

# Do SLP Graduate Students Reject Speech-Language Pathology Myths? Understanding the Research-Practice Gap



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## INTRODUCTION

Myths abound and persist throughout popular culture that pertain to the profession of speech-language pathology. Speech-language pathologists' (SLPs') endorsement of such myths is one consequence of the large research-practice gap. This gap is a major concern for many fields including speech-language pathology and education. Identifying which myths SLP students endorse will guide decisions about which myth-prone topics to address in preprofessional education. Explicitly addressing such myths would help students understand the research-practice gap and the critical need for evidence-based services.

**Purpose:** Explore the extent to which SLP students are operating under assumptions that are not supported by evidence and are contradicted by evidence.

## RESEARCH AIMS

1. Descriptively characterize the degree to which SLP students reject (disagree with) myth statements and accept (agree with) true statements
2. Determine whether endorsement of myth statements varies by topic

## METHODS

This study presents the data for student participants from a larger study that also included SLPs (results presented separately).

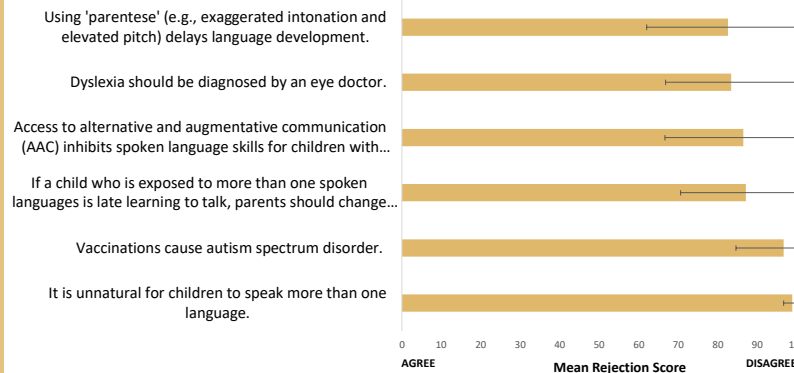
**Participants:** We recruited 37 SLP graduate students (mean age = 24.3 years) via multiple methods so as to create a varied applicant pool

**Procedure:** Students rated their agreement with true and false statements via an online survey. For each statement students used a visual analog scale to gauge their agreement anywhere between 0 (agree) and 100 (disagree).

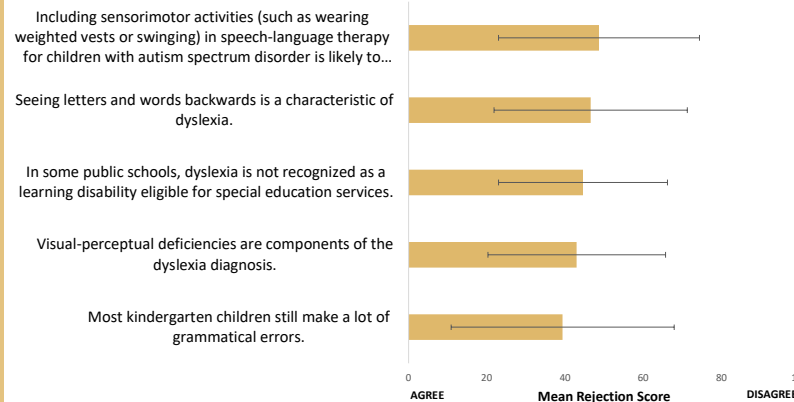
## RESULTS

**Aim 1:** Students strongly agreed with only 5 of 18 true statements. They strongly rejected 6 of 34 myths but failed to reject 5 myths. Histograms revealed distribution on agreement spanned the available scale (i.e., 0 – 100) for most statements.

### Most Strongly Rejected Myths



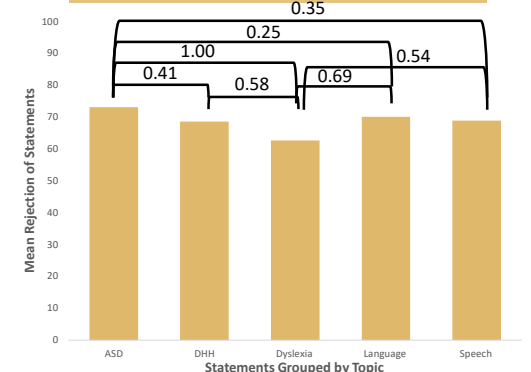
### Myths Not Rejected



**Aim 2:** Results of a one-way repeated-measures ANOVA ( $F_{4,144} = 8.25, p < .001$ ) with follow-up pairwise comparisons revealed greater rejection of myth-related ASD statements compared to the other four topics and less rejection of myth-related dyslexia statements compared to the other four topics.

## RESULTS

### Mean Rejection of Myth Statements by Topic



## DISCUSSION

Of the 34 myths evaluated, as a group the SLP graduate students strongly rejected one more myth than they accepted, 6 vs. 5. Most of the myths revealed a weak rejection. Of note, student responses were well-distributed across response options (i.e., the entire scale). For only 5 of 18 true statements did students accept the statement. These findings suggest that students' knowledge of the evidence base lacks the precision to reject unsupported information and to accept supported information. Overall, the findings aligned with SLPs' responses on the same survey.

### Future Directions

Evaluate students' agreement and disagreement with true and myth statements upon entrance and completion of graduate education.

Conduct qualitative analysis of basis for agreement or disagreement with statements.

Develop interventions (e.g., refutation texts, targeted professional development) that narrow the research-practice gap broadly and related to the tested topics.

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