



Parental and Teacher Validation of Language Impairment Status Based on Standardized Tests in School Age Children

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Introduction

Specific Language Impairment (SLI)

- SLI is frequently defined in research according to performance on standardized testing (e.g., Archibald & Gathercole, 2006).
- DSM-IV states identification of SLI should be based on impaired abilities and functional limitations (DSM-IV, 2000).

Parent Report

- Literature on parental report of language delay concentrates largely on toddler and preschool populations (e.g., Feldman et al., 2000; Heilmann et al., 2005)

Teacher Report

- Teachers showed low sensitivity (15%) but high specificity (97%) when identifying language impairment in kindergarten students (Jessup et al., 2008).

Purpose of the Study

- To determine the congruence between language testing and parent or teacher concern for language development.
- To examine differences in cognitive profiles of children who were or were not identified by parents or teachers.

Methods

Participants

- 322 children (178 boys), 6-9 years old
- 313 parents, and 292 teachers

Procedures

- Each child completed four sessions over 6 months

Methods

- Test battery:
 - TOWRE – single word & nonword reading
 - CELF-4–Composite Language Score tests (CLS)
 - AWMA – Working Memory Composite (counting recall, odd-one-out, spatial span)
 - WASI – matrix reasoning; block recall
- Parents and teachers completed questionnaires regarding concern for each child's language development.

