Abstract

<u>Background</u>**:** Developmental language disorder is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders in childhood and is characterized by a heterogeneous symptomatology. One of the key areas whose impairment can significantly affect a child's academic success and psychosocial development is sentence comprehension. In children with developmental language disorder, this ability is often compromised, and accurate diagnosis requires targeted assessment. In the Czech context, tools focused specifically on sentence comprehension have been lacking. The TEPO comprehension test was developed to address this gap. The aim of this study was to examine how the use of norms based on differently composed normative samples affects the diagnostic sensitivity of the TEPO test. The study also focused on the language profiles of children identified only by norms based on a sample of children with typical language development, but not by norms derived from a mixed sample.

<u>Methods</u>**:** This observational-analytical cohort study included 239 children aged 60–83 months (99 girls, 140 boys). All children completed seven language assessments, including the TEPO test. Parents completed the Functional Communication Questionnaire. A total of 126 children were diagnosed with developmental language disorder, while 113 children were included in the control group. TEPO test results were evaluated using two types of norms: Norms 1, created based on a sample of children with typical development, and Norms 2, derived from a mixed sample. This normative sample intentionally included 8 % of children with developmental language disorder, in accordance with the prevalence of this disorder reported in the literature.

<u>Results</u>**:** Using Norms 1, impaired sentence comprehension was identified in 90 % of children with DLD, compared to only 67 % using Norms 2. Statistical analysis (McNemar's test) confirmed a significant difference in the identification rate between the two types of norms. Furthermore, children identified only by Norms 1 but not by Norms 2 formed a specific subgroup with a milder yet still clinically relevant language profile. These children scored significantly higher on the composite language score than those identified by both sets of norms, but still differed significantly from the control group (Mann–Whitney U test, $p < 0.001$).

<u>Conclusion</u>**:** The choice of normative approach had a substantial impact on the diagnostic sensitivity of the TEPO test. Norms 1, based solely on children with typical development, demonstrated higher sensitivity and enabled the detection of even mild sentence comprehension deficits. From a clinical perspective, this approach is advantageous as it supports more accurate identification of comprehension difficulties and allows for timely intervention.