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Research Article

# Pragmatic Abilities in Children with Different Socioeconomical Status

**P Ramya[1], K Maruthi Krishna Goud[1]*, Suraj Singh[2] and G. Ramanjulu[3]**

*[1]Assistant Professor in Speech Pathology at Composite Regional Centre for Skill Development, Rehabilitation and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, India*

*[2]Assistant Professor in Special Education at CRC, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, India*

*[3]Lecturer in Physiotherapy at CRC, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, India*

***Corresponding Author:** K Maruthi Krishna Goud, Assistant Professor in Speech Pathology at Composite Regional Centre for Skill Development, Rehabilitation and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, India.

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** Lots of efforts have been put to assess language abilities in children especially in the area of pragmatics but limited light has been thrown in clinical contexts to help in identifying, diagnosing and planning intervention strategies. Several studies have been conducted in Indian language based on tests in English language. Telugu is a Dravidian language primarily spoken in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India.

In India, there are very few studies which deal with the language abilities of children with different socio-economic status, especially in relation to Telugu language. The results of this study would provide future directions to the assessment and management of children with SES. Hence, there is a need for the current study.

The aim of the present study was to evaluate the pragmatics abilities of typically developing children in different socioeconomic status.

**Method:** All the 90 subjects were administered Pragmatic assessment tool REELS, SES pragmatic assessment tool. This was followed by tasks of rhyme. The examiner conversed naturally on topics like storytelling, family members, friends, daily activities, schools and classroom description, festival and birthday celebrations, play items and activities at school as well as at home, for 30 minutes duration. This whole conversation was video recorded using canon power shot A3000IS 10.0megapixels camera.

Each child conversed for 30 minutes with the examiner which was video-recorded while recording the environment was monitored to maintain less distraction. The intentions of recording were to observe and judge communicative interaction of all the subjects from different socioeconomic status in three groups. As pragmatics consist of the verbal, paralinguistic and non-verbal aspects, it was necessary to observe both verbal and nonverbal behaviour.

**Results:** The results of this study states that HSES perform better on pragmatic skills compared to MSES and LSES, and the socio-economic status/ethnicity may show impact on the pragmatic skills of the children. These factors often expose children to different discourse styles and vocabulary in LSES than MSES and HSES (Ogbu, 1981).

**Conclusion:**

- There exists a significant difference in the verbal aspects of pragmatic skills of HSES compared to MSES and LSES and a slight difference between MSES and LSES, where, HSES performed good followed by MSES and finally LSES.

- Verbal aspects which includes speech acts, turn taking, lexical selection, and stylistic variation lies under many influential factors, which includes environment, exposure to the language, socio economic status, quality of the environment, child's interaction in the society, and responses from the listener. The current study shows that SES is one of the important factors in developing verbal aspect of pragmatics.
- In paralinguistic aspects, there is a significant difference seem among all the three groups of SES, MSES performed better than the other two groups i.e. HSES and LSES.
- In nonverbal aspects there is a significant difference noticed among the three groups of SES in the age range six-seven years i.e., HSES performed better than MSES and LSES in nonverbal aspects.


**Keywords:** Children; Pragmatics; REELS

## Introduction

During the pre-chomskian era, pragmatics was mainly of interest to philosopher like Pierce (1931), Morris (1946) and Austin (1962), who discussed the ways in which adults used Language to communicate. During the 1970's a theoretical shift occurred to look at both Social and cognitive factors influencing the acquisition process. Pragmatics becomes the "Fashion" of the middle and late 1970's, this led to a series of ideas and innovations termed "the pragmatic revolution "(Dunchan, 1984). One of the major contributions of this revolution has been a re-emphasis on the importance of communication in the context of social interaction. Researchers and clinicians have questioned the soundness of fragmented approaches and have focused attention on language in the actual settings in which it is used [1].

From this perspective, assessment interventions within the context conversion have become increasingly important. The renounced interest in pragmatics indicated a contrast to the focus during the past two decades on the structural aspects of language. It now realized that in addition to learning the phone logic, semantic and syntactic rules of language, a child must also master the rules underlie how language is used for the purpose of communication (Hymes, 1971).

