TRANSLATION AND ADAPTATION OF THE PRAGMATIC LANGUAGE SKILLS INVENTORY (PLSI) FOR ASSESSMENT OF PRAGMATIC LANGUAGE SKILLS IN ARABIC SPEAKING EGYPTIAN CHILDREN

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Introduction

Pragmatic language refers to the ability to use language appropriately across different social contexts for effective communication with others. It is the language domain that governs how other aspects of structural language are used within conversational contexts. In other words, it covers the domains of what to say, how to say it, when to say it, and where to say it. The persistent paradox of assessing pragmatic language lies in the fact that many of its aspects show much individual as well as social and cultural variability. In fact, the very nature of pragmatics as language use in context casts major doubt upon the ability of formal testing to mirror pragmatic skills reliably. Consequently, information about pragmatic 'performance' can be indirectly obtained through caregiver-reported checklists or questionnaires. While limited by the possibility of subjective interpretation, such information serves as important complementary cues for assessment of pragmatics in more naturalistic contexts.

Aim of the work

Translation and adaptation of the Pragmatic Language Skills Inventory (PLSI) to be used as a complementary tool for assessment of pragmatic language skills in Arabic speaking children.

Patients and Methods

The present study was conducted on 100 Arabic-speaking children of both sexes within age range of six to ten years, with expressive language skills of at least 3-word length sentences. **A) Translation of PLSI:** 1) Forward translation of original (English) version to Arabic language by two certified bilingual translators. 2) Comparison of the two translated versions to identify discrepancies and adjust required items to appropriately suit Arabic culture and Egyptian dialect. 3) Backward translation of final Arabic version to original language by a third bilingual certified translator. **B) Pilot study:** A pilot study was conducted on twenty-five randomly chosen subjects to check suitability and applicability of PLSI. **C) Application of PLSI:** Caregivers were asked to rate children across three sub-categories of 15 items each, with a total of 45 items. **D) Egyptian Arabic Pragmatic Language Test (EAPLT):** The EAPLT was used as a direct observational tool assessing pragmatic language for correlation with PLSI results.

Results

Internal consistency reliability:
Data from pilot study were used to assess internal consistency reliability of the used questionnaire by calculating Cronbach's Alpha for each of its three sections as well as an overall value, as shown in Table (1).

Table (1): Internal Consistency Reliability using Cronbach's Alpha

	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Section 1 (Classroom Interaction Skills)	0.945	15
Section 2 (Social Interaction Skills)	0.943	15
Section 3 (Personal Interaction Skills)	0.915	15
Overall value	0.973	45

Agreement between Egyptian Arabic Pragmatic Language Test (EAPLT) and Pragmatic Language Skills Inventory (PLSI):
Pearson correlation between total EAPLT score and Pragmatic Language Index of PLSI for total sample (n = 100) revealed *r* value of 0.734, denoting strong positive correlation between the two tools of pragmatic language assessment, as shown in Table (2) and Figure (1).

Table (2): Pearson correlation between total EAPLT score and Pragmatic Language Index of PLSI for total sample (n = 100)

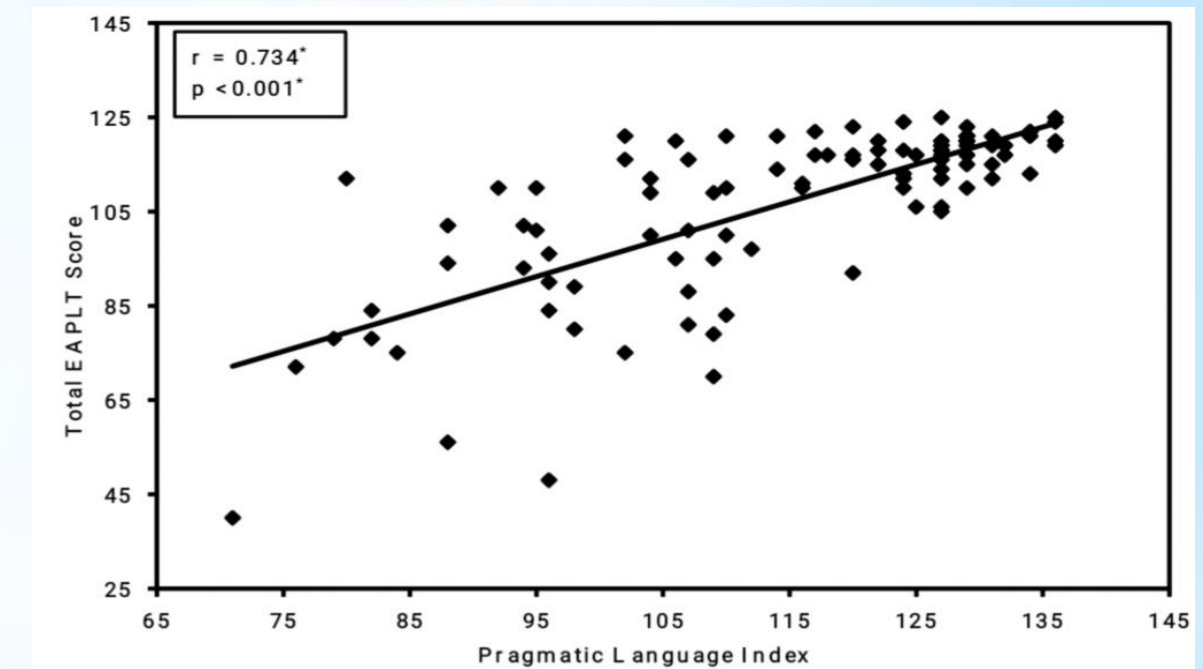| Total sample (n = 100)	Total EAPLT Score	
	r	p
Pragmatic language Index of PLSI	0.734*	<0.001*

Figure (1): Pearson correlation between total EAPLT score and Pragmatic Language Index (PLSI) for total sample (n = 100).

Conclusion

Given the heterogeneous nature that characterizes pragmatics, it remains ever so difficult to assess pragmatic language competency with a single measure. Furthermore, since pragmatics by definition is tied to language use in social contexts, accurate depiction of such skills through standardized testing per se may not fully represent a child's true ability to use language in his/her natural setting. On the other hand, care-giver rated checklists or questionnaires may represent an augmentative approach to assess pragmatic language skills in more natural contexts. In this regards, the Arabic version of the Pragmatic Language Skills Inventory (PLSI) is applicable to be used for assessment of pragmatic language by Arabic-speaking children.