

APPLICATION OF A REHABILITATION PROGRAM OF PRAGMATIC LANGUAGE SKILLS FOR DELAYED LANGUAGE SCHOOL-AGE EGYPTIAN CHILDREN.

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INTRODUCTION

- ❖ The study of actual language use is called "pragmatics". The literal meaning of an utterance is necessary, but not sufficient for the partner to reconstruct the meaning conveyed by the actor. Pragmatic competence requires the use of both linguistic and extra-linguistic communication in context, such as the ability to attribute mental states to others.
- ❖ Children with Pragmatic impairments may contribute less information or offer information that is either irrelevant or unintelligible leading to difficulties for the listener in understanding the gist of the conversation, so it has negative impact on the social and peer relationships.
- ❖ The Interventions of pragmatic impairments depend mainly on improving the four important aspects for any effective social communication contexts which are social interactions, social cognition, language processing and pragmatic skills.

AIM OF THE WORK

To apply the modified "Say and Do positive pragmatic fun sheets", a rehabilitation program for pragmatic skills and detect its effectiveness in rehabilitation of pragmatic impairments in Egyptian school-age children.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

- ❖ This study was conducted on 20 children with pragmatic impairments attending the Unit of Phoniatrics, in the outpatient clinic of Alexandria Main University hospital.
 - ❖ **Inclusion criteria:** Children complaining of pragmatic impairments of both sexes, in the age ranged from 5-8 years old who were identified either by the complaint of the parents or by the results of formal assessment.
 - ❖ **Exclusion criteria:** Children with intellectual disability, brain damage, hearing impairment, visual impairment and children with psychiatric problems as ASD.
- 1. Formulation of the remediation program:** the "say and DO positive pragmatic fun sheets" program was translated and modified to be used for Egyptian children with pragmatic impairments.

2. Initial assessment:

A. Elementary diagnostic procedures: history taking, general examination.

B. Clinical diagnostic aids: Psychometric evaluation, Arabic language test and pragmatic language skills evaluation by using the Arabic version of Test of Pragmatic Language second edition (TOPL-2), which is a subtest of Comprehensive Arabic language test.

3. Intervention: The subjects of the study were divided into two groups: **Group A:** 10 children with pragmatic skill impairments aged (5 to <6.5) years old, **Group B:** 10 children with pragmatic skills impairments aged (6.5 to 8) years old. The program was applied to all subjects in groups of 2-3 children, one session per week, each session ranged from 45-60 minutes. Two types of interventions were applied which were: **a. direct intervention:** was typically delivered by speech language pathologist, **b. indirect interventions:** typically consisted of advices and instructions to the parents or to support the generalization of social communication skills in the child's environment. "Say and Do Positive Pragmatic Fun Sheets" program helps children learn to use appropriate social communication skills in everyday situations. The fun sheets target a variety of social communication skills in the following areas: **giving information, persuasion, requesting, problem solving, feelings, and appropriate interaction, greetings/politeness and topic maintenance.** The duration of therapy was about **three to six months.**

4. Reevaluation: after a period of 3-6 months of therapy using the protocol of initial assessment

Results

A statistically highly significant increase in the scores of the cases of the school age studied groups A and B was seen when comparing between pre and post therapy, and no statistically significant difference when comparing post therapy scores between the two studied groups.

Table (1): Comparison between the two studied school age groups according to Pragmatic skills evaluation by using the Arabic version of TOPL-2.

Test of pragmatic language (TOPL-2)		Group A (n = 10)	Group B (n = 10)	U	P
Total Score of TOPL-2	Pre therapy				
	Min - Max	6.0 - 27.0	10.0 - 26.0		
	Mean ± SD	15.30 ± 7.42	17.50 ± 5.28	40.000	0.481
	Median (IQR)	15.50 (9.0 - 22.0)	16.50 (15.0 - 21.0)		
	Post therapy				
	Min - Max	22.0 - 41.0	31.0 - 39.0		
	Mean ± SD	32.50 ± 7.55	36.60 ± 2.95	42.500	0.579
	Median (IQR)	32.50 (24.0 - 40.0)	37.50 (36.0 - 39.0)		
	P	0.005*	0.005*		

U: Mann Whitney test

pc: p value for Wilcoxon signed ranks test for comparing between Pre and Post

Group A: 5- <6.5

Group B: 6.5-8.

p: p value for comparing between the studied groups

*: Statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$

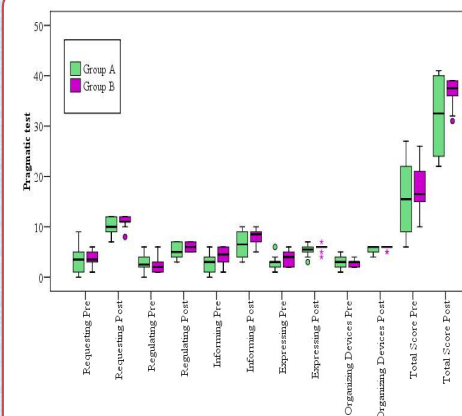


Figure 1: Comparison between the studied school age groups pre and post therapy according to all items of TOPL-2 (n=20).

CONCLUSION

The Arabic version of "Say and Do positive pragmatic fun sheets" program is an effective rehabilitation tool for children with pragmatic impairments.



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