



11TH ESLA CONGRESS OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY

New frontiers in speech and language therapy:
advancing practice, research and education



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A systematic review of tracheoesophageal voice therapy in post laryngectomy rehabilitation

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Introduction

Following total laryngectomy, surgical voice restoration is held as the gold standard for re-establishing communication via tracheoesophageal voice. Yet beyond insertion of a voice prosthesis to elicit voice production, there is suboptimal clinical knowledge of how to rehabilitate tracheoesophageal voice. This systematic review will identify and assess the quality and effectiveness of behavioural interventions for tracheoesophageal voice therapy.

Methods

A search of seven databases and manual searches was conducted in July 2021. Records were independently screened by two reviewers against inclusion/exclusion criteria. 45 studies were retained for full text review. Eligible studies will be assessed for quality using the PEDro, ROBIN-T and CASP critical appraisal tools. A data extraction tool will be developed to document key data.

The review protocol has been registered with PROSPERO and will be reported in accordance with PRISMA guidelines.

Results

Descriptive statistics will be used to describe participants and key aspects of the studies. We anticipate a narrative synthesis given the heterogeneity of the studies. The synthesis will report on details of the interventions, population characteristics; and measurement of outcomes across ICF domains, well-being and quality of life. Data permitting a meta-analysis will be performed.

Conclusions

This review will provide valuable information to clinicians on the under-researched area of tracheoesophageal voice therapy and appraise the effectiveness of existing therapy approaches. The findings of the review will form part of the VITAL project, which centres on the development of a novel Voice Therapy Approach for People with Laryngectomy.



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Adequacy of the phonological system based on the ABAB Model, with a pandemic period during the intervention

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Phonological disorder is one of the most common language disorders. A detailed assessment of the phonological system is essential to check the child's inventory. When ensuring the diagnosis of phonological disorder, it is important to employ recognized therapeutic programs. The objective of this abstract was to present the therapeutic progress of a patient with phonological disorder, who started the pre-pandemic intervention and had to stop it for public health reasons. The study consists of data from a patient diagnosed with phonological disorder without any hearing disorder. At the beginning of the intervention, the patient was 4 years and 7 months old. During this first contact, the Child's Phonological Assessment (Yavas, 1991) was performed and, based on the results, the therapeutic model that would be used was selected. In the pre-pandemic period, two cycles of therapy were performed based on the ABAB – Withdrawal model. The choice of the therapeutic target was made from the Implicational Hierarchy of Complexity of Traits (Mota, 1996). In the initial assessment, the child did not have in his phonological inventory the phonemes /f/, /v/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /λ/, /r/ and the syllabic structures of coda and complex onset. The first phoneme worked was /v/, in which an improvement in the inventory was observed, but in the second application of the model, the phoneme /ʒ/ was chosen, which allows for a greater number of generalizations. At the end of this period of intervention (39 sessions) it was necessary to interrupt due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Upon returning, five months after the initial period, the patient had the entire phonological inventory, managing to adequately produce all the phonemes that were initially absent. After this period only the difficulty of a complex onset remained. This demonstrates the importance of selecting targets that promote greater generalization.



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Alternative and Augmentative Communication: A transdisciplinary and Communication Partner-centered Approach in Speech Therapy

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Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) permits us to enhance social participation and self-determination for people with complex communication needs. Devices, such as pictograms, Speech Generating Devices and Key Word Signing, methods such as PECS or PODD, and access methods, such as eye-tracking devices and switches, permit us to reduce communication disability. AAC requires a transdisciplinary approach in which speech therapists have a central place for device selection, initial assessment and follow-up. Families should be included in the team. They can offer communication opportunities and use modeling or prompting in daily routines. They can provide relevant observations about AAC use in context. Recent studies tend to show that communication partner's knowledge and perception of AAC (Sievers et al., 2018). Their training is classically conducted during group sessions which do not guarantee maintenance and generalizations (cf. McCoy & McNaughton, 2018 about PECS). We suggest a communication partner/family centered approach with video feedback and practical training follow-up. We also propose an online questionnaire for both families and professionals for initial evaluation and follow-up. It permits us to lead a dynamic evaluation of communication (communicative functions, linguistic structures, AAC modalities,...). It enables us to define the need for training and the communication partner's perception of AAC. Such a method can be implemented in institutional or private speech therapy for both children and adults. Nevertheless, they suppose knowledge both in AAC and adult training.

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An Exploratory Study of Speech and Language Therapists' Experience of Collaborative Practice with Parents of Children Attending Primary Care Speech and Language Therapy Services in Ireland

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Family-centered care embraces the involvement of parents in the planning, implementation and evaluation of speech and language therapy (SLT) services for their children. Within paediatric primary care SLT services, collaborative practice is a central component in family-centered care. Speech and Language Therapists (SaLTs) play an integral role in facilitating collaboration with parents. This study explored SaLTs' experience of collaborative practice with parents of children attending paediatric primary care SLT services in Ireland.

The aim of the study was to gain an understanding of SaLTs' experience of collaboration with parents in paediatric primary care SLT services. This included investigating what SaLTs' viewed as the facilitators of, and the barriers to collaboration, as well as the outcomes of successful collaboration. Eight SaLTs from one primary care SLT service took part in focus groups. Six open-ended questions related to the research aims were asked. The data generated was analysed using thematic analysis.

SaLTs' perceived that the facilitators of collaboration practice with parents included; establishing a strong therapeutic relationship, using a solution focused approach, therapeutic interventions which emphasised a parent coaching model, and online SLT services/resources introduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. SaLTs' recognised the barriers to collaboration as; a divergence of parents and SaLTs' expectations of their roles, the negative impact of long waiting times, as well as challenges the SaLT faces in their role. SaLTs highlighted positive outcomes of collaboration including a perceived increase in parental empowerment and confidence, as well as a sense of feeling rewarded as a SaLT.

The reflections of SaLTs in this study shed new light on the unique professional experiences of SaLTs in a primary care setting. Their experiences can inform service planning to improve collaboration in SLT primary care services, with an additional outcome being to improve therapy outcomes for children and their families.



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Application of LITMUS Turkish Sentence Repetition Test and Turkish Nonword Repetition Test to Different Neurodevelopmental Disorders

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Developmental language disorder (DLD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder that is seen in early childhood and continues into adulthood. Autism spectrum disorder is also a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by deficits in social communication and social interaction, and the presence of limited and repetitive behaviors. In both of them, there are various difficulties in acquiring and/or expressing components of language such as phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. This situation prompts experts and researchers to think about the similarities and differences between DLD and ASD in terms of language skills.

In this study, we aimed to compare and contrast language and repetition skills of children with DLD, ASD, and ones with typical language development (TD). The study was conducted with a total 90 participants, including 30 children with typical language development, 30 children with DLD, and 30 children with ASD, ages between 5-9 years old. The participants in the DLD and ASD groups were the cases who applied to Biruni University Language and Speech Therapy Clinics. The participants in the TD group were taken from the database of the first researcher's doctoral thesis. In the study, the Turkish School Age Language Development Test (TODİL), LITMUS Turkish Sentence Repetition Test (LITMUS TR) and Turkish Nonword Repetition Test (TAST) were administered to the participants. The data will be analyzed to determine whether there are differences or similarities between the performance of the groups in language and repetition tests.



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Babbling as the early prediction of speech and language disorders.

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In our research we were interested in how babbling is a key predictor of speech - language and communication. In our study we had 2 groups of children - one with DLD/Autism/intellectual disability diagnosis and a control one without any known speech - language problems.

Objectives: To verify and prove that babbling is one of the key predictors of speech - language and communication development.

Methods: We did research in different kindergartens in Slovenia. We used a specially prepared questionnaire for parents and an in-depth early speech therapy anamnesis.

Results: The results showed that the absence of babbling is a key predictor of speech-language problems. The absence of early babbling is necessary for further speech therapy diagnosis and early intervention.

Take away note: Babbling is one of the best predictors of later speech and language communication, specially autism spectrum disorder and development language disorder.

Key words: early intervention, babbling, screening, early communication



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Behaviour Change in Speech and Language Therapy

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Speech and language therapy interventions rely on the use of complex combinations of techniques to change the underlying mechanisms of behaviour: capability, opportunity, and motivation. These techniques are largely underspecified in intervention studies, or are described in such a way that their meaning can be easily misunderstood. Michie et al. (2013) created a taxonomy of 'Behaviour Change Techniques' used in behavioural psychology and public health interventions. These techniques have been recently applied to SLT with the aim of understanding how well such techniques can describe SLT interventions. The research for this so far is promising. An internationally recognised consensus of techniques SLTs use in intervening with clients has three main research-related benefits, as well as several benefits for practice: First, it will promote the accurate replication of interventions; second, systematic reviewers will have a reliable method for extracting information about intervention content, (and thus promote understanding of potentially active ingredients which are linked with effectiveness), and third, intervention developers can draw on a comprehensive list of techniques to design effective interventions. There will also be positive impacts on treatment fidelity of effective interventions in practice and treatment fidelity reporting in research studies. Furthermore, the movement of effective interventions from research to practice will be made much easier since a list of recognised techniques would be available to draw on, and for the same reason there is a strong possibility of revolutionising the way SLT students are taught. The aim of this talk/workshop will be to introduce the concept of behaviour change in SLT, and how knowledge of this can support ESLA conference attendees in their practice and research.



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Children with phonological difficulties: contributions to diagnoses in speech and language therapy

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The linguistic markers to a differential diagnosis between developmental language disorder (DLD) and phonological speech sound disorder (P-SSD) are still unclear: empirical evidence supporting DLD or P-SSD is scarce and ambiguous, with clinical criteria and linguistic markers overlapping in both diagnoses. In this study, we aimed to investigate the phonological profiles of children between five and six years of age with primary phonological disorders, without associated biomedical conditions, to help establish a differential diagnosis of DLD and P-SSD in Speech and Language Therapy. To this purpose, a focus group was held with four specialists enquiring about the factors differentiating DLD and P-SSD. We also collected information about the linguistic markers that support each diagnosis. A qualitative analysis indicated the critical role played by phonological processes, the Percentage of Correct Consonants - Revised (PCC-R), the intelligibility index and the repetition of nonwords, as well as the assessment of phonological awareness abilities, lexical retrieval tasks and atypical performance in other language domains. After the focus group, an empirical study was conducted in a sample of 14 children with phonological disorders to assess them on the seven identified linguistic markers. The results showed that five out of seven linguistic markers are differential: the PCC-R, the intelligibility index, the lexical retrieval tasks, the performance in phonological awareness tasks and the performance in other language domains. Phonological processes and the repetition of nonwords do not appear to be differential in the diagnoses of DLD and P-SSD. With this investigation, we gathered qualitative and quantitative data for differential diagnoses of DLD and P-SSD based on empirical evidence.



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Coaching SLTs to improve teachers' language support practices using SOLEM, in Belgian preschools

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Background : Improving the features of teachers' linguistic interactions with students is currently an emphasis in many efforts to increase the benefits of early education programs for children's language development. SOLEM "Soutenir et Observer le Développement du Langage de l'Enfant en Maternelle" is a support tool designed for teachers to observe and sustain children's language development in a classroom environment. SOLEM positive outcomes have been already demonstrated. However, its implementation in preschools requires a close collaborative work between teachers and Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) to greatly increase its effects.

Aims: This study aimed to describe a professional development program targeting SLTs enabling them to train teachers to implement SOLEM in Belgian preschools. We focused on how teachers are taught by SLTs to implement support practices following SOLEM strategies.

Method: A mixed method design, including sharing information, modeling, prompting and providing feedback, was used to assess direct individualized in-site interventions. Eleven pair-working teachers and SLTs participated in the study. Specific individualized targets of SOLEM strategies were presented, discussed and assessed across the intervention for each pair of professionals. Teachers' knowledge and self-reported practices were assessed through a questionnaire before and following the implementation. Interviews were conducted with both groups of professionals during and following the implementation. Qualitative data was then thematically coded.

Results: Analysis found that the program strengthened collaborative partnerships between SLTs and teachers as well as teachers' knowledge and use of language rich strategies. SLTs professional identities were enhanced through professional learning as well as their self-efficacy. Modeling and feedback were identified as key factors to sustained practice change.

Conclusion: Outcomes illustrate how individualized professional learning can improve language rich environments in early childhood education. It also emphasizes the necessity of training professionals through individualized collaborative practices for better outcomes.



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Communication in practice: exploring real-world interactions of staff and autistic in-patients in hospital ward rounds

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Speech therapists working with adults with communication impairments play a crucial role in identifying communication difficulties, making recommendations about communication adjustments, and removing barriers that impede patient involvement and recovery. Hitherto, despite an oft-cited allegiance to a social model, impairments are viewed as dispositional, and less attention is paid to interactions whereby impairments may be visible, but social competencies can also be evident. This study examines communication between autistic in-patients and staff in mental health hospital ward rounds. Putting a research spotlight on autistic persons' inpatient experience of care management is significant; research highlights additional risks of poor mental health for autistic adults, increased likelihood of hospital admissions and longer patient stays.

