Pragmatic Assessment in Stuttering Children

Thesis

Submitted for partial fulfillment of M.Sc. degree in phoniatrics

By

Dr Nesreen Fathi Mahmoud Hussin, MB, B.Ch.

Under supervision of

Dr Amr Roshdy El Badrawy, MD
Professor of E.N.T
Faculty of medicine -Cairo University

Dr Elham Ahmed Shahin, MD
Assistant professor of phoniatrics
Faculty of medicine -Cairo University

Dr Amr Abd El Salam Anter, MD
Lecturer of phoniatrics
Faculty of medicine –Beni Suef University

Faculty of medicine
Cairo University
2009

Acknowledgement

First of all, thanks to my god the most beneficent and merciful.

I would like to express my thanks to Prof. Dr. Amr El Badrawy , Prof. of E.N.T, faculty of medicine, Cairo University, for his great help and support .

Words stand short when coming to express my sincere gratitude and respect to my great Professor Dr. Elham Shaheen, Assistant Prof. of phoniatrics, faculty of medicine, Cairo University, for her meticulous supervision and kind advices throughout my work.

I would like to record my deep appreciation to Dr. Amr Abd Elsalam, Lecturer of phoniatrics, faculty of medicine, Beni-Suef University who was my helping supervisor giving me his experience and time, without which, I could not complete this work.

Finally, I also extend my thanks to all members of phoniatric units Cairo University and Beni-Suef University for their help and support.

To my family in appreciation for their continuous support

Abstract

Pragmatics, the use of language in context, has been investigated only recently in the language by children who stutter. Some investigators have begun to address how the language and fluency of stuttering are influenced in different communicative settings. This study describes several findings concerning the pragmatic competencies of children who stutter against the traditional framework of pragmatic language development by using the protocol of pragmatic assessment includes the following skills : Preverbal communication, Object function, Managing conversation, Intentional communication and Narrative skills.

Key words (Pragmatic Skills - Pragmatic Assessment - Children who stutter - Arabic Speaking Children)

List Of Contents

Chapter title	Page
Introduction and Aim of the work	1
Review of literature	
Pragmatic development	5
Pragmatic dysfunction	14
Pragmatic Competencies in Stuttering Children	21
Pragmatic assessment	25
Stuttering: Theories, Assessment and Management	37
Pragmatic Intervention In Stuttering Children	49
Subjects and methods	56
Results	69
Discussion	85
Conclusion	98
Recommendations	99
Summary	101
References	105
Arabic summary	

List of figures

Figure 1: Case scoring in language assessment.

Figure 2: Pragmatic skills scores among group (case & control) understudy.

Figure 3: Means of pragmatic skills scores among cases with different degrees of stuttering severity.

Figure 4: Means of pragmatic skills scores among cases with different Bloodstien stages of stuttering.

Figure 5: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of stuttering severity with preverbal communication skill score (PC).

Figure 6: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of stuttering severity with managing conversation skill score (MC).

Figure 7: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of stuttering severity with total pragmatic skills score.

Figure 8: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of Bloodstien stages of stuttering with language score among cases under study.

Figure 9: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of language score of case group with age in months.

Figure 10: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of language score in control group with age in months.

Figure 11: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of preverbal communication score of case group with age in months.

Figure 12: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of preverbal communication score of control group with age in months.

Figure 13: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of total pragmatic skills score of case group with age in months.

Figure 14: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of total pragmatic skills score of control group with age in months.

List of tables

Table 1: Responsiveness Items (Girolametto, 1997).

Table 2: Assertiveness Items(Girolametto, 1997).

Table 3: Main features of pragmatic frameworks.

Table 4: The mean and standard deviation (S.D) of age in months in the whole study group.

Table 5: Sex Distribution in the whole study group.

Table 6: Language score in the whole study group.

Table 7: Mean and standard deviation (S.D) of pragmatic skills score among two groups understudy.

Table 8: Mean and standard deviation of pragmatic skills scores among cases with different degrees of stuttering severity.

Table 9: Mean and SD of pragmatic skills score among cases with different degrees of Bloodstien stages of stuttering.

Table 10: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of stuttering severity with pragmatic skills.

Table 11: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of Bloodstien stages of stuttering with language score among cases under study.

Table 12: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of language score with age of case & control group under study.

Table 13: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of pragmatic skills with age of control group under study.

Table 14: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of pragmatic skills with age of case group under study.

