

ABSTRACT

LATINO FAMILIES IN TRANSITION: PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF LATINO PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH COMMUNICATIVE DISORDERS AND THE QUEST FOR SERVICES ACROSS BORDERS

By

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The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to identify and understand the cultural and linguistic barriers encountered by Latino parents of children with communicative disorders. A second purpose was to identify the common themes that arise across Latino families regarding their transition to life in the United States and the quest for available and affordable services for their children. The general principles of phenomenological in-depth qualitative interviewing will be described. Linguistic themes regarding the parents' perceptions of their own linguistic abilities and the abilities of their children were identified. Cultural themes were also identified and included differences in lifestyle, knowledge and cultural views of disability, as well as educational roles and responsibilities. Information is provided regarding the role of speech-language pathologists, especially those who are Spanish-speaking. Finally, the importance of the development of cultural competence for all speech-language pathologists is discussed.

LATINO FAMILIES IN TRANSITION: PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF
LATINO PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH COMMUNICATIVE DISORDERS AND
THE QUEST FOR SERVICES ACROSS BORDERS

A THESIS

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Procedures

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was granted on August 1, 2014 from CSULB (See Appendix A). The subjects of this study were parents who met the following criteria: (a) had at least one child diagnosed with a communicative disorder, (b) moved to the United States from Mexico (c) be a Latino/Latina who speaks Spanish as the primary language. The principle investigators (PIs) distributed and posted information packets in English and Spanish, which included a Consent Form (Appendices B & C) and an informational Recruitment Flyer (Appendices D & E), at the CSULB Speech and Language Clinic. Flyers included contact information. The consent form informed the parents of the possible risks and benefits of participating in the study. Since the parents would be asked to discuss their experiences relative to raising a child with a communicative disorder, one risk was that they might experience emotional distress and become uncomfortable. Another possible risk was breach of confidentiality. As such, specific measures were used to protect against or minimize the risks. For example, confidentiality was maintained by conducting the interviews in a private clinic room and by using pseudonyms for each participant in recorded data. In terms of benefits, the research suggested that participants benefit from having someone to listen to their stories in qualitative interviews (Patton, 1990; Hutchinson, Wilson, & Wilson, 1994; Kavanaugh & Ayres, 1998). According to Murray (2003), giving participants an opportunity to tell their own stories allows them to begin the process of making sense of what has happened to them. Once the parents reviewed the information packets and contacted the PIs, they were informed of their options: (a) participate in the research study or (b) decline participation in the research study. Parents who expressed interest in participating in the

research study and agreed to the time obligations scheduled their first interview. Each parent signed the Consent Form on the day of, but prior to, the first scheduled interview.

In the current study, the interviews were guided by general themes, but did not rely on a strict protocol. However, a Parent-Interview Guide (Appendices F & G) was created in order to provide preliminary open-ended questions. Instead of utilizing the recommended three-interview series, the researchers adapted an interview guide that included a six-interview series. The six-interview series included the three recommended interviews, but integrated an additional three interviews in order to align with the purpose of the study. The six interviews included (1) Focused Life History, (2) Birth Practices and Details of Daily Life, (3) The Details of the Child's Current Experience, (4) Details of Current Experiences with School and Medical Services, (5) Linguistic and Cultural Guidelines, and (6) Reflection on Meaning. Priority was placed on following the participants' lead, asking follow-up questions, and building upon their responses. The interviewer allowed the participants to lead the sessions, while exploring the issues raised. Efforts were made to create an informal and natural conversation between the mothers and the interviewer.

The participants attended six 60-minute individual interviews, following the aforementioned series, in a private room at the CSULB Speech and Language Clinic. Several strategies were employed to help the participants feel comfortable throughout the interview process. Participants chose the interview dates and times, which allowed for flexibility and helped guarantee that they attended all interviews. All mothers chose to be interviewed at times when their children were concurrently receiving speech and

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DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify the common themes that might arise from interviews with Latino parents who have children with communicative disorders in order to understand the cultural and linguistic barriers they may encounter. The study employed in-depth phenomenological interviewing to gain insight into the parents' beliefs, views, and their quest for affordable and available services for their children. Linguistic themes regarding the parents' perceptions of their own linguistic abilities and the abilities of their children were identified. Cultural themes were also identified and included differences in lifestyle, knowledge and cultural views of disability, as well as educational roles and responsibilities. This section will discuss the clinical implications relative to the identified themes, limitations, and future research suggestions.

Linguistic Clinical Implications

Parents' Perceptions of Their Own Linguistic Abilities

There are clinical implications that can be taken from the results of this study that should be considered when working with Latino Families. For example, SLPs should refrain from making assumptions about linguistically and culturally diverse groups. As discussed by Salas (2004), many Latino families face language alienation and feel a sense of shame as a result of not speaking English. Based upon their reports, the mothers in this study feel uncomfortable speaking English despite residing in the United States for more than 10 years. This is not because of a lack of interest or refusal to learn. Rather, it

APPENDIX F
RECRUITMENT FLYER