The study uses an innovative video-reflexive ethnographic design and discourse analytic method. Two stages include: video-recording ward rounds (work-as-done) and collaborative interviews with staff and patients to facilitate reflection about communication practice (work-as-imagined). Thus, the research illustrates how care work is accomplished in real-world practice. The paper reports early findings from the data analysis. It examines factors facilitating patient involvement, communication barriers, and dominant narratives as interactive resources. Three important practice issues have been identified through analysis: 1) a lack of reasonable adjustments and an over-reliance on spoken language, 2) a mis-match between staff knowledge about best practice and communication in routine work, and 3) diagnostic over-shadowing of mental health and neglect of autism frameworks. Utilising video and interview data, I demonstrate these tensions and highlight why training as the solution is misleading.

This is novel research. Whilst there is guidance about how best to communicate with autistic adults, little is based on real talk or the perspectives of autistic people. This research adds value; it offers an evidence base in mental health for SLT intervention, and explores participatory techniques for autistic people's involvement in care.



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Complex syntax in DLD and ASD children

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The production of subordinate clauses has been pointed out as a relevant measure of increased complexity, especially when we consider spontaneous speech. The idea that abilities supporting syntactic complexity in linguistic production are impaired in children with Developmental Language Disorders (DLD) has been largely discussed (see Hamann & Tuller, 2015). However, less is known about the performance of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in tasks involving the interaction of different factors of complexity, which may include embedding, as well as certain types of movement, namely A'-movement, or intervention effects created by A' moving a DP across other DP with similar features.

The present study aimed to compare the results of DLD and ASD populations in the production and comprehension of structures involving subordination, movement or both. The results suggest a different role played by syntactic complexity in children with ASD and those with DLD, at least on particular tasks, with differences between the two clinical groups and the Typical Developing (TD) children, within the same age range (8-11y.o.).

Both children with DLD and those with ASD exhibit low rates of production of subordinate clauses. Additionally, the high levels of ungrammaticality associated with the production of embedded sentences also indicate that the performance in the DLD and ASD groups is affected by syntactic complexity. However, the results indicate different patterns of performance, since there are differences associated with the type and level of complexity of the subordinate clauses. Thus, in children with DLD and those with ASD, some relative clauses, wh-questions and subject control structures involving the verb promise seem to be problematic, with consistent results across different tasks. So, the results emphasize the importance of assessing different syntactic structures, in order to allow specific intervention procedures in the case of affected syntactic competences.



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Contributions to a child's phonological analysis: the importance of non-linear phonology analysis perspective.

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Children with Speech Sound Disorder (SSD) represent a large percentage of many pediatric SLTs' caseloads and phonological disorders are those with highest prevalence.

The theoretical framework of the non-linear phonology allows SLTs to analyze the child's phonological system considering not only the segment as a minimum unit, but also to contemplate prosodic aspects that promote a more specific and effective intervention planning.

This study aimed to demonstrate the importance of prosodic constituents (stress, length and structure of the syllable and word position) for complementary assessment of phonology and respective planning of SLTs' intervention with children with phonological disorder.

A speech sample of a single word picture naming test was performed with a child aged 5 years and 7 months, a monolingual speaker of European Portuguese and diagnosed with a phonological disorder. The speech sample was analyzed and compared according to the assumptions of linear phonology and non-linear phonology.

The results showed that the analysis in the scope of a linear phonology is quite reductive, focusing particularly on the identification of the presence or absence of segments. In contrast, analysis based on non-linear phonology enables a more holistic and integrative perspective of the child's phonological system, depending on the phonological structures associated with it, namely the interference of the constitution of prosodic aspects.

The analysis from the perspective of non-linear phonology is an essential complement in the practice of SLTs, proving to be effective both for the analysis of the results of the assessment and for the intervention, since from this, it is possible to know in more detail the child's phonological system, which allows the SLTs to plan its intervention more effectively and focus on its origin and not just on its symptoms.

Keywords: Speech Sound Disorders, non-linear phonology, assessment



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Contributions to the morphosyntactic profile of European Portuguese-speaking children – a procedure for analyzing speech samples

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Introduction: In the assessment and intervention in language disorders, the morphological and syntactic domains are often neglected to the detriment of other domains, such as phonological and lexical. This is due to the fact that guidelines for a complete and systematic analysis of discourse are scarce and this activity is time consuming (Heilmann, Nockerts, & Miller, 2010).

Objective: It is intended to demonstrate that a characterization of the morphosyntactic skills of children with language disorders, using a procedure for morphosyntactic analysis of speech samples from European Portuguese-speaking children, allows a finer characterization of their language skills and will allow more effective interventions.

Methods: Speech samples from European Portuguese-speaking children were collected and transcribed using the CHILDES - Child Language Data Exchange System. All utterances from the language samples were analyzed according to the morphosyntactic categories proposed in the Language Assessment, Remediation and Screening Procedure adapted to European Portuguese (LARSP-PE) (Castro, Marques, & Dôro, 2019), at the level of the sentence, phrase and word.

Results: The data were explored in order to assess the sensitivity and specificity of the analysis using the LARSP-PE to difficulties at the morphosyntactic level of children with and without language disorders.

Discussion: Data will be discussed considering their contribution to the characterization of the language profile of children, their interaction with assessment data using standardized tests and contribution to the planning of assessment and intervention in a clinical context.

Conclusions: A detailed assessment regarding morphosyntactic skills contributes for more accurate and efficient diagnoses and interventions.



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Cross-Cultural Adaptation, Reliability and Validity of the Turkish Version of the Voice Symptom Scale – VoiSS : A Preliminary Results

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Background: Voice assessment is a multidimensional process. Patient-reported quality-of-life and self-assessment voice measurements are necessary when evaluating dysphonic patients.

Aim/Objectives: The purpose of the present study was to adapt to Turkish and to evaluate the reliability and validity of the Turkish version of the Voice Symptom Scale (VoiSS-Turkish).

Methods: The study used cross-sectional and prospective study design. The study consisted of two phases: translation of items into Turkish and evaluation of reliability and validity of the VoiSS-Turkish. The translation processes followed the World Health Organization's guidelines of translation and adaptation of instruments. Eighty participants (40 with dysphonia and 40 without dysphonia) completed the VoiSS-Turkish as well as Voice Handicap Index-Turkish (VHI-Turkish). For validity analysis, VoiSS-Turkish scores in dysphonic and vocally healthy participants were examined, and also a correlation between VoiSS-Turkish and VHI-Turkish was analyzed. For the purpose of determining test-retest reliability, 40% of individuals took the VoiSS-Turkish twice, two weeks apart.

Results: In order to assess the scale's internal consistency and reliability, the Cronbach- α value was used, and the item-total correlation was obtained for each item. The Pearson correlation test was used to estimate test-retest reliability throughout the entire scale's range of values. The concept validity was assessed using the Mann-Whitney U test, which compared the total scale scores between the study and control groups. Spearman correlation test was used to determine the validity of the relationship between VoiSS-Turkish and VHI-Turkish.

Conclusions: The VoiSS has been translated into Turkish. As a result of the preliminary findings, it is believed to be a valuable tool for evaluating the symptoms and quality of life of patients with dysphonia. The preliminary findings and translation presented in the current study are considered promising.

Keywords: Voice disorder, dysphonia, quality of life, self-assessment



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Cyprus Autism Home Based Support Center

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Background: Parental efficacy plays a crucial role in family-centered practice, as it is also linked to family functioning in general. Understanding parental and family members' needs for development in these different aspects is essential to facilitate the family's role in caregiving for a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Aim and Objectives: The main object of this study is the creation and operation of a Family Intervention and Support Center for Autism in Cyprus aiming to provide specialized services at home to children up to the age of compulsory education, who have been diagnosed with autism, as well as to their families.

Methods: Every year in the Republic of Cyprus more than 100 families ask for help in supporting children with ASD in matters of communication, psychological support, and school integration. An Interdisciplinary Team (IT) will be set up to carry out the services of the Support Center for ASD children and their families. The IT team will consist of child psychologists, social workers, to support the families, guide and educate them, as well as speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and special educators to support communication, go in the home and provide training and assisting services to the parents on how to play, work, communicate with their child.

Expected Results: The services of the ASD Center's Home Program will alleviate today's existing problem and will effectively support the family and the ASD child as well.

Conclusion: Families with ASD children are facing daily challenges regarding the way to care, educate, cater for their ASD children, and require immediate early intervention strategies and support programs to assist them raise their child. The Support Center will coordinate all the required interventions.

Keywords: ASD, Home Based Support, Interdisciplinary Interventions



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Determination of Anxiety Levels of Parents Receiving Speech and Language Therapy During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Introduction: The COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged in Wuhan, China, is a virus that has spread all over the world. The virus that spread has affected the lives of many people. One of the groups it affects is speech and language therapy cases who regularly go to therapy. Due to the pandemic, face-to-face therapy processes have been interrupted. This situation has led families to have difficulties in reaching therapy and meeting the needs of their children. The difficulties experienced changed the family's perspective towards therapy. It has been emphasized in many studies that the psychological state of the family is important in therapy (1).

Aim: This study aims to determine the anxiety levels of parents who received Speech and Language Therapy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Method: For this purpose, parents with various clinical diagnoses were asked to fill out a questionnaire including a demographic form and Beck Anxiety test. The data will be collected by the researcher through Google survey forms and the analysis of the obtained data will be done using SPSS software and an ANOVA will be completed. The significance levels of the data will be determined according to the $p < 0.05$ value.

Result: It is an ongoing study.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, speech and language therapy, teletherapy, anxiety level.

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Developing Individual Transition Plans in Fiji to assist students to transit from special education schools onwards in life and into vocational pathways.

Melody - Konstantina Poultidou¹

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In Fiji, speech pathology, special education and social inclusion for people with disabilities is a challenge for children and adults. Practitioners and resources are limited in the country, due to a lack of available training for related qualifications, and individuals face geographical and cultural barriers that can limit their access to appropriate services. The overall goal of this presentation is to give practitioners ideas and methods that can broaden our areas of work and discover new pathways towards social inclusion and wider intervention methods in diverse environments.

The Individual Transition Plans (ITPs) had five main objectives: helping students identify their skills, developing new ones, transitioning them onwards from school, educating the surrounding environment and discovering potential opportunities for them to enter the workforce. Additionally, the project reached out to major businesses that could responsibly support and safely include students in their workforce.

Sustainable results were key to the success of this project. In order to create individual and sustainable transitioning plans, methods employed included creating a range of five different streams to suit each and every pre-vocational and vocational student, depending on their abilities, and with a “whole of life” focus.

Speech pathologists' can improve students' communication and social skills, identify and better comprehend their needs, discover their abilities and simultaneously up-skill and mentor mainstream teachers involved in the development of the ITP.

Since the development of the ITPs in 2016, 32 students had been offered traineeships with some entering into full time work. During my time in Fiji, I secured 3 traineeships that turned into job opportunities. Furthermore, these individuals can now support their families and feel valued and respected.

In conclusion, the ITP suggests that appropriate support of children in special education can help them successfully transition into mainstream society after school.

Keywords: special education, social inclusion, individual transition plans, sustainability, speech pathology



11TH ESLA CONGRESS OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY

26-28 MAY 2022 | SALZBURG-AUSTRIA

New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Developmental Profile of Social Communication: Preliminary results in typical developing children and children with developmental disabilities

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Objectives:

The Developmental Profile of Social Communication (DPSC) is based on the communication and language development in children with social communication difficulties. DPSC facilitates understanding of the challenges these children face in social interaction, communication, and linguistic development. It utilizes clinician and parent responses to build the developmental profiles of individuals. The profile allows clinicians to determine the therapeutic goals for improved cooperation and communication in various contexts. In addition, it provides insight into the parents' perspective. The aim of this study is to present the preliminary results of the DPSC in typically developing Greek children as well as in children with developmental disabilities .

Methods:

The DPSC, a 112-item questionnaire, was administered to 357 parents of typically developing (TD) children aged 2–7.5 years and 55 parents of children with developmental disorders aged 2 - 9 years old using a 3-scale rating of answers. Parents of TD children answered in DPSC electronically via Google forms, and were able to ask for clarification on questions. Parents of children with developmental difficulties answered in cooperation with the clinician who evaluated their child. All answers were categorized and then analyzed under independent variables.

Results:

Descriptive and hypothesis testing were used to summarize participant characteristics and performance. Findings suggest that (TD) children >7.5 years tended to develop most of the rated skills of DPSC adequately and children with developmental disorder tend to present a socially based profile of difficulties.