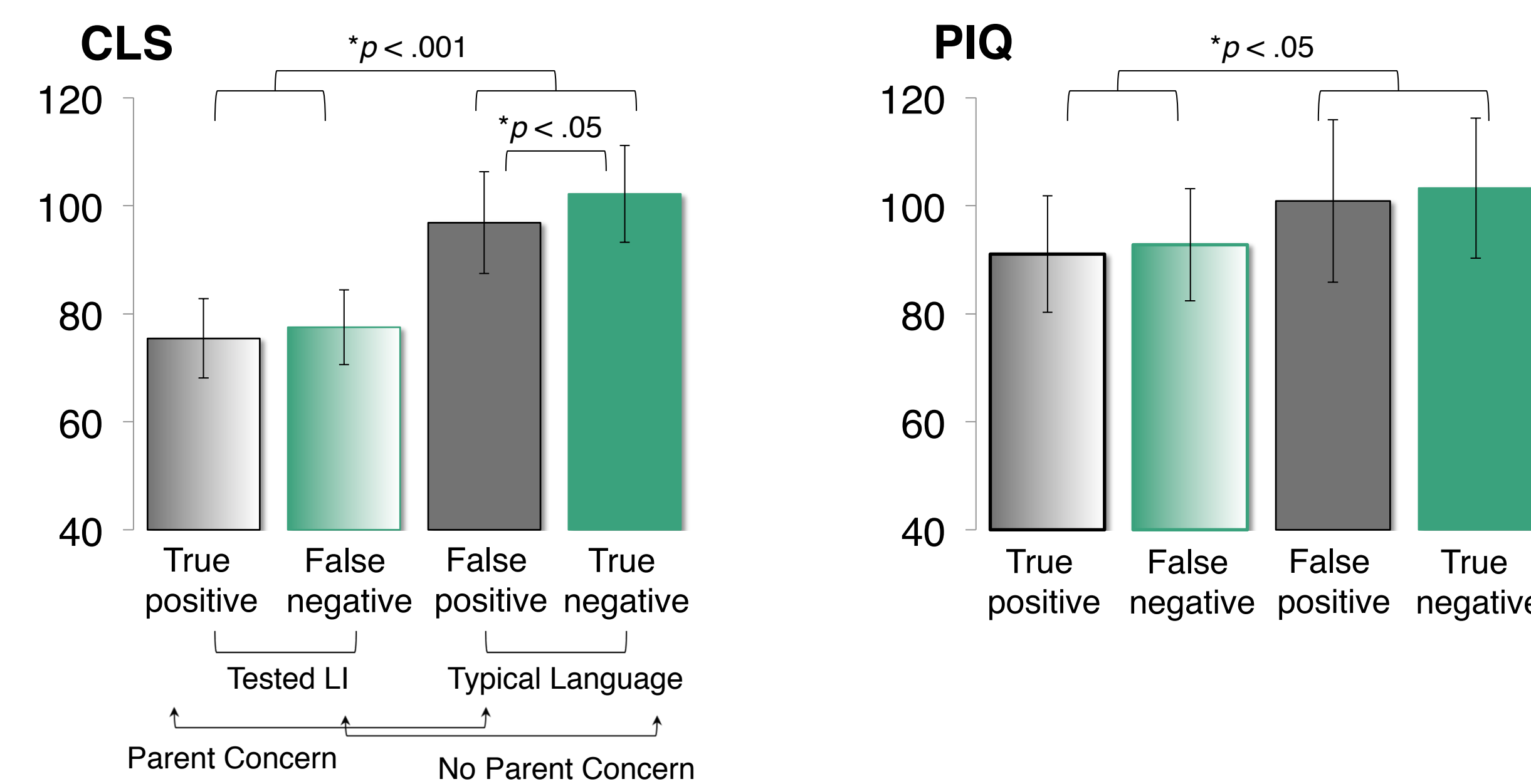
Results

Parent Concern and LI

Concordance between tested language status and parent concern regarding language

	Tested LI (SLI)	Typical Language	Total
Parent concern	29 (20)	49	78
No parent concern	37 (28)	198	235
Total	66	247	313

- 44% of children with LI validated by parents
- Agreement between testing and reported concern for 72% of cases

