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**PRAGMATIC LANGUAGE:
WHAT IS IT? AND HOW DO WE
TEACH IT?**

Outline:

- My personal interest/thesis study
- Social Skills vs. Pragmatic language
- Pragmatics... What are they?
- Theory of Mind
- Pragmatics & Hard of Hearing students
- Assessing
- Activities to support development

My interest in this topic

- Masters Degree in Special Education- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education
- Thesis study on teacher knowledge of pragmatic language skills

Brief overview of my study

- A survey of classroom and resource teachers who are teaching students who are D/HH in rural Manitoba (outside the city of Winnipeg)
- 19 participants representing approximately 4% of the total participant population
- Experienced between 1 and 20+ years
- 6 resource teachers, 10 classroom teachers, 1 both, 2 "other"
- Findings indicated that Resource teachers have greater knowledge than classroom teachers
- Overall, teachers were able to identify pragmatic skills in some situations but were not able to identify the same skill in other situations.

Social skills vs. Pragmatic language

- Social skills and pragmatic language skills are two different things that are often mixed up
- Pragmatic language is the type of communication skills that are used in socialization
- You can think of pragmatic language as social language use

Pragmatics... What are they?

- Pragmatics are referred to as "the social language skills we use in our daily interactions with others. They include what we say, how we say it, and our body language and whether it is appropriate or not" (Belinda Hill & Associates, 2008)
- The most subtle, abstract and complex language skills to master
- Children may have age appropriate vocabulary and syntax but do not know how to use them in social situations and for specific purposes

Examples of specific pragmatic language skills



- 45 different skills
- 6 different categories
- Check list by Karen Anderson but has been developed over time from Simon 1984

Theory of Mind- The ability to obtain pragmatic language skills

- A knowledge of human behaviour and relationships is required to understand what is being said
- This skill is known as Theory of Mind (ToM)
- Putting ourselves in someone else's shoes to understand what they feel and think
- Theory of mind is present when children understand what they think or believe may be different from what another person thinks or believes.
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hLubgpY2_w

How does this affect our hard of hearing students?

- Children with pragmatic deficits have difficulty understanding a speaker's true meanings or intentions
- This can lead to a misinterpretation of the conversation
- This can then lead students to isolation, without friends and unhappy in school because their access to socialization is limited
- Comparison of Hearing vs Hard of Hearing, plus hearing loss type
- <http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Pragmatics-Intervention-Article.pdf>

Skills that are difficult for D/HH students

- Provides information on request
- Repairs incomplete sentences
- Ends conversations
- Interjects appropriately
- Apologizes
- Requests clarification
- Makes promises

Skills that are difficult for D/HH students cont.

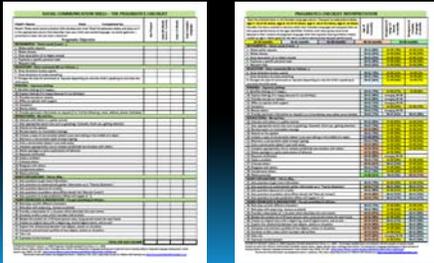
- Asks questions to problem solve
- Asks questions to make predictions
- Retells a story
- Tells four-to six-frame picture story in right order
- Creates original story
- Explains relationships between objects-action situations
- Compares and contrasts

Pragmatics in ASL

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDFxr6dMJUE>

How can you assess your student?

- Pragmatic check list- Grades K-2



Activities to promote Pragmatic Language Skills

- Development of Theory of Mind Activities
- Role-play what is real vs. what is imaginary
- Discuss presumptions of characters in stories
- Discuss how opinions and perspectives can be different
- Practicing communication break down repair
- <http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Pragmatics-Intervention-Article.pdf>

References

- Belinda Hill & Associates. (2008) Pragmatic Language. Retrieved from <http://www.therabee.com/images-pdf/pragmatics-julo8.pdf>
- Goberis et al (2012) The Missing Link in Language Development of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children: Pragmatic Language Development