Conclusions:

It was determined that the DPSC questionnaire is an easily administered tool that enables the evaluation of the social communication abilities of children of different ages and helps parents to understand more in depth the needs of their child.



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26-28 MAY 2022 | SALZBURG-AUSTRIA

New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Discovering the impulses of Emil Froeschels in ICF and ISTP today

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Background: The ingenious founder of “Logopaedie”, Prof. Ernst Froeschels, gave voice therapy special attention, as he himself gave lectures at the Vienna University of Music. His fundamental approaches to voice therapy are still effective today and we find them confirmed in many methods for voice therapy, including the most recent ones. It is not only the well-known “Chewing Approach”, but overall the psychosomatic approach that Froeschels developed. Regarding this fact, his scientific exchange with Prof. Gutzmann, Berlin, is very interesting in their contrary positions, even for recent discussions.

Objectives: The aim of this work is to find out how and where his theoretical and practical impulses can be perceived today. We are exploring their use in science and practice, including their effectiveness.

Methods: According to the ICF, “quality of life” is stated as the primary goal of speech and voice therapy. This corresponds exactly to the psychosomatic approach of Froeschels. His “Chewing Approach”, which is very well known in the USA, leads to a holistic experience. This is also the foundation for the “Integrative Voice Therapy and Voice Pedagogy according to Evemarie Haupt, ISTP”, which particularly relates to Froeschels, especially in the psychosomatic view of the vocal function. Well-being brings well-sounding – well-sounding brings well-being.

Results: As we are in the middle of the process to realize in ISTP-theory and practice the valuable impulses and ideas of Froeschels, we can hardly speak of measurable results so far. A Patient Related Outcome- study (Forum Logopädie, 2013) shows by means of a questionnaire study based on ICF, high-percentage improvements in voice function, general health and quality of life. Further studies are planned. Written patient statements from 2020/21 including the VHI, confirm the previous positive experience.

Conclusion: Caring for Froeschel's legacy does not mean keeping the ashes, but carrying the flame on!

Keywords: Emil Froeschels, ISTP, ICF, Integrative Voice Therapy and Pedagogy, voice therapy, holistic approach



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26-28 MAY 2022 | SALZBURG-AUSTRIA

New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Does Mentoring Matter? Introducing a mentoring programme to speech-language pathologists working in the public sector in Malta.

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Background

Telepractice, online therapy, is a means of service delivery that has been documented in research for several years in countries and remote areas where individuals have difficulty to access services face-to-face. In 2020, SLPs had to venture in the use of telepractice, irrespective of their location to minimize physical contact due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Association of Speech-Language Pathologists (ASLP) immediately sought ways to be of help to its members by providing different resources.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this study were to investigate the effects of telepractice on service delivery when compared with face to face sessions while gathering feedback from both the clients and the professionals perspectives.

Method

Given that no local data was available, ASLP felt the need to carry out two surveys to explore the perspective of SLPs and clients about telepractice, as well as the benefits and challenges it presents. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected through the electronic dissemination of the surveys. Participants included 66 SLPs and 66 clients.

Results

98.5% of the client respondents received online therapy. The vast majority reported that online sessions were effective and, in most cases, telepractice had no effect on the quality of service provision. 90.9% of the SLP respondents engaged in telepractice. Effectiveness of intervention delivered online and advantages and disadvantages of telepractice varied across client groups.

Findings highlighted the ability to set new goals and discharge clients; professionals' confidence to work remotely across different age groups; the importance of reviewing codes of ethics and ensuring that telepractice is covered by ethical guidelines.

Conclusion

Telepractice in speech therapy can be a useful tool in combination with other delivery methods of therapy. Further research is required to study its effectiveness. There also exists the need for therapists to receive training to implement telepractice and make maximum use of it. This study hopes to improve the services provided through telepractice. Telepractice also provided an opportunity to target the quality of parental input.

Keywords

Telepractice, face-to-face sessions, effectiveness, challenges, parental input, accessibility



11TH ESLA CONGRESS OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY

26-28 MAY 2022 | SALZBURG-AUSTRIA

New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Effects of neuromuscular disease on ventilatory function

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Introduction

Neuromuscular Diseases (NMD) are a highly heterogeneous group of around 600 infrequent neurological disorders. These patients develop cardinal clinical characteristics as a loss of strength, fatigue, decreased functionality and upper airway dysfunctions.

Objectives

The objective of the study was to know whether ventilatory dysfunction is related to the degree of physical disrepair in neuromuscular patients.

Method

This study included patients with a diagnosis of NMD recruited through the Association of Neuromuscular Patients of Granada (ASEMGRA). The patients were divided into two groups based on their overall fitness level. Group 1 being the patients with the best physical condition and group 2 those with the worst overall physical condition. Muscle strength was evaluated using the hand dynamometer and ventilation capacity measured with the WinSpiro PRO spirometer.

Results

Significant results ($p < 0.05$) are found when comparing groups 1 and 2, in FVC% and FEV1%; when comparing groups 1 and 0, in MVV%, FVC%, FEV1% and PEF%; and finally when comparing group 2 and 0, the results are significant in all the mentioned variables and also in FET%.

Conclusion

Our results showed that a more deteriorated global physical state is related to a greater impairment of ventilatory capacity in patients with neuromuscular pathology. Both when we compare healthy subjects and subjects with neuromuscular pathology, and when comparing patients with neuromuscular pathology with a different physical state from each other. However, there is a greater degree of relationship between the deterioration of ventilatory function and global physical state when comparing neuromuscular patients and healthy subjects, than when comparing neuromuscular patients with each other.



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26-28 MAY 2022 | SALZBURG-AUSTRIA

New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Electronic Instrument for Phonological Awareness Screening and Assessment - results of a usability study

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Introduction: Phonological awareness is an explicit linguistic competence that assumes a crucial role in language development and in reading/spelling learning process (Alves, 2012). The project Phonological Awareness – instruments for clinical and educational intervention had as a main goal to make available a phonological awareness assessment tool, in electronic format, directed to Portuguese children between 3 and 9 years old. The advantages of using electronic tools are widely recognized, however, its effective use supposes satisfaction, effectiveness and efficiency, allowing, therefore, that these tools correspond to the needs of its users (Babo, 1996; ISO 9241- 11, 1998: 2).

Objectives: To evaluate the usability of e.ConF.IRA instrument: Screening and Evaluation Instrument in electronic format.

Methodology: The dissemination of a tool implies its social and practical acceptance. Practical acceptance includes aspects such as reliability and functionality, and functionality, aspects such as utility and usability. The research methods used to assess the usability of e.ConF.IRA were (i) observation and (ii) inquiry of a small group of users.

Results: Both research methods applied - observation and inquiry - contributed to the detection and resolution of problems related with the tool functionality, as well as to the improvement of the parameters recognized by Nielsen (1993, 1995) and by Smith and Mayes (1996) such as Easy to Learn, Easy to Use and User Satisfaction in Using the System.

Conclusions: The current version of e.ConF.IRA has benefited from the improvements made from the results of the usability evaluation. Next step will consist in a sampling study in order to submit this electronic version to its standardization.



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26-28 MAY 2022 | SALZBURG-AUSTRIA

New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Empirical research on the differences between the representations of parental figures of children with a stutter and children without a stutter

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Developmental stuttering is explored from within the object relational framework of Bion. Based principally on psychoanalytic case-studies of people with a stutter, an understanding emerges of stuttering as a problem associated with the containment of psychic experiences, leading to words being expressed in a fragmentary form. However, since people engaging in analysis typically have other underlying problems, it is necessary to find out whether there is support, or not, for this hypothesis in a non-clinical population. It is suggested that in the empirical research the quality of containment can be inferred principally by the participant's capacity, or not, to respond fully to the emotional issues implicit in a targeted projective task, and by the nature of the object relations portrayed. A story stem technique that stimulates participants to tell stories proves very useful in producing appropriate research data. The responses of the participants are analysed using an object relations scale and by using a thematic analysis. Differences are found between children with a stutter and children with no stutter. The children with a stutter have difficulties responding fully to the emotional issues implicit in the stems. There are also problems for the children with a stutter to differentiate between characters in their stories, and the responses of children with a stutter have scant dialogue. I argue that these results, along with defences such as agglomeration and the nature of the object relations portrayed in the responses of children with a stutter provide tentative support for the usefulness of Bion's concept of a containing relationship. Although the findings are based on a small sample, this project helps to consolidate a place for an account of stuttering from within an object relations perspective.



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26-28 MAY 2022 | SALZBURG-AUSTRIA

New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Employer's Attitudes Towards Stuttering In Malta

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A common finding of past research is that people who stutter (PWS) are stereotyped as being more guarded, nervous, self-conscious, tense, sensitive, hesitant, introverted, and insecure than people who do not stutter (Klassen, 2001)

The purpose of this study was to explore employers' attitudes towards stuttering in Malta. The study investigated their different attitudes according to different aspects of work experiences such as employability and promotion possibilities. Additionally, it explored whether employers perceive that people who stutter face limitations in their places of employment and whether employers from different fields hold different attitudes towards stuttering.

An online adaptation of the Employers' Attitudes Toward Stuttering Inventory (EATS) (Hurst & Cooper, 1983) consisting of seven attitudinal statements was completed by 90 employers. Respondents were required to indicate their strength-of-agreement to these seven attitudinal statements concerning stuttering. Furthermore, five participants were selected at random to participate in semi structured interviews which allowed them to further elaborate on issues.

Statistical analysis showed how employers in Malta are in agreement regarding all statements in the EATS inventory, showing positive attitudes towards stuttering overall. Significant differences were found between demographic variables of gender and number of people who stutter (PWS) employed as well as in the attitudes of employers from different fields with regards to stuttering interfering with job performance and stuttering decreasing an individual's employability.

Furthermore, thematic analysis revealed how the majority of employers interviewed were unaware of the causes of stuttering and also lacked knowledge regarding speech and language pathology. Regardless of their lack of knowledge, interview participants showed a positive attitude towards PWS attending speech therapy.

The overall positive attitudes of employers that have surfaced through this study may provide PWS with the encouragement and motivation to not feel limited in the world of employment due to their stuttering. This study also highlights the positive effects of the creation of more awareness and efforts to reduce the stigma and stereotyping of PWS.



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26-28 MAY 2022 | SALZBURG-AUSTRIA

New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Executive Function and Language Skills of Children with Speech Sound Disorders: Preliminary Results

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Background: Children with speech sound disorders (SSD) are one of the most important clinical populations for speech and language therapists. Although the population is considerably large, the reason behind the disorder is still not clear. The interventions for SSD are shaped to the needs of the children. In the light of the current literature, the methods to improve executive functions are among the intervention alternatives.

Aim/Objectives: The main aim of the study is to find out the executive function skills of the children with SSD. Also, the subcomponents of the executive function will be analyzed in terms of the correlation with the severity of SSD.

Methods: 15 Turkish-speaking children between 5;0 to 5;11 years old and with typical language development were the participants of the study. Their language development was confirmed with Türkçe Erken Dil Gelişimi Testi (TELD-4 th Ed.) and detailed language assessment was made with Türkçe Okul Çağı Dil Gelişimi Testi (TOLD:P-4). The phonological assessment was conducted with Turkish Articulation and Phonology Test (TAPT). Additionally, non-word repetition was used to measure short term memory capacity and Dimensional Change Card Sort Task for cognitive flexibility. Sustained attention, organization, planning, time management, independently starting a task and meta cognitive skills were scored with 0 and 1 observing their performance during the assessment procedure.

Results: The participants had lower scores on Picture-Vocabulary, Relational Vocabulary and Oral Vocabulary subtests of TODIL while they were pretty good at discriminating the phonemes in TAPT. Similarly, they got relatively higher scores on Sentence Imitation and Morphological Completion subtest. Their short term memory assessment was found to be seriously impaired whereas their cognitive flexibility got weaker as the task got more complex.

Since the study is in progress, further analysis (e.g., the relation between the severity of SSD and the executive function skills) will be presented at the conference.

Conclusions/take home message: It can be concluded that SSD was correlated with the vocabulary knowledge, short term memory and cognitive flexibility. Further conclusions will be stated and discussed with further analysis.

Key words: speech sound disorders (SSD), language, executive functions



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26-28 MAY 2022 | SALZBURG-AUSTRIA

New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Exploring the factors affecting speech and language therapists' decision to transition from oral to nonoral feeding in patients with dysphagia: A qualitative study

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Background: Considerations of speech and language therapists (SLTs) that assist in oral/non-oral feeding decisions in patients with dysphagia include bedside/clinical/instrumental assessment and patient anamnesis. Deciding to put a patient on a non-oral diet is stressful and challenging for SLTs.