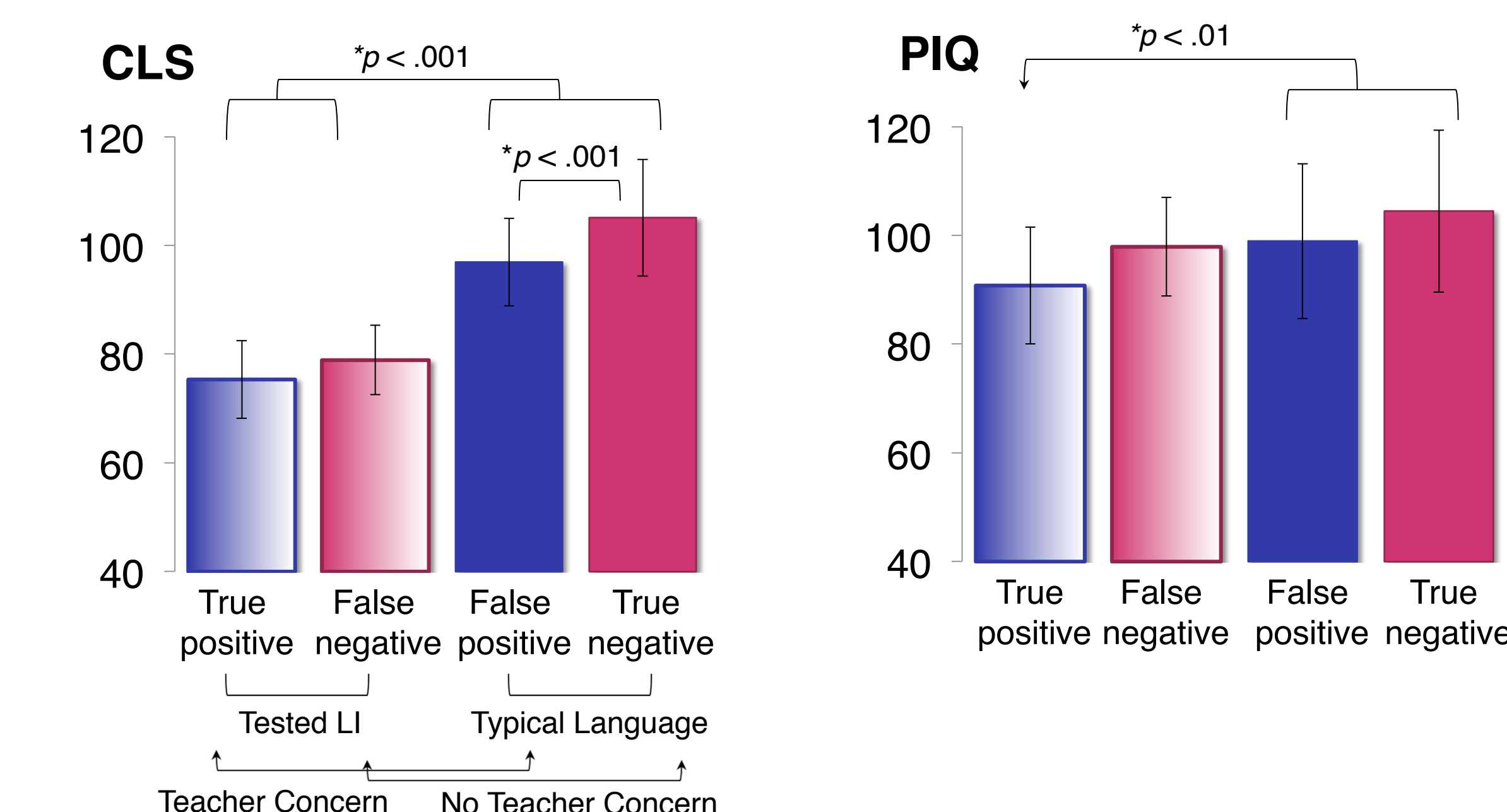


Teacher Concern and LI

Concordance between tested language status and teacher concern regarding language

	Tested LI (SLI)	Typical Language	Total
Teacher concern	43 (31)	71	114
No teacher concern	18 (16)	160	178
Total	61	231	292

- 70% of children with LI validated by teachers
- Agreement between testing and reported concern for 70% of cases



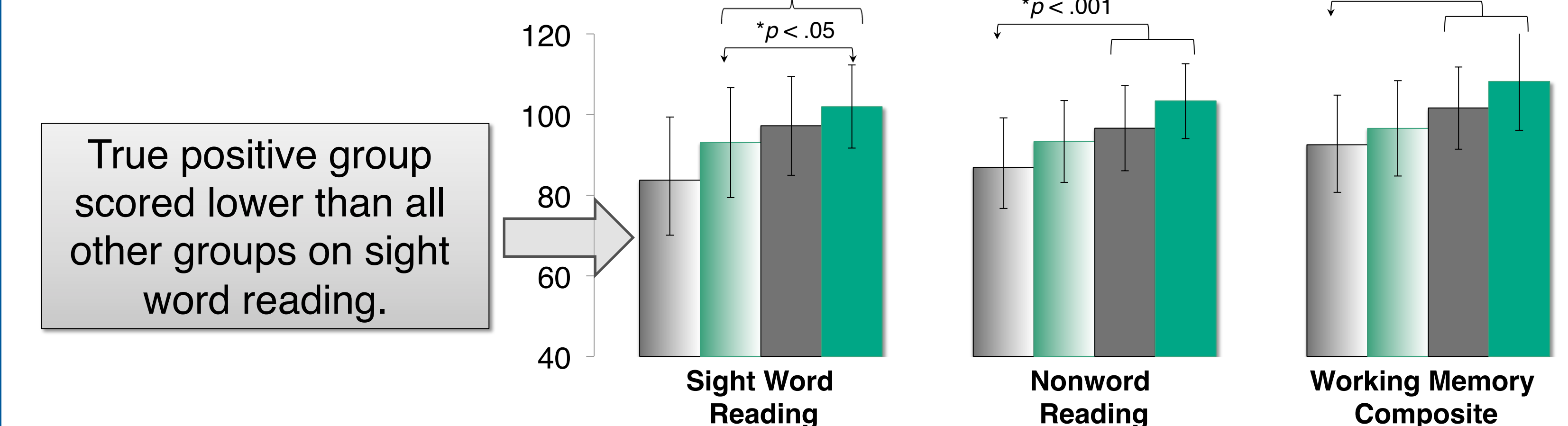
Results (cont'd)

