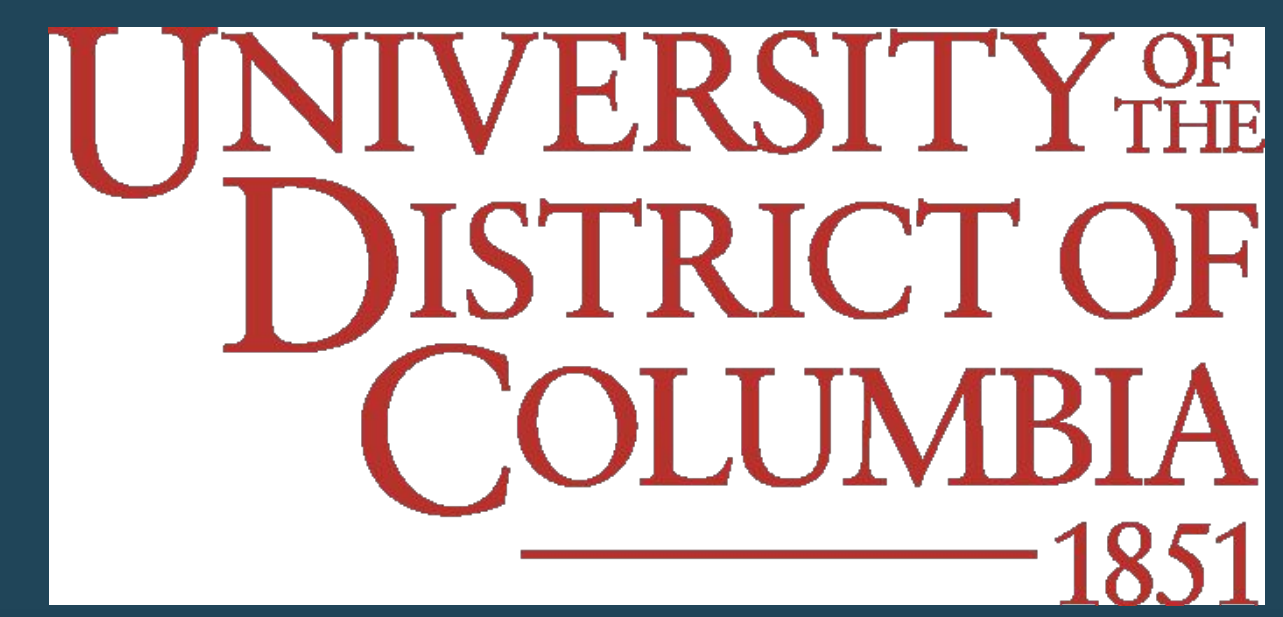


The Impact of COVID-19 and Other Traumas on Language Processes in Spanish-speaking Bilinguals

Antoria Yates, B.S, SLP-A¹, Jennifer Rae Myers, PhD, MS, CCC-SLP², Sulare Telford-Rose, PhD, CCC-SLP^{1,2}

The University of the District of Columbia¹ Culturally S.M.A.R.T. Program; ²



INTRODUCTION

Research has shown trauma can negatively impact cognitive-linguistic skills. While recent studies have found that 1 in 5 individuals exhibit cognitive impairment after having COVID-19 (Ceban et al., 2022), the true extent of its impact among Spanish-speaking bilinguals is relatively unknown.

Purpose

This study aims to address this gap by investigating if COVID-19 impacts language processes in Spanish-speaking bilinguals more than other traumatic experiences.

Hypothesis

It is expected that bilingual individuals with COVID-19 trauma will report worse language processes skills than those without COVID-19 trauma.

METHOD

Utilizing data from a larger, ongoing, survey study, 46 respondents between the ages 21-60 answered several demographics, cognitive-communication, and trauma-related questions.

Participants were assigned to either the ‘COVID-19’ (n= 24) or ‘Other Traumas’ group (n= 22) based on the type of trauma they endorsed.

‘Other traumas’ included the following traumas: serious physical accidents, brain injuries, the sudden death of a loved one, serious medical procedures/experiences, natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, floods) , and car accidents.

Informed consent was obtained with study approval from the University of the District of Columbia’s IRB committee