Objectives: The aim of this study is to explore the factors affecting the decision of SLTs who have experience in making decisions about non-oral feeding.

Methods: Semi-structured qualitative interviews were administered to 9 SLTs working in different hospitals and with various case groups. Data were collected online and face-to-face. Field notes were taken and transcriptions were approved by the participants. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. A researcher outside the study coded a randomly selected interview transcription for trustworthiness. MAXQDA Software was used to encode the data.

Results: Seven themes (Factors Affecting Patients, Factors Affecting SLT, Evaluation, Communication with Other Experts, Decision Making, Patient Information, Therapeutic Process) were determined. Thirty-four sub-categories were created under the main themes. In the process of making a decision, SLTs detailed the critical evaluation of patients with dysphagia, the medical history of patients, and the follow-up process as well as positive and negative effects that occur in them. Quality of life and awareness of psychological effects in patients after non-oral decisions were noted. It was observed that the non-oral feeding decision can be modified over time. The follow-up period is also important.

Conclusions: Results of the study support that SLTs give weight to the factors affecting the patients in the transition from oral feeding to non-oral feeding decision. The importance of evaluation, factors affecting SLTs' communication with other experts are among the components that can affect this decision. The non-oral feeding decision of SLTs is made as a result of a multidimensional synthesis.

Keywords: dysphagia, non-oral feeding, decision-making, speech and language therapist



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26-28 MAY 2022 | SALZBURG-AUSTRIA

New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Expressive language skills and anxiety manifestation in children with ASD as a result of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown

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During the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bulgarian government introduced a full lockdown, the reason for closing of all schools and kindergartens in the country for 3 months in March 2020. Children in the whole country attended classes online for this period.

This unprecedented situation raised concerns about children's and adolescent's mental health, especially those with various disorders, such as children with ASD. The impact of the pandemic may be even stronger for individuals with autism, because ASD is associated with a heightened risk of mental health problems, including a higher likelihood of comorbid mental health disorders such as mood and anxiety disorders. Another important factor for children with ASD is their expressive language abilities that, we presumed, would be negatively affected by the situation.

The main objective of this research was to study the consequences and influence of the lockdown on the expressive language skills and anxiety manifestations due to the situation of social isolation (COVID-19) in children diagnosed with ASD.

Two standardized paper questionnaires - CBCL and FOCUS - were used to interview the parents of a group of 20 children, aged 4-6years, with ASD before and after the lockdown period to find out and analyze quantitatively any meaningful changes in expressive language skills and anxiety levels.

The results of the data analysis derived from questionnaire results showed a meaningful change in the expressive language skills of the children and decreased levels of anxiety, probably due to a change in routine and daily activities, as well as sharply decreased or missed visits to therapies and classes with specialists.

Key words: Autism Spectrum Disorders; Expressive Language; Anxiety; Covid-19



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Expressive vocabulary, early executive functions and social-conversational skills: a screening tool to identify late language emergence. Preliminary data

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The identifiers (vocabulary and word combination) of late language emergence (LLE) are debatedly reliable to identify toddlers with LLE. In this perspective, the scientific community is investigating the variables most associated with LLE.

We studied (i) differences between children with and without LLE in language development, early socio-conversational skills and executive functions. Additionally, we explored (ii) differences in these variables in toddlers with overall high vs low scores on the assessment. We recruited the parents of 45 Italian toddlers (mean age=27.5 months [18.03–35.91]). We administered the Italian MB-CDI Word and Sentences - short version. LLE is identified by an expressive vocabulary lower than the 10th centile from the age of 24 months (N=7) and/or absence of word combination after the age of 30 months (N=2). From MB-CDI, we extracted data for expressive vocabulary, sentences and morphosyntax scores. From the “Abilità Socio-Conversazionali del Bambino (ASCB)” we extracted child assertiveness and responsiveness scores. From the “Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function–Preschool Version (BRIEF-P)”, we calculated executive function scores (for the subsets inhibition, shift, emotional regulation, working memory and plan/organize).

We used the Kruskal-Wallis test for research question (i), and cluster analysis for (ii). We found toddlers with LLE had significantly lower scores on expressive vocabulary, on the amount of sentences pronounced and in the morphosyntax scores than those without LLE.

Cluster analysis identified two groups of toddlers with low and high overall scores (respectively N=20, N=25) which significantly differed on expressive vocabulary, responsiveness, and assertiveness.

Participants with and without LLE differed in language-related variables but not on socio-conversational skills and executive functions (in contrast with previous literature). We underline the need of further longitudinal studies on the early identification of language difficulties, including parent-child socio-emotional assessment.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Function words and the emergence of finiteness in DLD

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Research on early language development emphasizes a close correlation between lexicon size and the course of grammatical development (e.g. Bates & Goodman 1997). Therefore, children at risk or with attested language impairment typically receive vocabulary therapy. However, limits in the association between lexicon and grammar have been discussed as well (e.g. McGregor et al. 2005). It seems crucial, finding out which parts of the lexicon are especially affected when lexical development is delayed and what kind of difficulties are related to specific gaps in the lexicon.

We argue that especially the domain of function words requires such detailed investigation. By comparing longitudinal data of one German-learning child with DLD (age 2;0 to 3;11) and two normally developing children it can be shown that a) lexicons compared at points of equal size (estimated by lexicon size and MLU) differ in the proportion of some word classes. However, there is no deficit in the proportion of verbs in the child with DLD but in that of certain types of function words. The emergence of function words is the more delayed the more grammatical they are. Further, we will show that the data of the child with DLD confirm the correlation in the acquisition of auxiliaries and finiteness revealed in typical L1- and L2- acquisition of German and Dutch in Jordens (2012). The child with DLD lacks command of finite verbs and target sentence structure until auxiliary verbs are regularly used.

The data suggest that complete lack of function words at age 2;5 is highly predictive for DLD. Moreover, we conclude that delayed acquisition of auxiliaries is the main handicap in the acquisition of finiteness for children with DLD learning a language like German. The findings strongly suggest a tied combination of vocabulary therapy and targeted intervention in function word acquisition.

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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Impact of an orthographic training on spelling skills in three 6th-graders with a reading disability: a SCED trial

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Orthographic skill is defined as the “capacity to form, store and access orthographic representations” (Stanovich & West, 1989), whether they are lexical (i.e., whole-word representation of a lexical instance) or sublexical (i.e., graphotactic regularities applicable to a great number of words). Although far less studied than phonological or morphological training, orthographic sublexical training (OST) may be an interesting way to help children deal with phoneme-grapheme inconsistencies (Galuschka et al. 2020). For instance, in French, the ending /o/ may be spelled in eleven different ways not necessarily deducible from phonological or morphological analysis. Learning to spell these inconsistent words may be facilitated by knowing the frequency distribution of sublexical orthographic patterns and about graphotactic regularities, which could be taught through an OST (e.g., apocope words such as “vélo” [bicycle] for “vélocipede” always end with a simple “-o”). Our aim was to determine the relevance and feasibility of an OST program on spelling impaired children via a SCED trial. We recruited three sixth-graders (one female) aged from 10.9 to 11.5 with spelling disability and included them in a 5-week OST targeting the common and inconsistent /o/ ending in French. The OST improved correct spelling of the /o/ ending in unknown words for two of our three participants according to our dual criterion visual analyses. The Non-overlap of All Pairs was above .65 for all our participants, suggesting a moderate effect of the training program (Parker & Vannest, 2009). Since the OST did not prove effective for all of our three participants, we cannot infer the effectiveness of our program (Kratochwill et al., 2010). However, our OST appears both relevant and feasible for future research on the topic, which should feature a larger number of participants, as well as a prepost-test design to assess potential generalization.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Informational brochure for pediatric Dysphagia: Recommendations and Guidelines

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Introduction

This brochure has been produced in order to provide correct information on prevention and recovery from disability consequent to pediatric dysphagia.

Goals

Promoting information, guidance, prevention in pediatric dysphagia.

Materials and methods

Starting from data present in scientific literature and from the main national/international evidence-based recommendations, we continued with the development of an information brochure, which is made of six parts:

- Recommendations: Risk factor analysis related to a multidisciplinary approach and with the parent's involvement.
- Definition of infantile dysphagia: Dysphagia is the medical term defining the inability of solid food or liquids to easily pass from the mouth to the esophagus or stomach during swallowing.
- Causes: They are mainly observed in children with neurological disorders, genetic pathologies, malformation syndromes complemented or not by anatomical anomalies of the air-digestive tract, prematurity, low birth weight and diseases responsible for difficult coordination among Suction-Swallowing-Breathing.
- Signs and symptoms: Generic or related to a specific phase of the swallowing process (oral, pharyngeal, esophageal)
- Management of dysphagia: The management of this complex pathology initially requires a diagnostic framework (clinical and instrumental) followed by the planning and implementation of a specific therapeutic process (for example: nutrition and postures) shared by a multidisciplinary team.
Parental counseling accompanies the whole diagnostic-therapeutic process.
- Prevention of secondary complications to aspiration

To observe:

- any signs of aspiration, record breathing mode and frequency, saturation levels
- secondary outcomes to cognitive impairment
- the child's mouth at the end of the meal and oral hygiene management
- behavioral factors by reducing external sensory stimulation.

Results and conclusions

Studies that have been conducted on the pediatric dysphagia population, appear, generally, still insufficient. Currently in literature there seems to be an increase in primary studies which investigate the evidence relating to the different diagnostic-therapeutic approaches.

The international recommendations represent a further element in support of specificity of the speech therapist's professional role in this complex and discussed field of intervention.

TOPIC: rehabilitation area

Keywords: pediatric dysphagia, brochure



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26-28 MAY 2022 | SALZBURG-AUSTRIA

New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

ISi-Speech - digital speech training for Parkinson's disease

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Parkinson's disease (PD) is the second most common neurodegenerative disease in Europe [1]. To improve speech therapy care in PD, technology-based therapies can be useful. The aim of the poster is to introduce the AI-based individual speech assistant-system: ISi-Speech (Individualized Speech Recognition in Rehabilitation for People with Speech Intelligibility Impairments). The prototype has already been developed in 2018. The aim of the web-based training is to stabilize the user's own communication and to promote social participation. ISi-Speech combines evidence-based and best-clinical-practice exercises for the therapy of articulation, prosody, speech volume, speech rate, voice volume and respiration. The training program includes an adaptive motivation and feedback system and works with automatic speech recognition to receive objective feedback [2]. Methodologically, a strictly user-centered implementation approach is planned.

The implementation of ISi-Speech takes place within the framework of the Parkinson Complex Therapy (PCT), an established therapy-method for the intensive inpatient setting in Germany. The patients show symptoms of dysarthria and receive a therapy which combines regular PCT and the training with ISi-Speech for two weeks. After that follows an eight-week phase of self-structured training at home. The intervention is part of a public project of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Germany called humAine - human centered AI network. Expected Outcomes are the development of implementation strategies and best practice models for inpatient settings. High frequency therapy with new technologies can improve clinical outcomes such as speech intelligibility and quality of life. During the project a systematic competence occupation of all users and a simplification of the therapeutic workflow should be achieved. To permanently enter these technologies into standard care in Germany, the integration of AI is essential and should be forced.

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11TH ESLA CONGRESS OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY

26-28 MAY 2022 | SALZBURG-AUSTRIA

New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Language and communication deficits as early signs in ASD. A qualitative family-based approach

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Background: Language and communication deficits, together with limited interaction and social retraction come in the picture of the ASD as symptoms described by speech and language therapists.

Aim / Objectives: The purpose of this study was to investigate and analyze the observation made by the parents of children diagnosed with ASD concerning the early signs of language deficits.

Methods: A focus group with 8 parents of children with ASD was created to raise awareness on 2nd April 2021 and to discuss the impact of the ASD diagnosis on their families, the early signs observed by them, the difficulty they face in relation with the child's education and social integration. Two parents were leaders for various NGOs that support and fight for the rights of ASD children.

Results: The parents reported that language and communication deficits were between the early signs of ASD. Parents highlighted a significant deficit in targeting language milestones or the loss of language acquisition within the first year of their child's life. Lack of language development or poor language development turned out to be an important element for ASD diagnosis, most of the time, and mothers' experiences are detailed in order to better understand where and at what moment SLTs should be present as part of the intervention team in the ASD context. Parents reported that in the absence of behavior deficits, poorly structured language was the reason why they requested the child's assessment. Parents pointed out that speech therapy is extremely necessary as early as possible and, in fact, the lack of functional communication skills in children and young adults is the biggest problem they still have to face. Speech therapy is important to be implemented immediately after diagnosis, and parents unanimously stressed that the traditional form of speech therapy may not be sufficient in this clinical context. This means that new SLT approaches should be established in the ASD context and SLT should better promote them and find a way to early implement them, with functional communication as the target.

