

# Creating a French Version of the Social Interaction Phobia Scale

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## Introduction

- ◆ Social anxiety (SA) typically refers to anxiety or worry experienced in social or evaluative situations. Sufficiently distressing or impairing levels of SA typically warrant a diagnosis of social anxiety disorder (SAD).
- ◆ SA and SAD involve hallmark features including fearing negative evaluation, making a bad impression, or acting in a way that might be embarrassing (Antony & Swinson, 2000). These core elements potentiate pathological fear occurring across several situations (e.g., social interactions, performance situations; Carleton et al., 2009; Thompson & Rapee, 2002).
- ◆ Researchers exploring SA across cultures have noted differences in the underlying factors associated with presentations of SAD. For example, some cultures consider failure to maintain eye contact a sign of SA, while others may interpret it as a sign of respect (McCarthy, Lee, Itakura, & Muir, 2006). Such differences suggest that SA and SAD may have socially constructed components (Lefton, Brannon, Boyes, & Ogden, 2008) that warrant investigation.
- ◆ Within multicultural communities such as North America, there may be important inter-cultural differences in SA that remain unexplored because of language barriers (Moss & Roberts, 2005). Accordingly, the purpose of the current investigation was to explore the psychometric properties of a French translation of the Social Interaction Phobia Scale (SIPS) in a community sample of French Canadians.

## Methods

### Participants

- ◆ Participants included a community sample of Canadians who reported speaking French as a first language and completed a battery of online self-report questionnaires. The SIPS was translated and back translated by professional bilingual translators from l'Institut français at the University of Regina
- ◆ 93 men, ages 18-53 ( $M = 28.7$ ;  $SD = 9.9$ )
- ◆ 189 women ages 18-55 ( $M = 33.1$ ;  $SD = 11.3$ )

### Measure

- ◆ Social Interaction Phobia Scale (SIPS; Carleton et al., 2000). The SIPS is a 14-item self-report measure designed to assess symptoms of social anxiety disorder. Each item is measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*extremely*).
- ◆ The SIPS is designed to measure three dimensions of SAD symptoms: *social interaction anxiety*; *fear of overt evaluation*; and *fear of attracting attention*.
- ◆ For the current sample, the internal consistency of SIPS scores was high ( $\alpha = .96$ ) and the average inter-item correlation was .60

### Analysis

- ◆ Descriptive statistics (i.e., minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation, skew, and kurtosis) were calculated.
- ◆ Comparisons were performed to assess for differences between the sexes. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to calculate fit indices for the precedent 3-factor structure relative to a unitary factor structure.

## Results

- ◆ The descriptive statistics for each of the translated SIPS items as well as the total and subscale scores for the translated SIPS are presented in Table 1.

### Comparisons

- ◆ Several independent t-tests were performed to compare the subscales and total score across the two sexes. Statistically significant differences were found wherein women reported elevated scores relative to men on the *fear of overt evaluation* subscale,  $t(280) = 2.08$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r^2 = .01$ , but not on the other subscales (i.e., *social interaction anxiety*, *fear of attracting attention*) or the total score.
- ◆ In all cases, the effect sizes were small (Cohen, 1988), suggesting general comparability across men and women.

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

- ◆ The precedent 3-factor SIPS model was superior to a unitary solution. The fit indices for each model are presented in Table 2.
- ◆ The subscale inter-factor correlations were relatively high: *social interaction anxiety* and *fear of overt evaluation* ( $r = .78$ ), *fear of overt evaluation* and *fear of attracting attention* ( $r = .87$ ), *social interaction anxiety* and *fear of attracting attention* ( $r = .78$ ).

## Discussion

- ◆ Overall, the current results provided initial validity for the French SIPS. The French SIPS demonstrated excellent internal consistency and responses to each of the items, the subscales, and the total score from the community sample approximated normal distributions
- ◆ The 3-factor solution found for the English SIPS was replicated for the French SIPS. The three factors can again be conceptualized as *social interaction anxiety*; *fear of overt evaluation*; and *fear of attracting attention*.
- ◆ Despite substantially outperforming a unitary solution, the relatively high reliability, inter-item correlations, and intersubscale correlations suggest substantial construct overlap. The overlap may be the result of factorial symptoms functioning along continua, while maintaining their interrelated structures (Stein & Chavira, 1998)
- ◆ Despite some limitations (e.g., the sample was self-selected, predominantly female participants), translating and providing normative data for the French version of the SIPS should provide clinical utility for therapists working with French clients suffering from SAD.
- ◆ Future research should assess the French SIPS in a comparison study between those diagnosed with SAD and those without SAD, thereby evaluating the original SIPS cut-off scores for a French-speaking sample while providing sensitivity and specificity norms for the French SIPS.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Items	Factor	Min-Max	M (SD)	Skew (.15)	Kurtosis (.29)
1. Dans un contexte social, je me sens mal à l'aise.	1	0-4	1.49 (1.29)	.34	-1.07
2. J'ai de la difficulté à parler à d'autres personnes.	1	0-4	1.10 (1.19)	.80	-.50
3. J'ai peur de ne pas savoir quoi dire dans des situations sociales.	1	0-4	1.51 (1.38)	.40	-1.15
4. Je suis nerveux quand je suis avec des gens que je ne connais pas bien.	1	0-4	1.73 (1.34)	.22	-1.19
5. Je deviens tendu dans un groupe.	1	0-4	1.43 (1.38)	.52	-1.04
6. Je deviens nerveux quand je pense que les gens me regardent lorsque je marche dans la rue.	2	0-4	1.16 (1.40)	.84	-.73
7. Je me sens embarrassé si je dois entrer dans une salle où d'autres sont déjà assis.	2	0-4	1.44 (1.38)	.54	-1.00
8. Dans un contexte social, je me sens mal à l'aise.	1	0-4	1.49 (1.29)	.34	-1.07

Table 1. Continued

9. J'ai de la difficulté à parler à d'autres personnes.	1	0-4	1.30 (1.19)	.80	-.50
10. J'ai peur de ne pas savoir quoi dire dans des situations sociales.	1	0-4	1.51 (1.38)	.40	-1.15
11. Je suis nerveux quand je suis avec des gens que je ne connais pas bien.	1	0-4	1.73 (1.34)	.22	-1.19
12. Je deviens tendu dans un groupe.	1	0-4	1.43 (1.38)	.52	-1.04
13. Je deviens nerveux quand je pense que les gens me regardent lorsque je marche dans la rue.	2	0-4	1.36 (1.40)	.84	-.73
14. Je me sens embarrassé si je dois entrer dans une salle où d'autres sont déjà assis.	2	0-4	1.44 (1.38)	.54	-1.00
Social Interaction Anxiety Subscale	1	0-20	7.26 (5.73)	.54	-.83
Fear of Overt Evaluation Subscale	2	0-24	5.88 (6.47)	1.14	.29
Fear of Attracting Attention Subscale	3	0-12	2.88 (3.47)	1.15	.24
Total	-	0-56	16.01 (14.26)	.93	-.07

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

	Factors	
	1	3
$\chi^2$ (df)	610.61 (77)	219.63 (74)
$\chi^2/df$	7.93	2.97
CFI	.84	.96
SRMR	.07	.04
RMSEA	.16 (.15; .17)	.08 (.07; .10)
ECVI (90% CI)	2.47 (2.21; 2.77)	1.10 (.96; 1.27)

Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Squares Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Expected Cross-Validation Index (ECVI). Higher CFI values indicate better fit, whereas lower values on all other indices indicate better fit. Confidence interval for RMSEA (RMSEA 90% CI).