DATA ANALYSIS

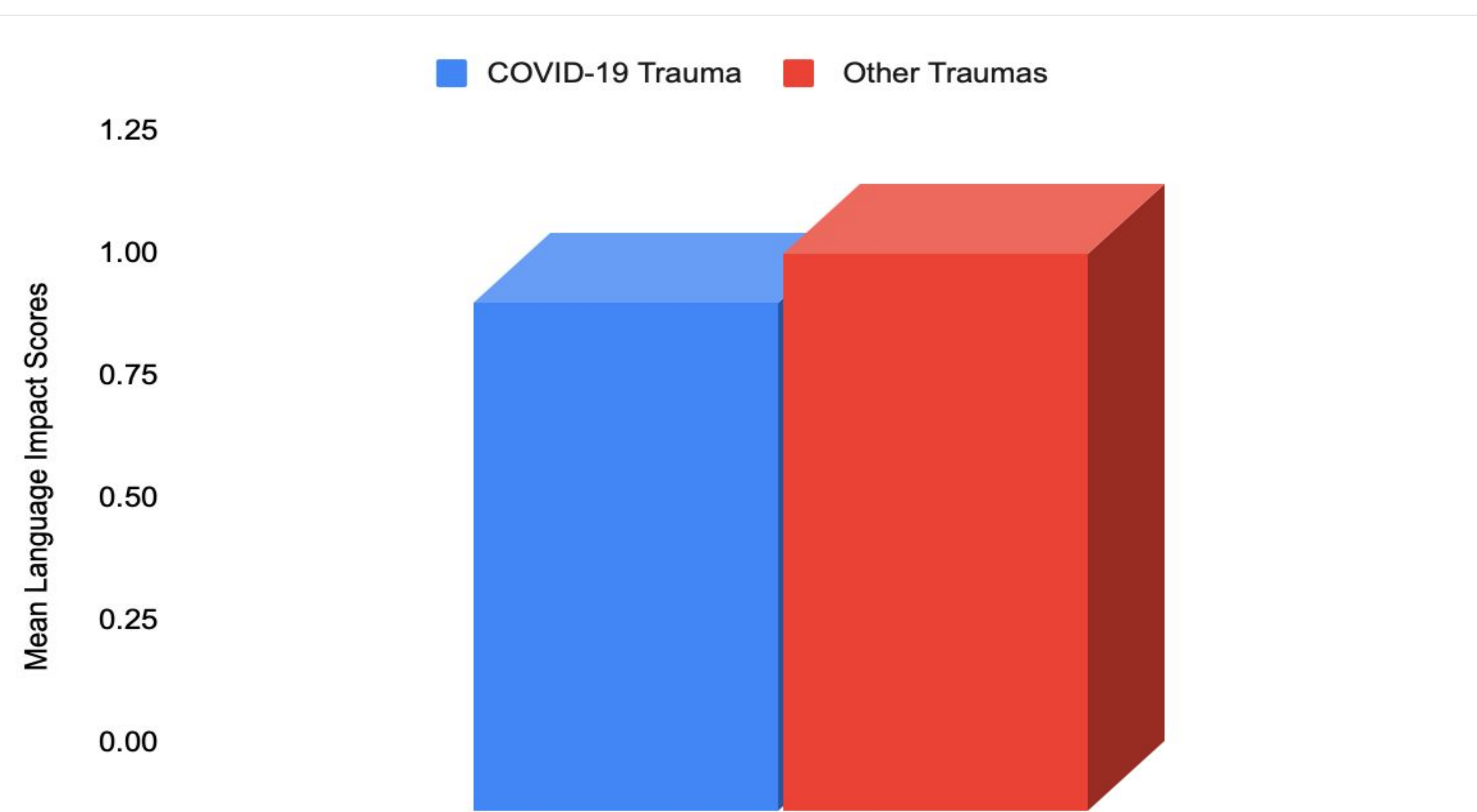
An independent samples t-test was conducted to determine if COVID-19 has a greater impact on language processes in Spanish-speaking bilingual adults as compared to other trauma.

The total score (max = 4) for questions related to the impact their reported trauma had on their language skills was used for the analysis.

Table 1. Group Characteristics

		COVID-19 Trauma (n=24)	Other Trauma (n=22)
Age	Minimal Age	21	21
	Maximal Age	48	56
	Mean	34.5	34.2
	Std. Deviation	7.5	8.9
Sex	Female	12	10
	Male	12	12
Education	High School	1	0
	Some High School	0	1
	Bachelor’s Degree	14	12
	Master’s Degree	5	4
	PhD or Higher	3	1
	Associate’s Degree	1	3
	I prefer not to say	0	1
Hispanic Origin	Hispanic Origin	10	15
	Other Origin	14	7

Figure 1. Mean Group Comparison



RESULTS

Final results of the analysis revealed there was no statistically significant difference in impact between the COVID-19 and other traumas group, $t(44) = -.211, p = .834$.

Respondents who endorsed COVID-19 ($M = 1.04, SD = 1.46$) as their trauma indicated a slightly less impact on their language skills than those who experienced other traumas ($M = 1.14, SD = 1.58$).

DISCUSSION

Our findings showed no difference in the impact between COVID-19 and other traumas on language processes in our sample. We only examined expressive and receptive language, therefore, it may be the case COVID-19 has a more significant impact on other communication-related processes (e.g., pragmatics). Since multiple traumas were grouped together, COVID-19 may have a greater impact on language than specific types of trauma rather than other traumatic experiences in general. As this is a limitation of the study, future research should compare COVID-19 to other traumas in isolation as well as explore other language processes that could be affected.

This study is ongoing; however, the current findings contribute valuable COVID-19 information and its potential impact on language in Spanish-speaking bilinguals for both researchers and clinicians.

REFERENCES

Ceban, F., Ling, S., Lui, L. M. W., Lee, Y., Gill, H., Teopiz, K. M., Rodrigues, N. B., Subramaniapillai, M., Di Vincenzo, J. D., Cao, B., Lin, K., Mansur, R. B., Ho, R. C., Rosenblat, J. D., Miskowiak, K. W., Vinberg, M., Maletic, V., & McIntyre, R. S. (2022). Fatigue and cognitive impairment in POST-COVID-19 syndrome: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity*, *101*, 93–135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbi.2021.12.020>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This project was supported by a multicultural grant from the American Speech Language and Hearing Association to Drs. Jennifer Rae Myers and Sulare Telford-Rose. The authors thank the participants for their time and effort in completing the survey.