Conclusions: The study highlights the importance of evaluation of language and communication deficits as early signs of ASD and the need for adequate speech language therapy, both underlined by parents of children with ASD.



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26-28 MAY 2022 | SALZBURG-AUSTRIA

New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Language mixing in bilingual patients with aphasia: A study of the underlying mechanisms

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Background: Language Mixing (LM) occurs among neurotypical bilinguals as well as in bilingual patients with aphasia (BiPWAs) (Neumann et al., 2017; Goral et al., 2019; Lerman et al., 2019). There is no consensus on the exact underlying mechanisms of LM in BiPWAs, whether it stems from a linguistic impairment or from an impairment in cognitive control (Abutalebi et al., 2009).

Aims: The current study investigated LM in both languages of Russian-Hebrew BiPWAs and examined the relationship between LM and language skills, background factors and cognitive control.

Methods: LM frequency and LM pattern were analyzed in a group of twenty Russian-Hebrew speaking bilinguals with aphasia. Three picture-sequence descriptions and three personal stories were elicited in L1-Russian and L2-Hebrew. The participants completed background questionnaires and the Bilingual Aphasia Test (BAT) in both languages, and a battery of 10 cognitive tests.

Results: We observed quantitative and qualitative differences in LM patterns produced in L1 vs. L2. More LM was observed in L2-Hebrew, the weaker language after aphasia for most BiPWAs. In L2-Hebrew narratives, BiPWAs mainly inserted L1-Russian discourse markers and L1-Russian function words; while in L1-Russian narratives, BiPWAs mainly inserted L2-Hebrew nouns. Language proficiency predicted LM in both languages, such that more LM was observed in the less proficient patients. Cognitive control measures were not significantly associated with LM.

Conclusions: BiPWAs produce words in the non-target language to compensate for lexical access difficulties, and to increase efficiency of communication and enhance speech fluency. Thus, speech therapists may encourage the use of LM by BiPWAs, as a strategy to improve communication with bilingual interlocutors. The findings show that LM is related to language skills rather than to cognitive control impairment in BiPWAs. Treatment directed at reducing LM should be targeted to the weaker language, where LM is more prevalent.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Manifestations and Therapy in Dysphagia Following Stroke: Action Study Using the Example of Three Patients

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The aim of the study was to describe the manifestation of dysphagia in three patients following stroke, to develop and implement intervention plans and to evaluate the effectiveness of the performed swallowing therapy.

The sample included three adult patients with stroke-induced dysphagia. During the intervention, patients underwent a thorough clinical and, if possible, instrumental evaluation of their swallowing function. Based on the evaluation results and the scientific literature, a therapy plan was developed for the patients, which was adjusted during the process according to the recovery dynamics of the swallowing function.

At the end of the therapy cycle, the effectiveness of the intervention performed was evaluated. In addition, other members of the treatment team and the patient's relatives were counseled during the therapy. The results confirmed that both the onset of dysphagia and the restoration of swallowing function are affected by the location of the lesion in the brain. The approach chosen to restore swallowing function and to achieve a safe and effective diet depends on the mechanism of the swallowing disorder and its severity.

The step-by-step approach of patients with dysphagia presented in the study provides an overview of swallowing therapy as a whole, describing the therapy techniques selected based on the mechanism of the disorder and their evidence-based approach, as well as therapy evaluation and swallowing counseling. The practical instructional materials in the appendices are intended to support speech therapists and students in their systematic work with patients with swallowing disorders.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Oral stereognosis in children with functional speech sound disorders – a comparative study of two groups of children at the age of 4 to 6 years

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Background: Oral stereognosis has an essential role in speech sound development and in language acquisition in children. Some speech sound disorders can be related to disabilities in oral sensory perception.

Objective: The specific objective is that there might be a difference in oral stereognosis between children with speech sound disorders and children with normal speech sound development in oral stereognosis recognition time and recognition errors. Group 1 (n=64) included children with a diagnosis of speech sound disorder like types of phonological delay (19 children), phonological consistent deviant processes (22 children), phonological inconsistent deviant processes (3 children), articulation disorders (38 children) and the diagnosis of orofacial dysfunction (40 children). Combined diagnosis were allowed in Group 1. Group 2 (n= 42) included children without any speech sound disorder or orofacial dysfunction.

The aim was to compare the measurement results of stereognosis recognition time of nine stereognosis forms in the oral cavity without visual control and the examination of the error rate in Group 1 and Group 2.

Method: The investigation took standardized diagnosis of speech sound disorders (APP, Ausspracheprüfung für die Praxis, Brunner 2016) and diagnosis of oral stereognosis and the evaluation of the core symptoms of orofacial dysfunction (Bigenzahn 2003, Claussnitzer 2001). The sequence of diagnosis as well as the presentation of the oral stereognosis forms had a predetermined order.

Results: A probability of less than 0.05 was accepted. The children in Group 1 had significantly more errors in recognition of stereognosis forms and needed more recognition time than children in Group 2.

Conclusion: Children with normal speech sound development were clearly better in oral stereognosis than children with speech sound disorders. The question after developing oral sensory perception should be an obligatory part of case history. There should be more awareness that the treatment of oral sensory deficits might be necessary in speech therapy. The linguistic finding is descriptive and gives less information about requirements for treatment.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Phonological improvement in children with speech sound disorders: a cross-language perspective

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Background: Research findings support the robustness of targeted and systematic phonological therapy in bringing phonological wide-system gains in children with speech sound disorders. The implementation and experimental manipulation of therapy stimuli vis-à-vis theoretical models of lexical organization for the optimum triggers for phonological improvement across language sub-systems and across communication contexts thus informing evidence-based practice. Nonetheless, cross-linguistic implementation of theory motivated therapy remains underexplored mainly due to limited resources and information transfer from research to practice.

Objective: The purpose of the current study was to examine the impact of phonologically dense word stimuli as triggers in promoting speech intelligibility in children with SSD. Furthermore, the study aspired to underscore theory motivated therapy as it informs evidence-based practice and with research data translating into clinical settings.

Method: A research design of multiple baselines across participants was used concurrently across three participants ages 3;6-4;0 years. All subjects received systematic phonological intervention over a period of three months during a series of bi-weekly, forty-five minute experimental sessions. Participants entered the baseline phase in a staggered fashion. Phonological measures were extracted from a 50-word probe list with stimuli depicted on pictures. Dependent variables included phonetic inventory size, proportion of consonants correct, and percentages of phonological process occurrence. Therapy Word stimuli consisted of phonologically dense targets in the form of word clusters implemented and constructed for each participant according to stimulability skills.

Results: Significant phonological gains were observed across all measures and across all participants. Visual inspection traces relative to phonological gains were complemented by large effect size ranging from 7.4-12.5. Phonological gains were maintained at the follow-up session conducted two months after treatment.

Conclusions: Implementing phonological similarity/density targets and word-level properties on the bases of theory-motivated frameworks inform evidence-based practice and provide the springboard for advancing testable hypotheses for inducing phonological gains cross-linguistically.

Key words: Lexical models, speech sound disorders, phonologically dense words, evidence-based practice.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Phonological processes in 4-5 year old children – a preliminary study

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Phonology is part of the language system, which children master in the process of mastering the native language. Phonological development is a long process that takes individual time to fully master and consolidate the native language. During the process of mastering the sound system in their mother language, children make a variety of mistakes related to classes of speech sounds, rather than a particular phoneme. The present preliminary study presents data from a study of phonology and phonological processes in children aged four to five years old, in which the process of mastering phonology should have already been completed. For this purpose, a phonology test was created, which assesses the phonological levels at two different stages: subtest one - naming a noun by a picture and subtest two - generating their own sentence by a picture. The aim of the research was to study the processes that are not mastered in children of this age and to make a comparison with children who have already been diagnosed with a language disorder. From the analyzed data, various phonological processes were observed such as substitution, elision, metathesis, assimilation, harmonization of vocals, reduction of syllables, simplification of accumulated consonants, which are extremely common in the production of children from the control group. The results of this study show that the task of naming a word provides sufficient and representative information to assess the child's phonology. The data obtained from the subtest two gave us information that is extremely useful for the average length of speech and intelligibility of speech, as well as other aspects of language and the language system.

Key words: assessment, phonology, speech-language development



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Phonology assessment - comparison between the main protocols used in Brazil

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Phonology assessment is a fundamental step in the perception of the infant's speech characteristics. Knowing how the phonological system is organized is essential for tracing therapy goals and objectives. In Brazil there are two main protocols used in the assessment of phonology, so the aim of the study was to verify the similarities as well as the differences between the two most used protocols in Brazil - the Child Phonological Assessment (CPA) (Yavas, 1991) and ABFW (Wertzner, 2000). The project was approved by the Ethics and Research Committee of the institution. The speech of 10 subjects, aged between 5 and 7 years, hearing within the normal range and with a diagnosis of phonological disorder was analyzed. All subjects were evaluated with both protocols. The results obtained were compared regarding absent sounds, syllabic structures and Percentage of Consonants Correct (PCC) in each of the applied protocols. The results were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Analysis of the results showed that only one subject had the same number of phonemes/syllabic structures absent in both protocols. Eight subjects presented a much larger number of absent phonemes/syllabic structures when evaluated by the CPA. The biggest difference was observed in the absence of syllabic structures from the complex onset. When comparing the severity of the phonological disorder, it was observed that 60% of the sample presented discordant results between the protocols. It is concluded that it is necessary that more studies are done and that the speech therapist, when faced with a case of more severe phonological disorder, with many omissions, both of phonemes and syllabic structures, makes a thorough assessment; a more detailed speech sample to better identify the infant's phonological system and thus provide therapy more directed to the real difficulties of the child.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Placebo techniques for voice therapy research: teaching students without dysphonia.

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Numerous studies have investigated the effect of one or more therapy techniques in the behavioral treatment of voice disorders. However, most of these studies lack control groups, especially control groups undergoing placebo/sham intervention. To our knowledge, there are no behavioral voice therapy techniques / methods that have been assumed or proven to be ineffective with respect to voice and voice physiology yet are credible voice therapy approaches, so they can be used as ineffective control or sham techniques. The present study therefore examined three techniques that were believed to be valid in the eyes of participants but ineffective clinically and therefore ineffective in changing voice physiology. Based on this exploratory randomized controlled trial with normophonic teaching students, it can be concluded that these three techniques may have the potential of being useful methods for placebo voice therapy.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Reading Intervention RCT study for children with Developmental Language Disorders

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Objectives: In a recent study we reported that 82 % of 61 Swedish children with developmental language disorder (DLD) attending school language units had poor word-nonword decoding skills. In this project we are investigating the effects of an intensive reading intervention for children with DLD in school language units.

Methods: This is an RCT study in which the pre- and posttests are blinded to group category. The intervention is a computer game based on the phonics method, focusing on grapheme-phoneme correspondence. All participants have DLD (6-11 years) and are randomized, based on participants' school year and sex, into three groups with at least 20 individuals in each group: a reading intervention group, a control group playing a computer math game with the same number of sessions and duration per session as the reading intervention group, and a second control group attending school as usual. The main outcome measures are reading of words-nonwords, and words from the reading intervention game. Parents are interviewed about family aggregation of language and reading related diagnoses and problems, and the parents are tested on language and reading tasks. We collect information from the schools about the quality and quantity of the formal reading instructions in the schools.

Results: We are currently collecting the first round of post intervention data.

Conclusions / take home message: Too early to make any conclusions since we don't have the data to analyze, yet.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Rehabilitation of Aphasia: proposal of a multidisciplinary evaluation/rehabilitation protocol based on mirror neuron stimulation

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Introduction

Starting from neurophysiological aspects of mirror neurons applied to a subject diagnosed with ischemic stroke, the evaluation protocol and the methods of intervention implemented are described, and finally the data obtained from the initial and post-treatment evaluations are illustrated.

Goals

Considering that action observation leads to MNS activation, some researchers have adopted action observation treatment (AOT) or MNS activation therapy to accelerate motor recovery in post-stroke patients. The main purpose was to evaluate the effectiveness of a therapy based on the observation and reproduction of gestures, for an improvement of semantic-lexical access in a patient with non-fluent aphasia.

Materials and methods

The study involved a 56-year-old male patient, diagnosed with ischemic stroke in the fronto-temporo-parietal area of the left hemisphere, right hemiparesis and medium-grade aphasia. A specific rehabilitation protocol, a clinical anamnestic evaluation, a neuropsychological and speech therapy evaluation before and after therapy and neuropsychological treatment were performed. The treatment was structured in four steps and included input and output exercises. Each step presupposed, for the passage to the next one, the achievement of specific goals.

