Results of the Feasibility and Utility of an Early Literacy Assessment

Introduction

- Early literacy skills are crucial for later academic success for multilingual learners, such as Spanish-English bilingual children, and for children with disabilities or language delays.
- There are few measures that accurately measure the skills of bilingual children with language delays, disabilities, or impairments that are instructionally relevant and capture growth over time.
- To appropriately capture bilingual children's emerging language and literacy skills, we must attend to children's cultural context and create item content that is culturally responsive, linguistically accurate, and developmentally appropriate.
- ***We developed CASA to meet these needs.***

Research Questions

- What are educators' perceptions about the content and potential utility of CASA for use with preschoolers?
- To what degree is CASA culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate?

Methods

- Three focus groups in Minnesota, Puerto Rico and California with 19 early-childhood educators took place in fall 2022 and winter 2023.
- Participants included 6 bilingual early childhood special educators, 6 speech and language pathology students, and 7 bilingual early childhood educators working in inclusive settings.
- Participants viewed mock-ups of CASA storybook pages (scenes) and were asked to discuss the appropriateness and potential utility of story items.
- Focus group interviews were recorded and analyzed thematically to extract suggested improvements for the CASA assessment.

The Computer Adaptive Storybook Assessment (CASA) is engaging and includes culturally relevant content for 3-5-year-old Spanish speaking children.
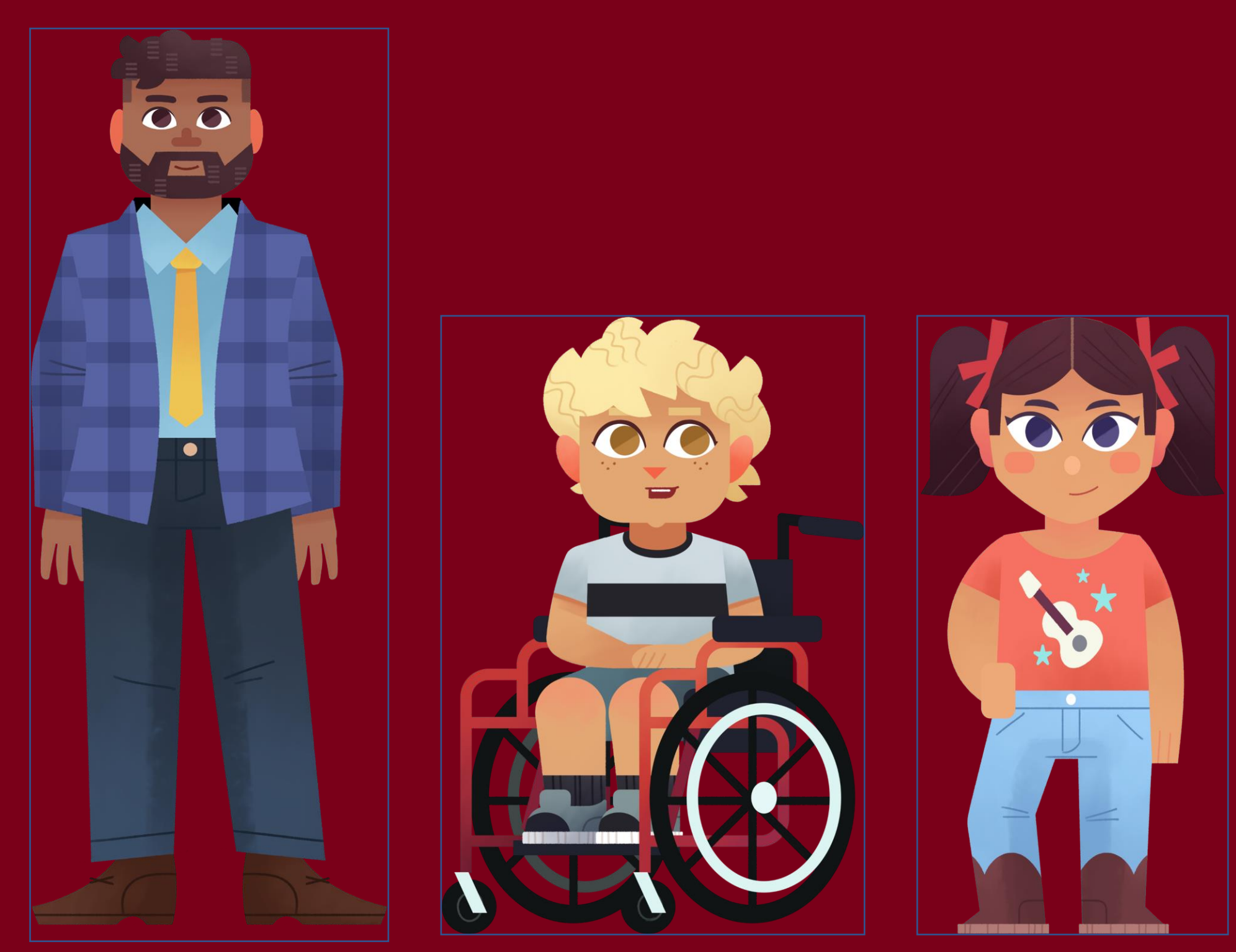

