

Analysis of Pragmatic Language Deficit in Children with ADHD

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the pragmatic deficiencies that arise in interactions between children with ADHD and other people. Data was collected from dialogues between ADHD kids and other speakers in YouTube videos based on observation.. The application of a qualitative approach through the comparison of descriptive methods' observations' findings with relevant theories. This is done to help us better understand the pragmatic deficits that children with ADHD have. Conversational reciprocity, excessive talking, coherent speech output, and understanding higher-level language were identified as specific challenges. The study found that children, or high levels of inattention and/or hyperactive.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a disorder with symptoms such as impulsiveness, hyperactivity, and inattention. that it has a massive effect on the global population. According to the American Psychiatric Association (2013), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a common neurodevelopmental disease characterized by heightened levels of impulsivity, hyperactivity, and inattention that interfere with everyday functioning, as cited in Carruthers et al. (2022). One of the communication disorders is the occurrence of objects that obstruct or inhibit communication, causing the listener to misinterpret the message they hears (Dewi & Saifullah, 2019). According to Hartini (2011), as stated in Dewi & Saifullah (2019), people understand and identify letters, syllables, word meanings, simple phrases, graded sentences to complicated and abstract, and a broad diversity of languages. Comorbid language disorders have been found to be three times more common in children with ADHD (Sciberras et al., 2014), including deficiencies in expressive, receptive, and pragmatic language abilities (Korrel, Mueller, Silk, Anderson, & Sciberras, 2017).

According to Nilsen et al. (2005), as cited in Al-dakrouy (2022), pragmatics is commonly divided into three domains firstly, discourse management, which includes how to initiate, maintain, and end a conversation, secondly, communicative intention, which includes how to request and inform; and thirdly, presupposition, which includes assumptions about the interlocutor and the context. The child's pragmatic competency is associated with a group of developing skills including eye contact, requesting information, taking turns in conversations, topic initiation, topic maintenance, speech acts, adjusting what is being said according to the listener's linguistic ability, responding to requests for clarification, and cohesion. Children with

poor pragmatic skills often misinterpret another person's communicative intent and have difficulty responding appropriately, either verbally or nonverbally.

In 1987, Prutting and Kirchner described pragmatic aspects of language as including verbal utterances, paralinguistic aspects, and nonverbal behaviors. According to them, the nonverbal aspects of pragmatic skills include eye contact, facial expression, physical proximity, and gestures. Paralinguistic pragmatic skills are defined as the mechanics of speaking that include intensity, intelligibility, tone, and rhythm. When the conversation is stopped due to the child's failure to make eye contact with the other person throughout the conversation, this may result in shifting the subject to inappropriate behavior, which is an example of nonverbal distraction in the pragmatic world.

When a person's turn of speech is incorrect, they take interruptions and fail to seek out and respond to topic changes. Pragmatic disorders is a phrase used to describe the difficulties in communicating and understanding the intended meaning of speech. It also covers difficulties in social interaction caused by linguistic deficiencies. The presence of disruptions at the linguistic level that seriously impair a person's capacity for effective communication is indicative of pragmatic disorders. These levels include turn-taking, lexical choice, stylistic variants, and verbal linguistic actions such as speech act, topic start, maintenance, and shifting. Paralinguistic features include speaking mechanics such as clarity, intensity, prosody, and fluency, as well as nonverbal features such as eye contact and body language.

Using the Pragmatic Assessment from Norbury Pragmatic Language (2007), the researchers will examine what pragmatic deficiencies exist in children with ADHD who have language difficulties in this research. We collected data from dialogues between and among ADHD kids and other speakers in YouTube videos. This is done to help us better understand the pragmatic deficits that children with ADHD have.

2. METHOD

The methodology in this study was qualitative. Qualitative research is a particular tradition in the social sciences that fundamentally depends on observing human beings in both their fields and aspects. This study was based on the premise that children with ADHD have pragmatic language deficits. Data was gathered from two videos—one each on YouTube and Instagram—that were the product of observation. The application of a qualitative approach through the comparison of descriptive methods' observations' findings with relevant theories.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings.

A 7-year-old child called Sam, who had been diagnosed with ADHD, was shown in the first video. Sam is interviewed for 15 minutes by Dr. Steven Pliska, chief of the University of Texas Health Science Center's Child Division of Psychology, on October 13, 2015. Sam took a number of actions throughout the interview that are typical of the pragmatic language deficiency that children with ADHD frequently encounter.

The first habit Sam displayed throughout the interview was difficulty paying attention to details. When replying to Dr. Steven Pliska's questions. At 13:41, Sam seems uncomfortable and disoriented, and he suddenly opens the device he has been holding since the beginning of the interview. Dr. Steven then reproaches him and orders Sam to place his device on the table. Sam then agreed to the request.