Results and conclusions

The rehabilitation training adopted has produced considerable results, attributing to reduction of semantic/lexical errors, in the generalization of positive effects of therapy, even to untreated items, and in the improvement of selective visual attention. In order to confirm or refute the solution offered by the research it will be necessary:

- submit a larger sample of subjects to the proposed program which allows an investigation capable of reaching conclusions of more truthfulness;
- carry out a pre and post treatment evaluation of the activation levels of the stimulated areas through neuroimaging studies, to evaluate the significant differences.

A comparison of the results achieved with the results gathered from exposure to traditional therapeutic treatment is useful in terms of confirming treatment efficiency provided by Mirror Therapy.

Topic: rehabilitation area

Keywords: mirror neuron system; aphasia



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Romanian Speech and Language Therapy Practice During the First Year of Pandemic

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Background: The COVID-19 pandemic has brought major changes in the field of speech and language therapy around the world.

Aim / Objectives: The purpose of this study is to present Romanian speech and language therapists' (SLT's) practice and perception about online therapy during the first year of pandemic (March 2020-March 2021).

Methods: A complex survey was elaborated using Google Forms and a number of 170 SLTs (160 females and 10 male) from public schools and the private sector in Romania answered this survey in March 2021.

Results: Communication efficiency in online therapy was identified in different areas and diagnosis and a combination of online and onsite therapy was preferred (22% used face -to face sessions, 8%- online session, 70% both online and face to face). The most popular platforms used for online therapy were Zoom (26%), Google Meet (25%), Google Classroom (24%), Skype (9%), Cisco Webex Meetings (6%), Teams (6%) Other platforms were 8 X 8, Adservio, Edus, ItsLearning, Kinderpedia, FB Messenger, WhatsApp, VoxiKids (1%-cumulative percent). Participants used technology in SLT daily sessions (98%), weekly sessions (1%), no use (1%). The preferred tools for content development were WordWall (63%), Google Forms (4%), Padlet (4%). The daily screen time was less than 1 h (4%), 1-2 h (8%), 2-4h (32%), 4-6h (35%), 6-8h (14%), more than 8h (7%).

Conclusions: The study highlights the difficulties specialists faced working online and possible solutions to solve them: to include digital training courses in initial training and lifelong training courses for SLTs, to include digital courses for students starting with the first grade in primary school and to encourage the collaboration between SLTs and specialists in the field of information and communications technology (ICT), in order to develop new digital opened resources.

Keywords: online therapy, platforms, SLT practice, pandemic period



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Social-communicative skills and language development at 18 months: differences in the Covid-19 pandemic

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Infants' joint attention (JA) capacities are related to language acquisition. Difficulties with JA are considered as clinical markers of social communication deficits (e.g. ASD). Typical interactions with people and exploration of objects and contexts promote practicing JA skills and vocabulary growth. However, restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in changes of exposure to social and environmental stimuli.

Our goal was to investigate whether JA abilities and language development were affected by the societal changes during the pandemic, which might shift both domains towards lower achievement.

We examined JA and language skills in a typically developing “pre-pandemic group” (n=51) and the “Covid-19 group” reared for at least 6 months during the pandemic (n=57). Firstborn, 18-month-old infants were assessed with the Early Social Communication Scale task and the Language Scales of the Bayley-III administered in the laboratory. Parents also filled out the MacArthur-Bates CDI Words & Gestures form.

Significantly less initiation of JA was detected through eye-contact ($d=0.33$) and gaze alternation ($d=0.77$) in the Covid-19 group compared to the pre-pandemic group. No significant differences were found in initiations by pointing, following the experimenter's pointing, the Bayley-III Language Composite score, and the CDI expressive vocabulary and gestures scores. The Covid-19 group achieved higher scores in the CDI receptive vocabulary and in measures of responses to JA initiations. Expected correlations among JA and language variables were proved in the pre-pandemic group only.

18-month-old children reared during the pandemic exhibited fewer JA initiations related to eye contact but showed typical vocabulary development. Early growth in language and gestural communication might be maintained by familial interactions, while infants' capacity to engage in JA with unfamiliar persons might have been hindered by the reduced diversity of environmental stimuli. This pattern observed in otherwise typically developing children should be taken into account as a reference in clinical assessments of JA.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Speech and Language Characteristics of Turkish Speaking Patients with Alzheimer's Disease

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Introduction: Alzheimer's Disease (AD) is a progressive disease that results from the destruction of brain cells. It is a neurodegenerative disease usually characterized by decreased cognitive functions. According to DSM-V, the conditions for the diagnosis of AD's disease are mixed attention dysfunction, executive function impairment, learning and memory impairment, language impairment, perception disorder, and deterioration in social cognition. Language disorders are seen in these patients because of cortical structure damage.

Aim: In this study, we aimed to determine speech and language abilities of patients with AD. For this study, an evaluation will be made with 30 cases diagnosed with Alzheimer's living in Istanbul. As of today, we have evaluated 9 patients with AD.

Methods: To assess speech and language characteristics of patients with AD, Aphasia Language Assessment Test and the Montreal Cognitive Assessment Scale were used. We have assessed nine out of 30 patients so far. They were aged between 56 and 93.

Results: This study is the first step for our upcoming studies which will aim to support speech and language skills of patients with AD. It is an ongoing study.

Keywords: Alzheimer's disease, language, speech, therapy.

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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Speech and language telepractice in Slovenia: where are we now?

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Background

In March 2020, due to COVID-19 pandemic, the government in Slovenia declared a complete lockdown which lasted until 18th of May 2020. Except for hospitals, other health facilities operated on a very reduced scale. Most therapists had to quickly find other ways to keep in touch with patients and to continue with therapy work. Telerehabilitation started, and Slovenian speech and language therapists struggled with new approaches, never known before.

Aim

After almost 2 years from the beginning of telerehabilitation service delivery in Slovenia, we wanted to see where we are now that the lockdown is over. Our main question was, if Slovenian speech and language therapists still use telepractice, how often and in which field of speech and language disorders it is used nowadays.

Methods

This study surveyed speech and language pathologists in Slovenia about the use of telepractice. We used an adapted version of the 2016 SIG 18 telepractice survey (ASHA). The survey was online, and a link was sent to 170 speech and language pathologists in Slovenia to respond.

Results

Sixty-five (N=65) speech and language pathologists responded to a questionnaire, with 10% reporting their use of telepractice to deliver clinical services after the end of lockdown. Telepractice is used for a wide range of speech and language disorders, most commonly articulation and language disorders. Speech and language pathologists also report privacy and security issues.

Conclusions

To use telepractice widely, there is still a lot of work to do. In Slovenia, we need improved infrastructure – mostly to provide privacy in security. For professionals we need training for telepractice use and some sort of guidelines for client selection. For further deployment, Slovenian speech and language telepractice will require help from the government, which will provide an appropriate policy for service delivery of that kind.

Keywords

Speech and language pathology, Telepractice, Slovenia, Technology



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Speech and Language Therapy Students' Self-Efficacy and Attitudes Towards Cluttering

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Background: Cluttering is a fluency disorder characterized by a rate that is perceived to be abnormally rapid, irregular, or both for the speaker. These rate abnormalities further are manifest in one or more of the following symptoms: (a) an excessive number of disfluencies, the majority of which are not typical of people who stutter; (b) the frequent placement of pauses and use of prosodic patterns that do not conform to syntactic and semantic constraints; and (c) inappropriate (usually excessive) degrees of coarticulation among sounds, especially in multisyllabic words. (1). When the literature was examined, it was seen that there was no study on the attitudes and self-efficacy of speech and language therapy students about cluttering. With the help of this study, it is thought to contribute in describing the nature of cluttering and examine speech and language therapy students' self-efficacy and attitudes.

Purpose: In this study, we aim to determine the language and speech therapy department students' self-efficacy and attitudes towards cluttering.

Method: A 40-item questionnaire will be administered to speech language therapists via Google Forms or face-to-face interactions.

Result: As a result of this study, it is thought to give perspective on cluttering for future studies regarding attitudes and self-efficacy. This is an ongoing study.

KEY WORD : speech and language therapy, cluttering, self-sufficiency, survey.

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11TH ESLA CONGRESS OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY

26-28 MAY 2022 | SALZBURG-AUSTRIA

New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Speech assessment in multilingual children: What do French-speaking SLTs think?

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Background

As cultural and linguistic diversity is increasing among children and families, SLTs encounter new challenges in their practice. One of the challenges is to assess the speech of multilingual children. The scientific literature provides recommendations for improving professional practices.

Objectives

This study aims to examine French-speaking SLTs' practices and perspectives in assessing the speech of multilingual children.

Methods

An online survey was completed by 120 French-speaking SLTs from four countries: Belgium (n = 90, 75.0%), Canada (n = 15, 12.5%), France (n = 12, 10.0%), and Luxembourg (n = 3, 2.5%). The questions addressed demographic information, assessment practices, and perspectives regarding multilingualism.

Results

Among the SLTs, 39.2% could use a language(s) other than French. There was little overlap between the languages spoken by the SLTs and the children in their caseloads. Almost all of the SLTs (91.5%) used a norm-referenced approach with French standardized tests and norms. Adaptations or tools to assess multilingual speech (e.g., analyze speech sample, use a criterion-referenced approach, assess stimulability, assess speech or intelligibility in the home language) weren't widely used or were even unknown. More than three quarters of SLTs (79.2%) indicated that their initial training didn't adequately prepare them to work with multilingual children, and that they (75.5%) lacked assessment tools. More than half of SLTs (57.7%) weren't confident to discriminate between speech difference and disorder. SLTs reported some evidence-based beliefs about multilingual development and speech sound disorders.

Conclusions

French-speaking SLTs encounter challenges in assessing the speech of multilingual children. The results are coherent with findings in other countries. SLTs' beliefs and knowledge regarding multilingualism are in line with the scientific literature. However, assessment practices are still far from the recommendations. Initial and continuing education should focus on access to appropriate tools and approaches for assessing the speech of multilingual children.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Teleassessment of Arabic-speaking children with and without Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) during COVID-19: Challenges and Opportunities

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Background: The COVID-19 pandemic has caused and is still causing unprecedented disruptions to healthcare worldwide, including service delivery to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), requiring alternative service provision. There is limited research on the use of teleassessment and teletherapy among children with ASD (e.g., Gibbs et al., 2021; Krach et al., 2020).

Aims: The study aimed to investigate the potential utility and efficacy of teleassessment among children with ASD by evaluating the effect of testing mode (teleassessment vs. Face-to-Face) on language performance in children with typical language development (TLD) and ASD.

Methodology: A total of 76 Palestinian-Arabic-speaking children participated: 38 with ASD (Mage=8.43, SD=1.58) and 38 TLD (Mage=8.40, SD=1.49) were split randomly across the two testing modes (teleassessment, delivered via Zoom, and Face-to-Face). The 4 subgroups were matched for age, SES, and non-verbal IQ. The ASD subgroups were matched for the severity of ASD, as indexed by ADOS-2 scores (Lord et al., 2012). In addition, individual language profiles were considered in the ASD group: ASD with intact structural language skills (ASD+NL) and ASD with a comorbid language impairment (ASD+LI). All the children were administered four language tasks (based on the LACA battery, Schaeffer et al., 2020) tapping into different domains of language: phonology, morpho-syntax, lexicon, and pragmatics.

Results and Clinical Implications: Across all the language tasks, no differences were observed between the two assessment modes for children with TLD. Individual differences were noted in the performances of the children with ASD across the teleassessment and Face-to-Face modes but there were no differences between the modes, when the individual profiles (ASD+LI and ASD+NL) were taken into consideration. Our preliminary findings show that teleassessment might be a useful primary or adjunct service model for children with ASD to assess their language skills across different language domains.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Telepractice in paediatric dysphagia rehabilitation. Case study: The history of G.

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Background

This pandemic of SARS-CoV-2 has challenged and limited clinical care of children with severe dysphagia. The use of telepractice gave an enormous potential for speech-language pathologists (SLPs).

Aim / Objective

The first aim was to critically review literature on the treatment via telepractice on children with dysphagia (1). The second aim was to present a case study of telepractice (2).

Methods

1) We searched the MEDLINE, PUBMED, EMBASE, Google Scholar, Google Search and the grey literature until August 2021 for publications written in English which resulted in 559 records. Abstract screening and data extraction was carried out independently by two reviewers. 36 papers were selected to read in full, and the methodological quality of the studies included was evaluated using Downs and Black checklist.

2) We describe the case of a 1 yr old child diagnosed with arthrogyriposis, hypotonia, feeding and swallowing difficulties, PFO, SGA, micropolygyria and left clubfoot under investigation. SLT treatment started in September 2019 and from March to May 2020 the treatment was carried out using telepractice.

Results

1) The results of the systematic review found one case study of swallowing treatment via telepractice in children with dysphagia.

2) This is the first case of swallowing treatment via telepractice in a 1 yr old child. The treatment via telepractice showed successful results, increasing the feeding modality. The results of the thematic analysis of parents' feedback revealed five themes: resources, effectiveness, accessibility, safety and security and emotional level.