Data Analysis

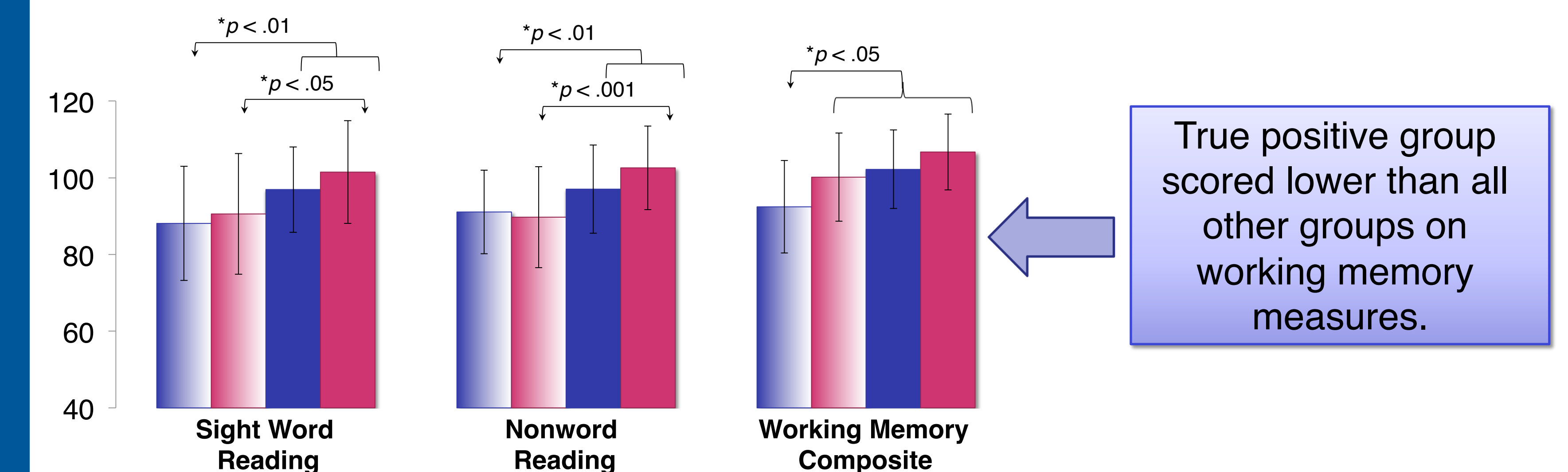
- Two ANOVAs completed on CLS: parent concern (2) X tested language status (2); teacher concern (2) X tested language status (2)
- Two MANOVAs completed on sight word efficiency, phonemic decoding efficiency, reading fluency, and phonological awareness: parent concern (2) X tested language status (2); teacher concern (2) X tested language status (2)
- ANOVAs completed on each of working memory composite and nonverbal intelligence: parent concern (2) X tested language status (2); teacher concern (2) X tested language status (2)

Performance on Language Related Measures

Parent Concern vs Tested LI



Teacher Concern vs Tested LI



Conclusions

- Language score did not differentiate correctly identified children with LI (true positives) from those with LI who were not identified (false negatives). This was found for both parents and teachers.
- Higher congruence was found between teacher concern and tested LI than for parents, but also higher number of false positives.
- Parent concern for language may be related to their child's sight word reading ability
- Teachers may be more sensitive to language impairment when coupled with working memory impairment

References

APA (2000) *DSM-IV-TR*; Archibald & Gathercole (2006) *Int J Lang Comm Dis*, 41(6), 675-693; Feldman et al. (2000) *Child Development*, 71(2), 310-322; Heilmann et al. (2005) *AJSLP*, 14(1), 40-51; Jessup et al. (2008) *International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology* 10(6), 449-459.