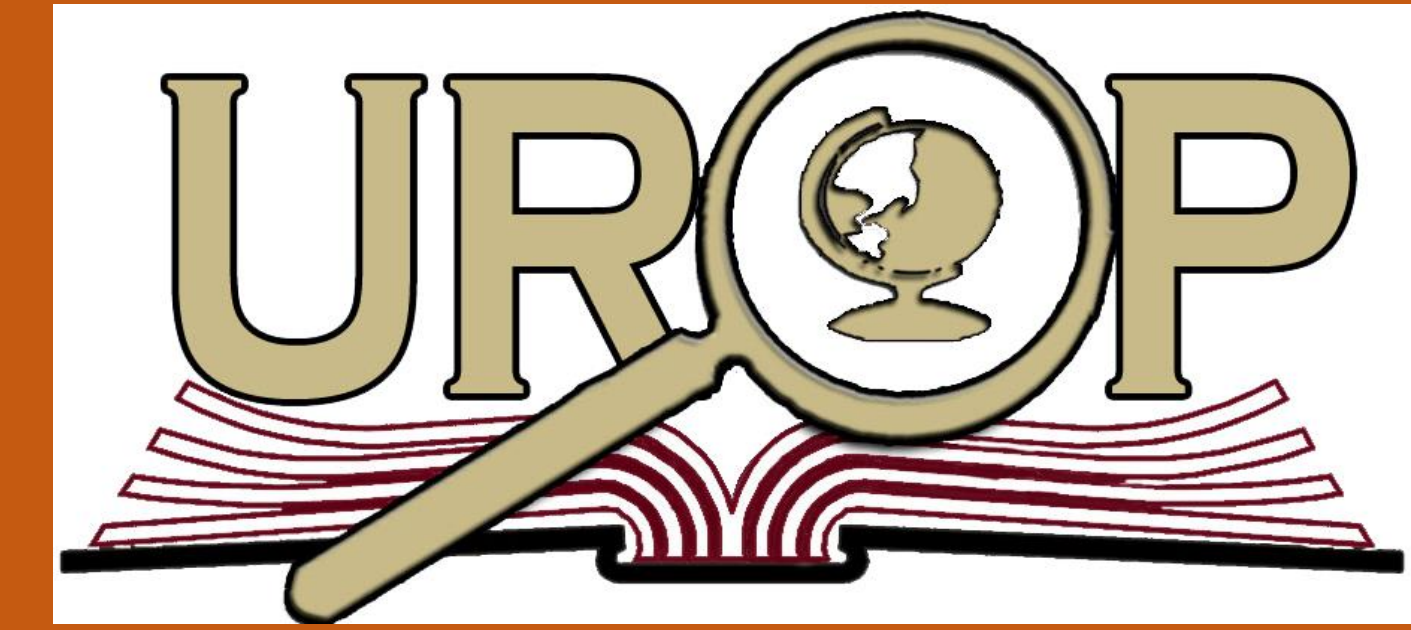# Speech Pathologists Serving Diverse Children

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Background

• Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) are charged with ensuring that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to communicate effectively[1]. However, with the growing number of student's from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds continuing to grow In the U.S., this may present as an area of difficulty for many therapists[2]. Given a review of the extant literature, it has been documented that SLPs have reported consistent challenges when serving this population[1]. Furthermore, they have also reported a lack of resources (e.g., trainings, assessments, etc.). Given that many of these seminal studies were conducted years ago, it is imperative to gain an updated understanding of how SLPs are adjusting to the ever-changing population to best suit the needs of their students.

Purpose

To better understand and describe the challenges faced and resources utilized by school-based speech pathologists when serving students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Methods

• We surveyed 136 speech language pathologists

• Surveys asked 2 open-ended research questions:
  o "What challenges have you experienced when serving children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?"
  o "What are resources or supports that you have found helpful when serving students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?"