Conclusions / take home message

Although the systematic review showed no studies, the telepractice approach was fundamental in increasing the feeding modality in this case study, overcoming the limitation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords

Children, swallowing, dysphagia, telepractice, rehabilitation, systematic review



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Teletherapy as practice - regional challenges

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The American Telemedicine Association (ATA) defines telerehabilitation as "the provision of rehabilitation services through information and communication technologies." Telerehabilitation "includes a range of rehabilitation and habilitation services that include assessment, monitoring, prevention, intervention, supervision, education, counseling, and counseling."

Subject - Teletherapy as a way of rehabilitation in the conditions of the Covid pandemic

Objective - Examining the attitudes, experiences and challenges of professionals involved in pandemic rehabilitation circumstances

Methodology - The research was conducted in the period January - February 2021 in the form of an online survey questionnaire which contained a total of 20 research areas divided into categories:

demographic characteristics of the professional profile involved in teletherapy

experiences in teletherapy

attitudes about teletherapy

challenges in teletherapy

87 health workers and associates, speech therapists, special educators and psychologists were included, from the health, education and social institutions sectors.

Results and discussion - Some results from the conducted research emphasized that experts mostly believed that telepractice is the best way to apply in emergencies, but its effectiveness can be expressed only if it is carried out in combination with work with physical contact and it requires education on the use of IT, family readiness, and more tools for the work of rehabilitators online. For quality and successful rehabilitation treatment, it is necessary to have organized training, including professionals and parents, in order to have effective treatment through an appropriate platform.

Conclusion - For a quality rehabilitation process according to the model of teletherapy, ie telepractice, it is necessary that the client has the appropriate attention and adequate mental status, technical readiness to provide uninterrupted internet with good quality, as well as minimal education of experts.

Key words: telerehabilitation, speech therapist, special educator, psychologist



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

The Activity of the Speech Therapist during Covid-19: Knowledge Survey

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Introduction

The restrictive and isolation measures issued by our government to fight and contain the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus have had a strong impact on the way the speech therapist works. The Speech Therapist Association commission of the Interprovincial Order of NA-AV-BN-CE conducted an anonymous survey on specific work outcomes.

Goals

The study aimed to evaluate how and in what way the preventive measures have influenced professional activities and work-related discomfort.

Methods

A questionnaire was structured with the aims to investigate, anonymously, different areas of professional interest (treatment methods, management of work-related stress, changes in human relationships, specific needs), disseminated through the Google platform and available from 15/06/2020 for all speech therapists belonging to our Association.

Results

161 speech therapists, between 21 and 60 years old, who carried out work activities mainly in tele-rehabilitation (73.3%) and in the outpatient setting (77%), equipped with PPE suitable for treatment, took part in the survey.

From the research have emerged:

low / medium level of frustration and work-related stress for tele-rehabilitation treatments;

high level of frustration and work-related stress for outpatient or home treatment;

medium / high values of anxiety, worries and work-related discomfort, favored by social isolation and a perception of less support among work colleagues;

need for support from specialized figures for the management of the emotional load (90%).

Conclusions

The results suggest a medium / high level of work-related discomfort, more evident for speech therapists who performed outpatient / home activities during the pandemic period, implying the risk of developing psychological symptoms. Further research should be undertaken, with multicentre studies and with a greater sample size, to define the relationships between the working methods promoted, the stress-related work and the management needs of the same.

TOPIC: Covid19 experience

Keywords: Covid19; survey.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

The adaptation and standardisation of the Pyramid and Palm Trees Test on the Maltese population

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Background: The Pyramid and Palm Trees (PPT) test is a formal assessment that assesses verbal and non-verbal semantic memory. Semantic memory is dependent on culture. Thus, semantic memory tests, including the PPT test, require normative data prior to use with a named population.

Aim: This research project aimed to culturally adapt the PPT test for the Maltese population and obtain normative data on the named population. The objective was to identify whether the demographic variables age, education and gender affected performance on the adapted PPT.

Methods and Procedures: Ten native Maltese professionals within the healthcare system were recruited to culturally adapt the PPT test. Normative data was collected from Maltese adults and elderly persons, aged above 50 years (N = 59; range of age = 50-94). The recruited participants had no history of neurological diseases, psychiatric disorders or cognitive impairments. The participants were tested with either the picture or the written-word version.

Results: There was a significant difference between age and education with the scores obtained from the picture version. However, there was not a significant difference between age and education and the scores obtained from the written-word version. Gender had no significant difference in either version.

Conclusion and Implications: Age and education are significant predictors of performance on the picture version of the PPT test. Further research is required to determine if this assessment is sensitive to mild semantic memory impairment.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

The Early History of Stuttering and Bilingualism Knowledge

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Background: The relationship between stuttering as a fluency disorder and bilingualism is an interesting and current topic. Two centuries ago there was already some interest in specialized literature. Now more and more studies are being published dealing with stuttering and bilingualism.

The purpose of the present paper is to document the early history of stuttering and bilingualism as part of Speech and Language Pathology (SLP). New aspects are clinically oriented because they investigate aspects of assessment and treatment of stuttering in bilingual persons.

Method: The data were collected from early publications on stuttering disorder. A number of articles, books and professional websites on the history of SLP in general and treatment of stuttering in particular were considered.

Results: The authors studied reported data from the Modern (1500-1945) period. Authors' works in the study reporting on stuttering and bilingualism include Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), Joseph Frank (1771-1842), Jean Marc Gaspard Itard (1775-1838), J. Dieffenbach (1792-1847), Mark Colombat de L'Isere (1797-1851), Ivan Sikorski (1842-1919), Alfred Becquerel (1814-1862), Ludwig Quidde (1858-1941), H. Guzman (1865-1922), and George Lewis (1870-1915).

Conclusion: The discussion on the topic above covered 3 parts: equal stuttering in different languages, bilingualism as the cause of stuttering and treatment of stuttering in bilinguals from a historic point of view. It is still not clear why some bilinguals who stutter are disfluent only in one language or stutter less in one language than another. Various hypotheses have been put forward in the Modern period writings.

There is no doubt that the new frontiers and perspectives in modern research-based stuttering therapy are going back to the historical roots of stuttering and bilingualism knowledge.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

The Effect of Homework on Statistical Grammar Learning: Is More Always Better?

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Background: The Statistical Language Learning paradigm suggests that humans can learn morpho-syntactical elements following brief exposure by implicitly extracting statistical regularities in a language. This has been applied in intervention for language impairments in children, but it is still not clear how dosage will affect the outcome. In a previous study investigating short term dosage distribution, we found that massed exposure resulted in increased initial learning, but distributed exposure yielded similar overall outcome.

Aim: The aim of the present experiment is to assess the effect of varying dosage to see if increased dose frequency delivered as homework facilitates learning of morpho-syntactical elements in an unfamiliar natural language.

Methods: Sixty graduate students are currently participating in the study. They are exposed to Russian nouns with gender marking suffixes in the laboratory on three separate days over one week. They were randomly assigned to one of the following conditions: 'no homework', 'grammar homework' or 'placebo homework'. The homework involves listening to a two-minute-long soundtrack. Participants are tested on new items (i.e., generalization items) on the final day of the experiment.

Results: Data collection is incomplete. However, preliminary data suggests that the participants overall accepted more grammatical correct items ($M = 8$, well above chance level) than ungrammatical items ($M = 5$), thus learning has occurred in all groups. Participants in the placebo group have the largest discrepancy between acceptancy of grammatical ($M = 8.20$) and ungrammatical ($M = 4.70$) items, and the smallest difference is seen for the 'grammar homework group'.

Conclusion: The participants were able to learn morpho-syntactical elements following brief exposure to an unknown language. Involving homework between the lab sessions seems to facilitate learning. The nature of the homework and practical implications of the results will be discussed.

Keywords: Statistical language learning, generalization, natural language, homework, dosage



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

The epidemiology of swallowing disorders in people with schizophrenia: a systematic review

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Background: Dysphagia is recognised as a complication in mental health disorders (MHD) such as schizophrenia. In the EU, the estimated incidence of schizophrenia is 15.2 per 100 000 persons. Dysphagia is reported in people with schizophrenia (PWS).

Aims: This systematic review (SR) aims to examine the prevalence of dysphagia in PWS, the associated dysphagia characteristics, and the risk factors for developing dysphagia.

Methods: A study protocol (CRD42021256549) was registered in PROSPERO. Included studies were those with participants with schizophrenia diagnosis with no other medical condition that could cause dysphagia. No language or date limitations were applied. Letters to editors, expert opinion, abstracts and literature reviews were excluded. Six electronic databases were searched (PubMed via Medline, CINAHL Complete, Web of Science, Embase, Cochrane Library, Open Gray). PRISMA guidelines for SRs were followed. Quality assessment using relevant JBI epidemiology checklists was completed.

Results: 491 studies were retrieved with 14 studies meeting inclusion criteria. 74 participants were included. Only 2 participants were diagnosed according to DSM-IV-TR. Age range was 18 to 76 years (mean= 54.5, SD: ±14.5) with 12 females (16%). Meta-analysis was not possible due to heterogeneity of studies, many were case reports. Just 2 studies examined prevalence of dysphagia in PWS. Dysphagia was common in studies on pharmacological interventions. The most prevalent type of dysphagia was oropharyngeal dysphagia while oesophageal dysmotility was described in non-pharmacological intervention studies. Narrative synthesis of evidence was used. Overall methodological quality of included studies was graded as low. Risk factors for dysphagia included neuroleptic medication, specifically risperidone. Movement disorders were a further significant risk factor.

Conclusions: Oropharyngeal dysphagia is associated with schizophrenia although few prevalence studies exist. Two key risk factors are identified. Impact of medication on swallowing is significant. Directions for research and clinical practice are provided.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

The formulation and evaluation of the discharge policy of the Speech-Language Department, Malta

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Background

A policy on discharge to guide Speech and Language pathologists practicing within the National Health Service was formulated and evaluated.

Aim / Objectives

The objective of the study was to create the discharge policy and evaluate it.

The policy is described through five different stages; these being initiation, formulation, implementation, evaluation and review. The study describes how current heightened interest in the Health sector and the need for harmonisation of discharge planning procedures in the Speech-Language Department initiated the policy and led on to its formulation, followed by implementation, evaluation and eventually to review.

Methods

Data was collected at the initiation stage from 27 Speech-Language Pathologists employed with the department itself. This helped to inform and formulate the policy which was implemented in a clinical trial. The policy was evaluated through feedback collected in a focus group made up of six different health care professionals and one educator involved in the health setting.

Results

SLPs and other health care professionals reported that they felt that timely and efficient discharge will lead to a more focused and effective service. The therapeutic relationship with the client, the social and humanistic aspect of therapy and the need to respect professional decision making have emerged. The differences between the acute setting and rehabilitation have been highlighted.

Conclusions / take home message

SLPs welcomed guidelines on discharge planning for the clients on their caseload.

Keywords

Formulation of policy; Discharge policy; policy evaluation;



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

The investigation of satisfaction of patients with dysphagia towards their diet texture and hospital foods: a preliminary study

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Background: Patients may have positive and negative reactions to hospital foods. Patient satisfaction is affected by factors such as the diagnosis of patients and the facilities of hospitals. In the current situation of patients with dysphagia, their satisfaction with food and diet texture can be seen as important.

Objectives: The aim of the study is to investigate the satisfaction related to hospital foods of patients with and without dysphagia.

Methods: A total of 67 patients (24 patients with dysphagia and 43 patients without dysphagia hospitalized in Ankara City Hospital) were included in the study. Participants filled out the demographic information form and satisfaction questionnaire for texture and hospital food. The data were collected face to face. The independent t-test analysis was performed for the difference test between the two groups. Descriptive statistics are reported with boxplot graphics. The SPSS 25.00 program was used for data analyses.

Results: While $\bar{x}=3.78$, $SD=0.507$ in the responses of the patients with dysphagia to the questionnaire, it was found as $\bar{x}=3.77$, $SD=0.523$ in the patients without dysphagia. Satisfaction related to hospital meals did not differ between patient groups with and without dysphagia ($t=0.041$, $p>0.05$).

Conclusions: The results of the study show that patients with dysphagia are as satisfied with their hospital foods and diet texture as patients without dysphagia. The clinical implications are discussed.

Keywords: dysphagia, satisfaction, diet texture, hospital foods.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

The performance of Maltese Adults on the Maltese Aphasia Screening Test (MAST)

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Background

Despite proving to be a key component in diagnosis and treatment planning, there are no standardised aphasia tests in many of the world's languages, including Maltese. This poses a challenge on local SLPs, who must rely on other tools for the assessment of aphasia, leading to inaccuracies in the interpretation of results which impacts the quality of intervention.