Figure 1. Sam had difficulty paying attention to details

Sam's second habit is to be difficult to listen to when he speaks directly. Sam does not appear to have made eye contact with Dr. Steven Pliska prior to the interview. His glance shifts between below, above, and sideways. After that, Sam was spotted making eye contact with Dr. Steven for a little while after the interview had been done for a few minutes. This might have happened because Sam began to relax throughout the interview.



Figure 2. Sam does not appear to have made eye contact with Dr. Steven Pliska

Sam's third trait is that he interrupts or intrudes on other people's conversations. As shown in the image below, Sam abruptly moved up his right leg as Dr. Steven asked him the question, which appears to have disrupted Dr. Steven's attention.



Figure 3. Sam interrupted on the conversations

Sam's fourth habit is that he does not appear to desire to maintain the flow of conversation. Sam frequently answered Dr. Steven's queries on multiple occasions. Such are "Yes," "No," and "Sometime".

The second video observed was a YouTube video of an interview with a 6-year-old girl diagnosed with ADHD that was uploaded on August 20, 2017. The girl showed pragmatic language deficits in behavior by failing to comprehend the context of the questions. So, she responded to the question in the context of the question.



Figure 4. She failed to comprehend the context of the question

When the interviewer asked at 00:32, "Why don't you like school?" "Because I have a lot of stuff to do, and my little sister is really cute, and I want to spend more time with my little sisters," the girl said. The interviewer then asked, "What do you like about yourself?" at 02:19 to which the girl responded, "I like myself because I like Jesus and God, and they are really important."

Discussion

Sam had difficulty focusing on the facts that his discussion partner, Dr. Steven, was seeking to impart during the interview in the first figure. According to Green et al. (2017), as cited in Al-Dakroury (2022), executive functions can be tested for verbal working memory, self-control, reconstruction, and nonverbal working memory. As a result, having a coherent conversation with a conversation partner necessitates paying attention to and remembering what they are saying, which is dependent on the executive functions of sustained attention and working memory.

Bignell and Cain (2007) investigated pragmatic elements of communication and language understanding in children with ADHD in relation to poor attention, high hyperactivity, and a combination of poor attention and hyperactivity. This has been seen in Sam's behavior (Figure 2), where he appears difficult to listen to while speaking directly. During the interview, he also did not appear to have made eye contact with Dr. Steven Pliska.

Sam's second characteristic is that he frequently interrupts or intrudes on other people's conversations. When Sam abruptly raised up his right leg as Dr. Steven asked him the question, it appears that Dr. Steven's focus was distracted. This relates to language disorders

diagnostic criteria for diagnosing ADHD with pragmatic language disorder, which is characterized by excessive talking, interrupting others, difficulty waiting on turns, not listening to what is being said, and blurting out answers to questions before they are completed (Camarata and Paul,2002).

Sam's next action indicates that he does not appear to want to sustain the flow of discussion by regularly responding to Dr. Steven's inquiries with a single sentence, such as "Yes," "No," and "Sometimes," without offering any further information. It is also proposed that the inattention typical of ADHD may have a greater direct influence on the verbal parts of pragmatics than the nonverbal aspects of pragmatics. Turn taking, volume of discourse, subject introduction, maintenance, and modifications all have an influence on the flow of a conversation (Green, 2014).

Green et al. (2014) found that children with ADHD, or high levels of inattention and/or hyperactivity, have worse pragmatic ability than their peers with TD. Conversational reciprocity, excessive talking, coherent speech output, and perhaps understanding higher level language were recognized as specific challenges. This was discovered in a second video with a 6-year-old child diagnosed with ADHD who failed to grasp the meaning of the questions.

4. CONCLUSION

Pragmatic competence is a crucial skill for children with ADHD, which involves developing skills such as eye contact, requesting information, taking turns in conversations, topic initiation, topic maintenance, speech acts, adjusting what is being said according to the listener's linguistic ability, responding to requests for clarification, and cohesion. Children with poor pragmatic skills often misinterpret others' communicative intent and have difficulty responding appropriately, either verbally or nonverbally. Paralinguistic aspects of language include speaking mechanics such as clarity, intensity, prosody, and fluency, as well as nonverbal features like eye contact and body language.

Two diagnosed ADHD children that were observed in the interview from two Youtube videos have shown some pragmatic language deficit behavior. The availability of the research's data sources and participants resulted in a small sample size and other restrictions. If there are more participants and data collected, the results can be more convincing and complete.

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