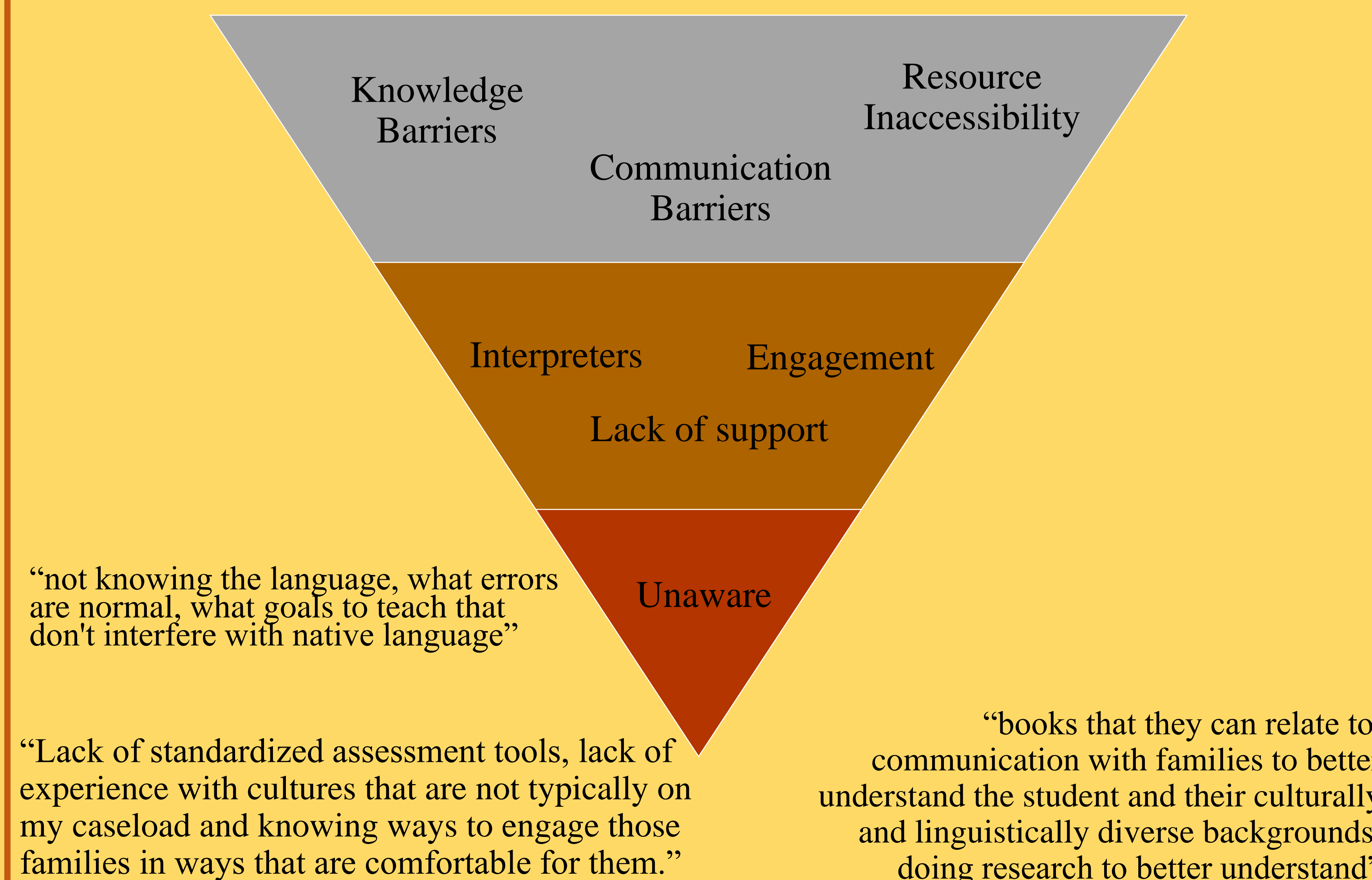• Responses were coded and analyzed for themes

Data Analysis

• We ran a qualitative analysis to determine themes in each of the participants responses.
• Following an open-coding framework, we utilized the program NVivo to develop codes based on participant responses.
• Reliability between each coder was gained at 74% and any discrepancies were discussed and resolved.
• After coding, we analyzed the data to develop themes and made note of an identified sub-themes.

Results

Table 1
Participant Demographic Data

| | Gender | | Linguistic Status | | Race/Ethnicity | | |
	Female	Male	Bilingual	Dialect Speaker	White	Black	Hispanic/Latino
n	132	4	18	19	105	22	9
%	97.1	2.9	13.2	14	77.2	16.2	6.6

This graph shows characteristics of people in a sample for this study.

Knowledge Barriers
Resource Inaccessibility
Communication Barriers
Interpreters
Engagement
Lack of support
Unaware

"not knowing the language, what errors are normal, what goals to teach that don't interfere with native language"

"Lack of standardized assessment tools, lack of experience with cultures that are not typically on my caseload and knowing ways to engage those families in ways that are comfortable for them."

"books that they can relate to, communication with families to better understand the student and their culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, doing research to better understand"

Themes of Challenges

• Communication barriers
• Knowledge barriers
• Resource inaccessibility

Themes of resources

• Digital resources
• External supports
• School level supports

Conclusion/Discussion

• The major challenges and resources described by our sample are relatively consistent with those identified in the previous literature.
• Challenges described were seen at the district level, school level, and with parent interactions.
• The types of resources used varied across the sample signifying variability in access.
• The challenges and resources described do not exist as separate constructs but were intersectional in nature.
• More of an emphasis should be places on ways to better support the needs of these therapists so they are better equipped at supporting their students.

Limitations/Future Directions

• The sample size was relatively small and may not fully represent the thoughts and opinions of all SLPs.
• Future studies should further examine the most adequate format for providing SLPs with relevant resources.

Acknowledgements

References

[1]Roseberry-McKibbin, C., Brice, A., & O'Hanlon, L. (2005). Serving English language learners in public school settings. DOI:10.1044/01611461(2005/005)

[2]Kimble, C. (2013). Speech-language pathologists' comfort levels in English language learner service delivery. *Communication Disorders Quarterly*, 35(1), 21-27. DOI:10.1177/1525740113487404