Aim/Objectives

This study aims to promote further local research in the field of aphasia, leading to advancements in assessment and rehabilitation procedures. Thus, the focus was to improve the clinical use of the MAST by:

1. Presenting normative data for typically ageing Maltese adults
2. Establishing its psychometric properties.

The MAST was designed by Dr Ritienne Grima (2015) as an impairment-based comprehensive aphasia screening test.

Objectives:

1. Present descriptive statistics of typical MAST performance.
2. Investigate the effects of the demographic variables age, gender and education on the performance of typically ageing individuals.
3. Compare the performance of typically ageing individuals to Individuals with Aphasia (IwA).
4. Compare the performance of IwA following stroke to individuals without aphasia post-stroke.
5. Determine the reliability and validity of the MAST in identifying aphasia

Method

Anonymous secondary data was used for this study. Participant data was divided into two subgroups: the Neurotypical Group (TG, n=261) and the Clinical Group (CG, n=35), 16 of which had aphasia .

The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to compare mean MAST scores between independent groups clustered by gender, age, or years of education. Predictive relationships were analysed using Regression analysis. The Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to determine whether MAST performance differs significantly across (1) the TG and CG, (2) the TG and the participants from the CG without aphasia and (3) CG participants with and without aphasia.

Psychometric properties were investigated through construct validity, concurrent validity, inter-rater reliability and test-retest reliability

Results

Analysis of the performance of healthy Maltese individuals revealed that age, gender and years of education have an effect on MAST performance. Age ($p=1.07E-9$) appeared to be the strongest predictor of total MAST performance, followed by years of education ($p=0.1E-5$).

A significant difference between the performance of IwA and those without aphasia was evident.

Validity and reliability testing showed that the MAST is a reliable and valid tool for the identification of language difficulties related to aphasia following a stroke.

Conclusion

Preliminary analysis has indicated that the MAST is a valid and reliable test. Further research should focus on establishing further psychometric properties and in-depth item analysis to ensure that the MAST is a sound screening test.

Key words

aphasia, screening test, Maltese Aphasia Screening Test, stroke, age, years of education, gender, reliability, validity.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Use of the LENA system to study language environment in a Cypriot-Greek-speaking typically developing child

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Background: Studies support that children's language development is affected directly by their environmental experiences, specifically from the verbal interaction with adults and their parents. **Objectives:** This is the first study on Cypriot dialect or Greek language where LENA software has been used to record and analyze sound environmental and language data. The present case study collected a representative speech sample in the natural environment of a typically developing 46- 47-month old child. The LENA (Language Environment Analysis) (LENA Research Foundation, CO, USA) software performed all the analyzed recordings of the study. **Method:** Sequentially, it automatically classified into different categories providing the user arithmetic and graphic results. All the findings are presented descriptively and compared to corresponding norms of typically developed children raised by the LENA Foundation. A total of 48 hours of recordings were recorded and analyzed. Caregivers received directions to improve their turn-takings to their child quantitatively and qualitatively. **Results:** According to the norms held by the LENA Foundation, the parents are placed at the 70th percentile, as it shows that they promote the appropriate quantitative language stimuli (AWC).

On the contrary, the parent-child conversations (CT) ranged between the 25th and 10th percentile and did not present quantitative differences. The child pronunciation (CV) data classified the child at the 10th percentile and did not show a significant increase in any of the recordings. **Conclusion:** The guidance that parents received contributed significantly to the rise of AWC, and this recorded feedback improvement was measured only quantitatively. The results support the importance of parents' enriched engagement that could increase their input.



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

Voice therapy in postoperative care

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Background

Voice problems are frustrating, patients have worries, notice speech effort and sometimes an inability even to talk to relatives. In many cases, a reduction in the amount of speech or absolute silence helps. Unfortunately, however, so-called elite vocal performers are usually affected here, i.e. singers, teachers, politicians and much more. In some cases, this means inability to work, loss of income and existential needs are the results. After phonosurgery of the vocal folds absolute silence must be practiced. There are still different views on the duration of postoperative voice rest. And after that, which exercises are statistically proven?

Aim/Objectives

This presentation will give an overview about literature recommendations of the duration of voice rest, patient compliance, behavior and voice therapy methods used after phonosurgery.

Methods

This presentation is based on a literature search.

Results

The optimal voice silence period after surgery is about three days. Literature also states a different duration of up to 7 days, depending on the disorder – cysts, polyps, edema, etc. However, there are no generally valid statements. The compliance of patients decreases with the length of the silence, this is another reason to plead for a shorter voice rest. In voice therapy, there are many methods, such as SOVTE, whose effectiveness has been statistically proven. But also voice hygiene measures must not be missing in the postoperative care.

Conclusions/take home message

The right time to start voice therapy is crucial. Likewise, the vocal behavior after phonosurgery must be adjusted and adapted so that the best outcome for the patients arises. Patients must be accompanied by speech therapy for at least 6 weeks after surgery to ensure safe voice rehabilitation.

Keywords

Postoperative care, voice rest, vocal hygiene, compliance, SOVTE, voice therapy, phonosurgery



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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

What consequences in participation do people experience in the context of their daily lives because of their communication problem? A concept elicitation study

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Background:

Communication is a prerequisite for participation in today's society. To indicate that communication has a major influence on participation, and make it easier to measure, Eadie et al. (2006) introduced the construct 'communicative participation'. They subsequently developed an instrument designed for adults with mild to moderate communication problems: the Communication Participation Item Bank (CPIB) (Baylor, et al., 2013).

In the developmental process of the CPIB, people with spasmodic dysphonia were asked to describe the consequences of their voice problems on participation. According to the COSMIN-guidelines (Terwee et al., 2018) the study population in the developmental process needs to be representative for the target population, to make sure all relevant items are included.

Aim

To explore consequences of communication problems that participants experience in participation, in order to develop additional Communicative Participation PROM-items.

Methods:

Procedure:

Participants with different communication problems (speech, hearing, language, voice) were invited to keep a diary (written, photo's, video's) for three weeks, in which they noted social activities they encounter in daily life that are difficult for them because of their communication problem. They were then invited for an semi-structured interview, in which their diary was discussed, as well as other situations that may arise in daily life.

Analysis:

This study started with five interviews, which were coded and analyzed. This process continued until no new concepts appeared.

Respondent descriptions were considered carefully in relation to the characteristic features of communicative participation (variability, impact and relevance) (Patrick et al., 2011). The different situations were linked to the ICF Activity and Participation domains.

Preliminary results:

Eighteen interviews yielded 46 different concepts. Concepts were described in terms of: person, location, topic of conversation, form, moment, pace and combinations thereof. Most of the concepts described relate to ICF-domains 7, 8 and 9.

Conclusions:

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New frontiers in speech and language therapy: advancing practice, research and education

What makes screening of preschool children's speech and language acceptable? A qualitative study of parents' perspectives

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Background:

Screening for speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) in the preschool years promotes early identification and provision of support. However, developmental screening is also associated with practical and ethical concerns (Carlton et al., 2021). For example, given variability in early language development, screening may create unnecessary anxiety in parents. Therefore, it is important that we understand what contributes to acceptability of screening for SLCN from parents' perspectives. Sekhon, Cartwright and Francis (2018) developed the 'Theoretical Framework of Acceptability' (TFA) as a way to assess acceptability of healthcare interventions. However, to date there are few examples of this framework being used to assess parents' views about outcomes for their children.

Aim:

This study aimed to explore the applicability of the TFA to the context of screening for speech and language during children's developmental reviews.

Methods:

Parents attending the nationally mandated 24-30 month developmental review completed a survey (n=433) based on the TFA. Follow-up qualitative interviews with 40 parents explored perspectives of the speech and language component of the developmental review. Parents were recruited purposively to cover a range of factors, including demographics as well as their level of concern about their child's language development.

Results:

Quantitative results from the survey supported acceptability of the screening process, however qualitative results provided a more mixed picture. Some themes from the TFA were relevant, including coherence of the assessment. However, additional themes were found that were specific to the screening context, for example the importance of individualisation, the relationship with the practitioner and the value that parents placed on the outcome of the assessment for their child.

Conclusions:

The TFA provided a useful initial framework for exploring acceptability, however this study identified additional elements of acceptability specific to the context of speech and language screening during the developmental review.



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When a AAC system does not work: An example using aided language modeling

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Background: Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems are highly effective in improving communication and language in children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. However, such improvements do not always occur and the clinician is faced with the decision of which new system to use. In this paper we present the case of four children who received an intervention based on aided language modeling, two of them after failing to communicate using PECS, and the other two without any previous experience of an AAC system.

Objectives: The current study aimed to determine the improvements in communicative ability produced by an aided language modeling-based intervention in two children with ASD who had not benefited from the PECS system, compared with two children with ASD without any previous experience of an AAC system.

Methods: Participants were 4 children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), divided into two groups. Group 1 consisted of two children (age range 8y8m – 13y10m) who had used the PECS system for 24 months without success. Group 2 consisted of two children (age range 4y2m – 14y7m) who had no previous experience with AAC systems and acted as a control. All participants received an aided language modeling-based intervention for 6 months. Changes in communication were assessed by administering the Communication Matrix at the beginning and end of treatment.

Results: The overall communicative level of all patients improved, so that children who had not previously benefited from the PECS system showed a significantly better communicative level. In addition, no significant differences were found between the two groups.

Conclusion: The aided language modeling-based intervention produced an overall significant improvement in communication function in all children, resulting in an effective treatment for children with ASD. The findings also suggest that having previously failed with an AAC system is not related to worse outcomes when receiving treatment with a new system.



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When a school reform brings out a complete paradigm shift: case study of the implementation of a skills-based approach in the speech therapy department at HE Vinci

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Background

Since the introduction of the “Décret Paysage” (2013), universities have had to offer an initial training program developed around the skills-based approach. From teachers’ perspective, this is a real paradigm shift and consequently in the way of acting as a teacher. As part of a major reform, Levin and Fullan (2008) stress that improving teaching practices requires specific and continuous efforts by all stakeholders. Furthermore, Lecat (2018) highlights the importance of informal learning in innovative practices among teachers.

Aim / Objectives

This applied research focuses on the implementation of the skills-based approach in speech therapy degree in the environment of non-university higher education at Fédération-Wallonie-Bruxelles in Belgium, and more specifically at HE Vinci. The study has run from 2019 until now. The main goal of this research was to assess the impact of this paradigm shift from a more transmissive approach to a skills-based approach focusing more on student learning. Parent & Jouquan (2014) define competence as the adequate mobilization of capacities (knowledge, interpersonal skills, know-how) in a situation.

Methods

We used a mixed method for the purpose of this study (questionnaire and focus groups). Via a questionnaire we aimed to highlight the impact of the reform on informal learning on students and teachers. Via focus groups, we tried to understand the limits of such a reform, both from a teacher and student perspective.

Results

The focus groups highlighted a lack of support in terms of preparation for such a change. The results of the quantitative analysis will be available in early 2022.

Conclusions / take home message

As Dupriez (2015) emphasizes, the organization must support such a change in all possible ways (training, information, resources...).

Keywords

Reform, skills-based approach, speech therapy, higher education, informal learning



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Writing Test for the Assessment and Analysis of Writing Skills

- validation of the subtests 1 to 8: graphic shapes, letters, syllables, words and pseudowords

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Background: Writing is a learnt competence that follows the literate subjects throughout their academic and social lives. Due to the difficulties observed in the initial stages of learning, this competence should be given the utmost attention. The instrument Writing Tests for the Assessment and Analysis of Writing Skills intends to contribute to the assessment of that competence, presenting a holistic perspective of the writing process. It is constituted of 14 subtests: subtests 1 to 8 evaluate from graphic shapes to pseudowords; subtests 9 to 14, from sentences to texts.

Objectives: Validation of the subtests 6 to 8, centered in the assessment and analysis of orthographic and phonological aspects (with words and pseudowords); architecture adequacy of the subtests 1 to 8 (graphic shapes, letters, syllables, words and pseudowords).

Methodology: To achieve the objectives above, a small-scale pilot study was carried out in order to test the usability of the instrument, the application procedures, execution time, stimuli, images, semantic cues, registration of the child's responses, registration and classification of the examiner's analyses. The difficulty index of the items was carried out and organized by schooling criteria, in order to reduce the items in each subtest.

Results: The usability test will allow us to understand the aspects described, those that work or that need to be improved. The results obtained from the stimuli will also allow the identification of the most sensitive items for each test and, thus, it will be possible to reduce the number of items in each subtest.

Conclusions: These pilot study data contribute to improvement of the test specifications and task types. The results of this study will have a direct impact on the procedures of the instrument, its size and duration. This is subsequently agreed with aspects such as applicability and acceptability by the professionals who will apply it.