Was that sarcasm?

Working on pragmatics to improve communication skills

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Agenda

- **ASD diagnostic criteria**

- **How does social-pragmatic communication play a role in an autism diagnosis?**

  - **Social Interaction**
  - **Social understanding**
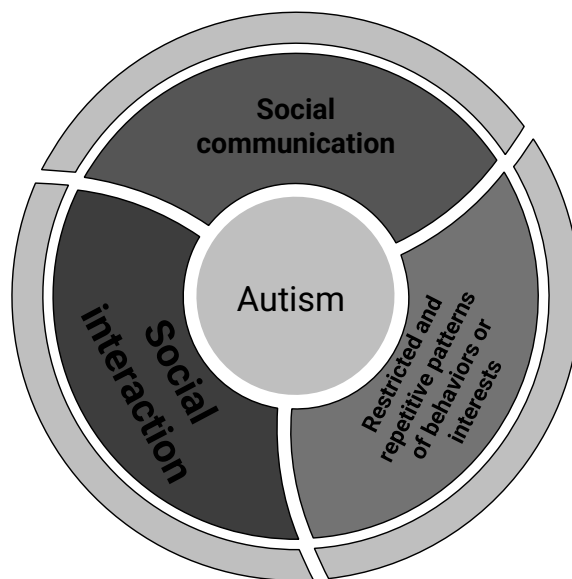 - **Pragmatics**
  - **Language Processing**

- **Wrap up**

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How does social communication intersect with ASD?

Diagnostic criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder

Diagram showing: Autism (center), Social communication, Social interaction, Restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviors or interests

Social interaction

Social communication

Restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviors, interests or activities

Echolalia
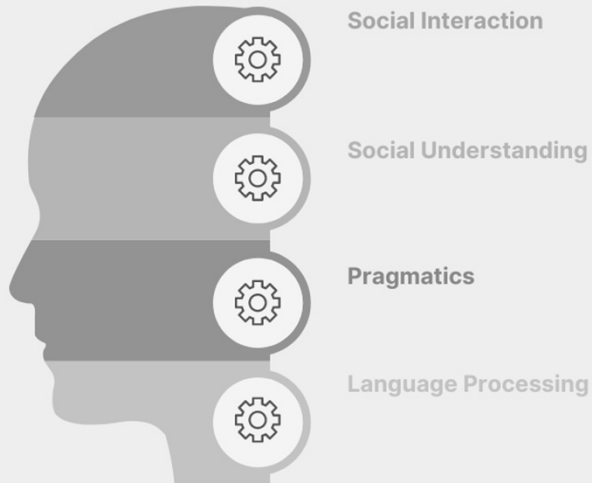
What is social-communication?

4 Components of Social Communication

Social Interaction

Social Understanding

Pragmatics

Language Processing

Social Interaction

- Speech style and context
- Gender communication differences
- Language transfer
- Power relationships
- Rules for linguistics politeness
- Nonverbal communication

Social Interactions

Competency is based on being able to adopt norms across cultures, communities, and physical environments.
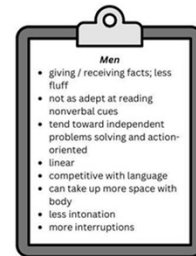

Speech Context

- Intrapersonal Communication
- Dyaadic/interpersonal communication
- Small group communication
- Organizational communication
- Public communication
- Mass communication
- Social media communication

Speech Style

- Frozen / Fixed
- Formal
- Consultative
- Casual
- Intimate

Gender communication differences

Women
- more vocal than men
- more verbally skilled
- emotion, language and memory strengths
- relationship oriented
- frequent use of body language
- better at nonverbal communication
- less declarative
- ending sentences with a question tone (uptalk)
- less linear

Men
- giving / receiving facts; less fluff
- not as adept at reading nonverbal cues
- tend toward independent problems solving and action-oriented
- linear
- competitive with language
- can take up more space with body
- less intonation
- more interruptions

Power relationships

- Coercive
- Expert
- Reward
- Informational
- Formal
- Referent
- Connection

Language transfer
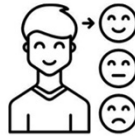
Rules for linguistic politeness
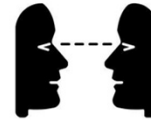

YES, MA'AM.