Figure 1. Grocery scene
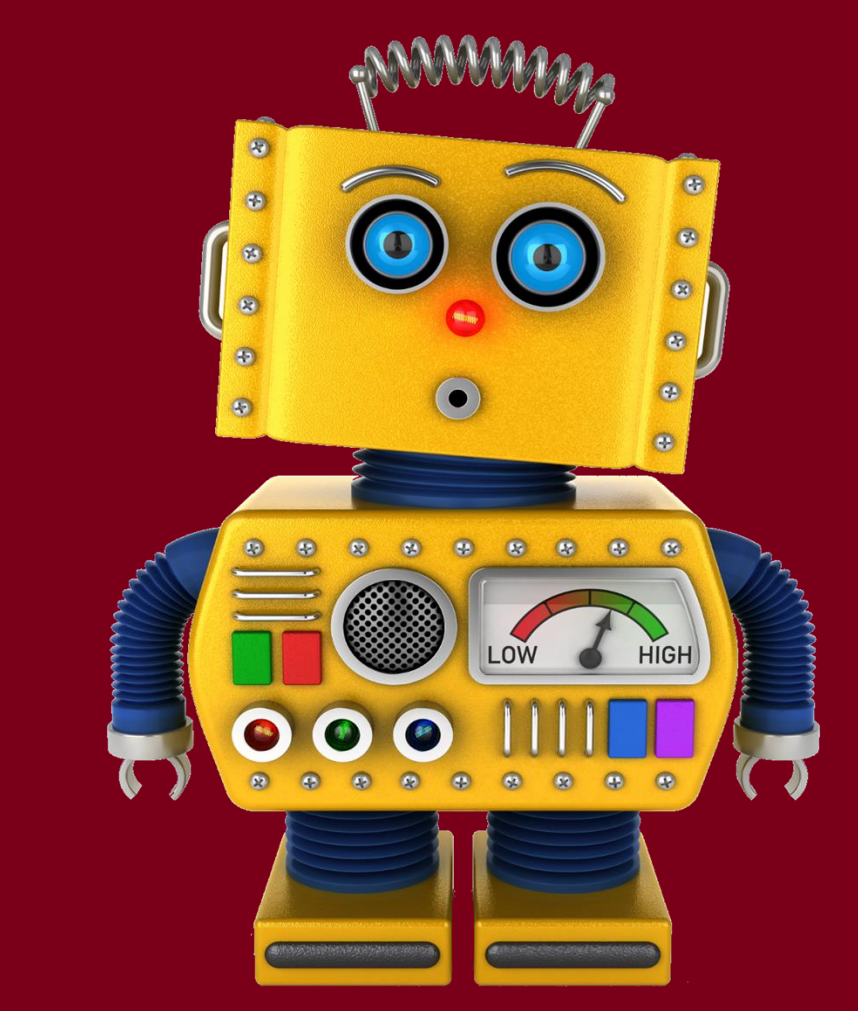

Figure 2. Characters of the story

Figure 3. Oral language item

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CASA Measure

- The Computer Adaptive Storybook Assessment (CASA), is a developmentally tailored and engaging assessment experience for 3–5-year-old children identified with language delays.
- CASA captures oral language (OL), phonological awareness (PA) and alphabet knowledge (AK).
- CASA maximizes innovation by supporting non-linear stories and unique experiences each assessment through computer adaptive testing.

Results

- The grocery and community festival scenes (Figure 1), were well received as familiar and engaging.
- Participants suggested including characters with a wide range of individual characteristics (e.g., children with disabilities, different skin tones and hair textures; Figure 2)
- Regarding items (Figure 3), participants suggested expansion of item responses for some target words (dialect variation), and new items that expand sampling across dialects.
- Images may have different names across communities (e.g., fresa/frutilla).
- Vegetables or fruits might look different across communities (eg., limón could refer to a lemon or lime)
- Translanguaging in communities is common and even in Puerto Rico some English words are used instead of Spanish.

Recommendations to the field

- Include communities as collaborators at the beginning of the design process, to ensure the inclusion of the end-user perspective.
- Including diverse participants within the Spanish-speaking community is crucial for capturing dialectical differences.
- More studies need to be conducted in Puerto Rico to capture the unique cultural and linguistic differences on the island.