

BACKGROUND

Children’s books are popular tools used by speech-language pathologists (SLPs) for various treatment activities with children. Diverse children’s literature could have a large impact on the efficacy of SLP service delivery because there are marked cultural discrepancies between the Canadian SLPs and their clients ¹. Frameworks and pilot studies ^{2, 3} pertaining to diverse children’s books in SLP practice have been conducted in the USA. Therefore, we explore the understanding, use, and potential need for diverse children’s literature in SLP pediatric services in Canada.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- We aim to answer the following questions:
- Do Canadian SLPs use culturally responsive materials in their clinical practice with pediatric clients?
 - Is the use of culturally responsive materials moderated by service provider (i.e., health care provider, school provider, private practice provider)?
 - Is the use of culturally responsive materials moderated by demographic characteristics of the SLP?
 - Is the use of culturally responsive materials moderated by demographic characteristics of the region in which the SLP practices?

METHODOLOGY

We developed a questionnaire based on an in-depth review of the literature on culturally sensitive practice in education and speech-language pathology. The final anonymous survey was distributed across Canada via professional organizations, SLP groups, and social media. Categorical items identified the demographic characteristics of SLPs and their caseloads. SLPs also provided a list of books routinely used in their practice. Books were coded for racial/ethnic diversity of the main character and linguistic diversity of the text.

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY OF SLP SAMPLE

N = 35

Practice ***		Racial Identity		Mother Tongue	
Alberta	11%	Multi-racial or Mixed	6%	French	17%
British Columbia	6%	Other visible minority	3%	Other	17%
Manitoba	9%	White	91%	English	66%
Newfoundland	3%				
Nova Scotia	6%				
Ontario	26%				
Québec	40%				

BOOK ROUTINELY USED IN THERAPY SUMMARY

N = 260 book titles

Main character of story narrative		Percentage
Animals		45%
White main character(s)		15.8%
Exclusively visible minority main character(s)		11.9%
Un-scorable		10.0%
Inanimate objects		7.3%
Visible minority + White main character(s)		6.5%
Fairytale/legend		3.5%
Language of story narrative ***		Percentage
English		85.8%
French		6.5%
Wordless		5.8%
Multilingual		1.2%
Other		0.4%
Unknown		0.4%

DISCUSSION

Although participant recruitment is still ongoing, some preliminary conclusions can still be drawn:

- **Sample of books routinely used do not mirror the diversity of client caseload.**
- 60% of respondents also report not having enough knowledge and/or resources to meet the unique needs of diverse clients.
- Results support conclusions from previous studies: there is an overall need for more culturally responsive knowledge, tools, & resources in SLP practices to meet the unique needs of diverse clients.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Further analysis of categorical and qualitative items will examine the correlation between indicators of culturally responsive practice and the tools routinely used with clients. We are still recruiting participants. To access the survey, click here: www.bit.ly/dclinslp

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* - no more than 1 to 2 children in my caseload are from a racial or linguistic minority
** - more than half of the children in my caseload are from a racial or linguistic minority
*** - Percentage is > 100 % due to rounding.