Say PLEASE!

Nonverbal communication

Body language

Facial expressions

Eye contact & gaze

Proxemics **Deictic gestures** **Symbolic gestures** **Challening behavior**

Global eye contact

- signifies a sign of **interest, honesty and sincerity** especially during **business**
- **males and females** should lower their gaze when crossing paths
- people make eye contact when they are **angry** and it **represents a challenge** and is **disrespectful**
- children are taught to f**ocus on the neck** in conversation
- eye contact with a stranger is considered **rude** and a **violation of personal space**; mind your own business
- **glance of eye contact**, do not sustained eye contact for most conversations
- **women** look at the ground
- a way of **showing interest in the opposite gender**
- signifies **interest and attentiveness**
- avoid eye contact with **older or higher social status**

Social Interaction

- speech context and style

- gender communication differences power relationships

- linguistic politeness

- nonverbal communication

Social Understanding

Acquiring knowledge about one's and other's mental actions (social cognition) and using this knowledge to play, guide, and flexibly respond (executive function) to social interactions within a cultural or societal context

- Theory of Mind (ToM)
- Executive Functioning
- Implicit & Explicit Memory
- Joint Attention
- Inference
- Presupposition

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Theory of Mind (ToM)

"Theory of mind allows people to infer the intentions of others, as well as to think about what's going on in someone else's head, including hopes, fears, beliefs, and expectations. Social interactions can be complex, and misunderstandings can make them even more fraught. By being able to develop accurate ideas about what other people are thinking, we are better able to respond accordingly."

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Theory of Mind (ToM)

Tasks Listed From Easiest to Most Difficult

1. The understanding that the reasons why people might want something (i.e. desires) may differ from one person to the next
2. The understanding that people can have different beliefs about the same thing or situation
3. The understanding that people may not comprehend or have the knowledge that something is true
4. The understanding that people can hold false beliefs about the world
5. The understanding that people can have hidden emotions, or that they may act one way while feeling another way

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Executive Functioning

Implicit and Explicit Memory

Implicit memory - unconscious recall, like skills and habits; long term memory

Examples:

- Singing a familiar song
- Typing on a keyboard
- Playing piano
- Brushing your teeth
- Riding your bike

Explicit memory - conscious recall of facts; long term memory

Examples:

- Recalling phone numbers
- Completing an exam
- Remembering items on a list
- Birth dates
- Names
- Locations
- Countries names

Joint attention

Joint attention is the shared focus of two or more individuals on the same object or event.

Deficits in joint attention include

- difficulty orienting toward people in a social environment;
- limited frequency of directing another's attention to share an item or event;
- restricted range of communicative functions to seek engagement and comfort from others;
- limitations in recognizing and describing another's emotional state, intention, and perspective; and
- difficulty determining causal factors for emotional states of self and others.

Joint attention is part of being social as it is the precursor for sharing an event with someone else, even if just by a glance or gesture.

Inference & Presupposition

Inference

the practice of inferring the meaning of an unfamiliar word or expression from the meaning of familiar words occurring with it in a context together with one's knowledge of or beliefs about the world.

Pre-supposition

- something assumed beforehand at the beginning of a course of action
- Implicit assumption about the world or background belief relating to an utterance whose truth is taken for granted in discourse.

