students effectively. The implications for practice emphasize the importance of implementing policies and practices that promote culturally responsive assessments. Promoting culturally responsive assessments involves understanding the cultural backgrounds and linguistic influences of CLD students, utilizing culturally relevant materials, appropriate use of interpreters, and providing language support sensitive to linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, ongoing professional development is crucial to enhance SLPs' knowledge and self-efficacy in serving CLD students. While this study had certain limitations, such as a limited sample size and specific focus, it provides valuable insights into the experiences of educators in addressing the needs of CLD students. Future research should aim to expand the scope of the study to include a more diverse sample and explore the long-term impact of appropriate SLI identification.

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Appendix A

IRB Application

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 5, 2023

Paola Flores
Heather Strafaccia

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-1421 Multicultural Assessment Practices: A Phenomenological Study Examining Speech-Language Pathologists' Self-Efficacy and Current Research

Dear Paola Flores, Heather Strafaccia,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B

Consent Form

Title of the Project: Multicultural Assessment Practices: A Phenomenological Study Examining Speech-Language Pathologists' Self-Efficacy and Current Research
Principal Investigator: Paola J. Flores, Doctoral Candidate, School of Education, Liberty University

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Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a speech-language pathologist working for a public school district within the specified SELPA servicing the kindergarten to sixth grade age group, fully licensed, fully credentialed, and have at least two years of experience post-graduate school. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to understand the self-efficacy experienced during multicultural assessments with culturally and linguistically diverse students for speech-language pathologists at rural public-school districts in California.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:
1. Participants will be asked to take part in a one-on-one, audio-recorded, in-person or online interview that will take one hour.
2. Participants will then be asked to take part in electronic journal prompts that will take one week to complete and return.
3. Next, participants will participate in a video-recorded focus group, that will take one hour and a half.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include gathering further information on assessment procedures for appropriately identifying speech or language impairment in students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. It will also provide valuable information for graduate programs on instructing current graduate clinicians on appropriate assessment procedures for students from culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Data collected from you may be used in future research. If data collected from you is reused, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then deleted. The researcher will have access to these recordings.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is the researcher in a position of authority over participants, or does the researcher have a financial conflict of interest?

The researcher serves as a speech-language pathologist at a public elementary school. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate or not participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or ███████████████████████████. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Paola J. Flores. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at ███████████ . You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Heather L. Strafaccia, at ██████████████ .

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date

_____

Appendix C

Recruitment Email

Dear Potential Participant,

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research on speech-language pathologists' self-efficacy towards multicultural assessment practices to better understand self-efficacy with culturally and linguistically diverse populations. The purpose of my research is to understand the self-efficacy of speech-language pathologists at elementary schools, and I am writing to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be speech-language pathologists working for a public school district within the specified SELPA servicing the kindergarten to sixth grade age group, fully licensed, fully credentialed, and have at least two years of experience post-graduate school. Participants will be asked to take part in a one-on-one, audio-recorded, in-person interview, take part in an electronic journal prompt, and take part in a video-recorded focus group. It should take approximately 3 hours to complete the procedures listed. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To participate, please click here https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Q5NN52Z to complete the screening survey. If you meet my participant criteria, I will contact you to work with you to schedule a time for an interview.

A consent document is provided as the first page of the survey. The consent document contains additional information about my research.

After you have read the consent form, please click the button to complete and return the survey. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the study.

Sincerely,

Paola J. Flores
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix D

Recruitment Email (Follow-Up)

Dear Potential Participant,

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research on speech-language pathologists' self-efficacy towards multicultural assessment practices to better understand self-efficacy with culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Last week an email was sent to you inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to complete the survey if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is 07/14/2023.

Participants must be speech-language pathologists working for a public school district within the specified SELPA servicing the kindergarten to sixth grade age group, fully licensed, fully credentialed, and have at least two years of experience post-graduate school. Participants will be asked to take part in a one-on-one, audio-recorded, in-person interview, take part in an electronic journal prompt, and take part in a video-recorded focus group. It should take approximately 3 hours to complete the procedures listed. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To participate, please click here https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Q5NN52Z to complete the screening survey. If you meet my participant criteria, I will contact you to work with you to schedule a time for an interview.

A consent document is provided as the first page of the survey. The consent document contains additional information about my research.

After you have read the consent form, please click the button to complete and return the survey. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the study.

Sincerely,

Paola J. Flores
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix E

Permission Request

June 6, 2023

███████████████
███████████████
███████

Dear ████████████████████████████████:

As a graduate student in the Department of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. in Special Education degree. The title of my research project is Multicultural Assessment Practices: A Phenomenological Study Examining Speech-Language Pathologists' Self-Efficacy and Current Research. My research aims to explore the self-efficacy of speech-language pathologists at the elementary school level in ██████ California.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at ████████████████
██████████.

Participants will be asked to respond to a short demographic survey if they are interested in taking part in the study. In addition, participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, respond by email to pjflores@liberty.edu. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Paola J. Flores, M.S., CCC-SLP
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix F

Permission Letter

June 07, 2023

Paola J. Flores
Doctoral Candidate
Liberty University
pjflores@liberty.edu

Dear Paola J. Flores:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled Multicultural Assessment Practices: A Phenomenological Study Examining Speech-Language Pathologists' Self-Efficacy and Current Research, we have decided to grant you permission to contact our staff and invite them to participate in your study.

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

☑ We will provide our membership list to Paola J. Flores, and Paola J. Flores may use the list to contact our members to invite them to participate in her research study.

☑ We grant permission for Paola J. Flores to contact speech-language pathologists in ▬▬ ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ to invite them to participate in her research study.

☐ We will not provide potential participant information to Paola J. Flores, but we agree to provide her study information to speech-language pathologists on her behalf.

Sincerely ▬▬▬▬
▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