Validity of the *Proficiency in Oral English Communication Screening*

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigated the construct, criterion, and social validity of the Proficiency in Oral English Communication Screening (POEC-S), an assessment used with accented English speakers. Validity of this assessment has not previously been established despite its frequent use in clinical practice. **Method**: Speech samples, POEC-S scores, and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores were collected from 28 non-native English speakers. Twenty undergraduate students and 20 speech-language pathologists (SLPs) listened to the speech samples and rated each speaker on speech parameters of overall accent and components of accent (i.e.articulation, intonation, naturalness, and intelligibility) using perceptual rating scales. **Results**: POEC-S total and subtest scores correlated with SLP's perceptual ratings of accent and, to a lesser extent, TOEFL scores; both results indicate construct validity. Criterion validity was demonstrated by significant correlations between the POEC-S and all components of our working definition of accent. Ratings by undergraduates who would have international teaching assistants (ITAs) as instructors also correlated with POEC-S scores, verifying social validity of the POEC-S. **Conclusions**: These results support validity of the POEC-S for use with ITAs but more research is needed to determine if the POEC-S has validity for the general population of accented English speakers.

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