Nonliteral language requires inference and presupposition which is
why many autistic people interpret things literally

poems, metaphors, similes, jokes, sarcasm, idioms

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Pragmatics

communication that focuses on goal-consistent language use in social contexts

- Verbal Communication
- Nonverbal Communication

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Verbal Communication

Speech Acts

- requesting
- commenting/ labeling
- answering / asking questions
- Protesting
- expressing feelings
- describing
- story telling
- general conversation

Verbal Communication

Prosody

- a tool of human expression that is conveyed acoustically by way of durational, intensity, and frequency cues.
- The way we use prosody impacts the meaning of the message.
- The term prosody comes from the Greek word prosōidia meaning "song" or "melody." Therefore, prosody is often viewed as the melody of speech.
- Using monotone speech is the opposite of prosody and is common in some with ASDs
  Examples:

  - Intonation
  - Stress
  - Tempo
  - Rhythm
  - Pause
  - Chunking

Verbal Communication

Discourse

- Style refers to conversation, narration, expository, or procedural
- Cohesion/coherence
- Topic maintenance
- Social reciprocity
- Communication breakdown and repair
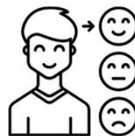- Contingency
- Adjacency
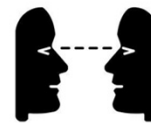- Co-construction of meaning

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Nonverbal communication

Body language

Facial expressions

Eye contact & gaze

Proxemics

Deictic gestures

Symbolic gestures

Challenging behavior

Language Processing

Language processing is an area of social communication that regards internal generation of language (expressive) as well as understanding and interpretation of language (receptive).

- Spoken and written language
- Morphology
- Syntax
- Semantics
- Phonological skills

Language Processing

- Spoken and written language comprehension
- Morphology
- Syntax
- Semantics
- Phonological skills for reading, spelling or decoding

Spoken and written language comprehension

- Receptive language - what we understand and comprehend
  - Following directions
  - Finding body parts
  - Identifying photographs
  - Reading a book and following the plot
- Expressive language - what we express with speech or other communication modality
  - Describing pictures
  - Asking questions
  - Making comments
  - Asking for wants and needs

Morphology

Grammatical Morphemes in Order of Acquisition*

Based on Brown (1973)

Grammatical Morpheme	Example
Present progressive (-ing)	Baby cry**ing**.
in	Juice **in** cup.
on	Book **on** table.
Plural regular (-s)	Daddy have tool**s**.
Past irregular	Doggie **ate** bone.
Possessive ('s)	Jake**'s** apple.
Uncontractible copula (used as main verb)	This **is** mine.
Articles (a, the)	**A** red apple. **The** big house.

Past regular (-ed)	He jump**ed** high.
Third person regular (-s)	Susie drink**s**.
Third person irregular	Baby **does** patty-cake. Kitty **has** a toy.
Uncontractible auxiliary	**Are** you thirsty? She **was** running. He **is**. (Response to "Who's crying?")
Contractible copula	It**'s** cold outside.
Contractible auxiliary	Mommy**'s** crying.

*All grammatical morphemes are typically acquired by about 4 years of age.

Brown, R. (1973). *A first language: The early stages*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Syntax

- Syntax is the system governing the order and combination of words to form sentences, and the relationships among the elements within a sentence.
- understanding sentence structure elements when listening, speaking, reading, and writing

The boy jumped on the couch.

Article-subject-verb-preposition-article-object of the preposition

Semantics

- the meaning of words and combinations of words in a language.
- listening, speaking, reading, and writing vocabulary

Age	Range of # of words
12 months	1-14+ words
18 months	10-170+ words
24 months	50-441+ words
36 months	50-1000+ words

Phonological skills for reading, spelling, or decoding

Phonological awareness is the awareness of the sound structure of a language and the ability to consciously analyze and manipulate this structure via a range of tasks involving:

- words
- syllables
- onset and rime
- phonemes
- blending at the word
- recalling phonemes associated with specific graphemes

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Social Communication

Food for thought:

- What parts of the social communication components resonated when thinking about the students you know? How might you incorporate them into your practices?

- What goals can I write that respect my autistic students personal culture?

- What goals will increase the students quality of life and foster independence?

Social interactions

Social understanding

Pragmatics

Language processing

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Thank you!

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