Abstract

Action semantics is a relevant part of cognitive-linguistic assessment and the “Kissing and Dancing Test” (KDT) has been used extensively for this purpose, evidencing clinical distinctions among brain-damaged patients. To enhance its use, reference values are necessary, especially for populations with heterogeneous educational levels and socioeconomic backgrounds. Objective: To analyze the effects of schooling and age on the KDT in cognitively unimpaired individuals. Methods: The KDT was applied to seventy-four healthy subjects. Sociodemographic factors were investigated through correlational and between-group analyses. Reference values according to age and schooling were provided. Results: KDT performance correlated significantly with schooling ($r=0.757$, $p<0.01$), age ($r=-0.496$, $p<0.01$) and socioeconomic status ($r=0.418$, $p<0.01$) but these variables were intercorrelated. Correlation with schooling and age remained significant when controlling for age and socioeconomic status ($r=0.530$, $p<0.01$), and for schooling ($r=-0.305$, $p<0.01$), respectively. When controlling for schooling, correlation between socioeconomic status and KDT was not significant ($p=0.164$). Between-group analyses revealed no age effects. Significant differences were found in performance according to educational level. Scores below 39/52 and below 47/52 (percentile 25) for individuals with 8 or less years of schooling and for individuals with 9 or more years of schooling, respectively, seem suggestive of an impairment in Action Semantics Processing and shall be further investigated. Conclusion: KDT performance was influenced both by age and schooling, indicating the need to consider these demographic features as covariates when analyzing performance on the test and to adjust cut-off scores according to these demographic characteristics in clinical practice.

Keywords
Cognition, language, memory, neuropsychological tests, age, schooling.