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
CWS	Children Who Stutter
CNS	Children Who don’t Stutter
SLPs	Speech-Language Pathologists
SPD	Semantic-Pragmatic disorder
SLPD	Semantic-Pragmatic language disorder
AS	Asperger's Syndrome
SLI	Specific language impairment
PC	Preverbal Communication
OF	Object Function
MC	Managing Conversation
IC	Intentional Communication
NC	Narrative Communication
CNC	Children with normally developing communication skills
SD	Standard Deviation

INTRODUCTION

Stuttering is one of speech disorders that is primarily characterized by repetitions (sounds, syllables, part-words, whole words, phrases), pauses, and prolongations that differ in number & severity from those of normally fluent individuals. Onset usually occurs around the time that language skills are developing, and is generally gradual in nature **(Quesal, 2005).**

The nature of association between language and stuttering in young children has been the focus of debate for many years **(Watkins and Johnson, 2004).**

Some recent data has suggested that there may be a propensity for delay or differences in certain areas of language learning for children who stutter when compared with children who do not stutter, specifically in vocabulary or syntax development. One purpose of investigating the pragmatic competencies of children who stutter was to determine whether knowledge of children who stutter `use of language in context has relevant fluency treatment implications **(Weiss, 2004).**

Pragmatics, the use of language in context, has been investigated only recently in the language used by children who stutter. Historically researches compared the length and complexity of the syntactic constructions produced by these children with those of children who do not stutter and generally found the children who stutter to be relatively deficient. More recently, some investigators have begun to address how the language and fluency of children who stutter are influenced in different communicative settings **(Weiss, 2004).**

Clinical observations of a number of children and young adults who stutter indicate, unexpectedly, that these young speakers often have situational speaking fears associated with their fluency disorder. What was not expected, however, is the frequency that these same speakers exhibit pragmatic weakness as well **(Swiney, 2007).**

A simple but functional definition of pragmatic skills is to know "what can be said, where it can be said, when it can be said, and how to say it most effectively**" (Cohen, 2004).**

It is not surprising that children who stutter often exhibit pragmatic language disorders (PLD) that either influence or complicate their speaking fears. Reports by **Blood and Seider (1981),** indicate that 68% of children who stutter have at least one concomitant disorder. Therefore, it is highly probable most clinicians have or will have at least one child who stutter with a concomitant pragmatic language disorder.

The demands and capacities models, as explained by **Starkweather (1987),** indicate that a decrease in fluency can occur when speech demands exceed a child's motor, linguistic and /or emotional capacities. Under this model, it is easy to understand how the linguistic and cognitive demands of dealing with the spontaneity of pragmatics, the most complex of language tasks, can increase disfluency in children who stutter.

It was suggested that the first step in defining the role of pragmatics training should play in stuttering therapy is to establish the individual's current level of language competence **(Weiss, 2004**).

Clinicians are encouraged to include some measure of pragmatic

competency in their fluency assessment and provide specific training in these skills as part of their therapy plan **(Swiney, 2006).**

It was reported that increasing an individual's pragmatic skills also improves narratives and expository discourse and points out that all fluency therapy eventually covers these types of conversational interactions. The challenge is how to make connection between treatments of children who stutter and some aspects of language treatment program by acknowledging the relevance of pragmatic in planning a treatment program for children who stutter. The speech-language pathologists focus treatment on "the big picture", which is the enhancement of the individual's ability to communicate in activities of daily living **(Weiss, 2004).**

Little is known about pragmatic competencies of CWS and this remains an open area for research. The question is "pragmatic skills and stuttering": are they related?

Aim of the work

Pragmatic Development

Language is a system of objects or symbols, such as sounds or character sequences, that can be combined in various ways following a set of rules, especially to communicate thoughts, feelings, or instructions. **(Mifflin, 2005).**

A language disorder is a problem with understanding and/or using spoken, written, and/or other symbol systems (e.g., gestures, sign language). The disorder may involve the form of language (phonology, morphology, syntax), the content of the language (semantics), and/or the function of language in communication (pragmatics) in any combination.

*** Form of Language**

- Phonology is the sound system of a language and the rules about how sounds are combined.
- Morphology is the structure of words and how word forms are constructed.
- Syntax is the order and combination of words to form sentences.

*** Content of Language**

- Semantics is related to the meanings of words and sentences.

*** Function of Language**

- Pragmatics is the combination of language components (phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics) in functional and socially appropriate ways **(ASHA, 2008).**

Pragmatics is the area of language function that embraces the use of language in social contexts (knowing what to say, how to say, and when to say it, and how to "be" with other people) **(Bowen, 2001**). An individual may say words clearly and use long, complex sentences with correct grammar, but still have a communication problem - if he or she has not mastered the rules for social language known as **pragmatics (ASHA, 2008).**

Pragmatics involve three major communication skills:

- **Using language** for different purposes, such as
  - greeting (e.g., hello, goodbye)
  - informing (e.g., I'm going to get a cookie)
  - demanding (e.g., Give me a cookie)
  - promising (e.g., I'm going to get you a cookie)
  - requesting (e.g., I would like a cookie, please)
- **Changing language** according to the needs of a listener or situation, such as
  - talking differently to a baby than to an adult.
  - giving background information to an unfamiliar listener
  - speaking differently in a classroom than on a playground.