Pragmatics account of language development try characterizes children's growing Communicative competence {Bates, 1976. Hymens, 1972, Synder and sliver stain, 1972} [21]. Rather than on focusing on the structural forms of syntax or content semantics of their language what does pragmatic development or communicative competence involve. It has been suggested that seeking a single definition of pragmatics is little like, asking several gourmet pastry chefs how to bake a perfect chocolate cake is an example [Snyder and sliver stein, 1972] [21]. Like the chefs Linguists agree on most of the basic ingredients but they are likely to emphasize different components to give the overall domain a different flavor.

When human communicates they share experience, events, ideas and feelings with others through verbal and nonverbal channel includes body movements, voice and touch. Generally communication is an active and intentional two way process of exchange of messages from speaker to listener [5].

Children communicate in order to build to a set of beliefs about the world, themselves and others they learn to communicate with a basic set of sounds appropriate to their language. It is also possible to communicate without verbal intending to do so [6]. Language is then situation where by humans communicates with each other by means of habitually used oral and auditory arbitrary symbol to communicate (Hall, 1968).

### Pragmatics

Phonology, Syntax, and Semantics are studied more frequently than Pragmatics among the various language components. The language component of pragmatics is concerned with the proper use of conveyed utterances in social circumstances to exchange ideas Prosody, intonation; turn-taking, collaborative attention, replying to queries, and commenting are all included in this category (Ninio and Snow 1996, Pellegrini, Brody, and Stoneman 1987) [27]. Com-

municated utterances have a purpose/function, can be processed/not processed, and normally follow the speaker society's communication rules. Although some people believe that the syntax and semantics domains of language are the most important in school, pragmatic skill is showing to be just as vital to a child's academic growth (Brinton, Fujiki 1993 and Gallagher, 1993) [31].

### Importance of pragmatic skills

Individualized Education Plans (IEP) goals show that parents, practitioners, and teachers regard pragmatics to be a critical component of language. Experts have focused on conversational skills. Researchers have backed this theory, claiming that because of the links between language impairment, social skills, socio-emotional behaviour, and communicative competence development, successful interactions with peers and school personnel are essential (Black, Hazen, 1990; Brinton, Fujiki, 1993; Damico, and Damico, 1993; Gilmor, Glatthorn, 1982; Guralnick, Paul-Brown, 1989; Roth and Clark, 1987) [30]. Because communication ability is essential to social engagement, even preschoolers prefer to interact with more receptive (i.e. communicatively competent) peers. A lack of this skill could lead to social and/or academic failure (Brinton and Fujiki, 1993) [7], especially if the youngster is unresponsive to teachers.

### Influences on pragmatic behavior

Outside influences on children's pragmatic behaviour have been postulated and evidenced by researchers (Becker, 1994; Damico and Damico, 1993; Hart, Risley, 1999; Haslett, 1983; Pellegrini, Brody, Stoneman, 1987; Ryder, Leinonen, 2003, Snow, Perlmann, Berko-Gleason, and Hooshyar, 1990). Culture, for example, has been linked to mother-child interaction styles, which can lead to a variety of communicative exchanges. Furthermore, children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, regardless of cultural background, are exposed to distinct speech patterns than children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (Hart, Risley, 1995). As a result, all cultural groups must consider socioeconomic status as a potential influence on pragmatics. Gender disparities have been discovered to effect pragmatic skills in older children's study, and parents' linguistic actions may also affect their children's pragmatic skills (Becker, 1994). Researchers have also found that the conversational environment and the child's age have an impact on pragmatic skills (Pellegrini., *et al*. 1987). The variety and interaction of conversational context and child age affects demonstrate the complexity of pragmatic development research [6].

The present study therefore is an attempt, the first move towards these directions, in the Indian context. This study was designed to assess the pragmatics in different socioeconomic status.

## Review of Literature

Pragmatics is one of the components of language. It is generally described as the study of rules governing the language use in social contexts this encompasses a wide range of phenomena, functional aspect of language usage descriptions of speech events: how utterances are used to accomplish social actions: how people engage in everyday conversation: and how people process spoken and written text [6]. Within the study of language usage several areas can be identified that may be seen as relatively independent of the study of structure. These are language and social actions, language as appropriate behavior, and language as means of intentional communication. Language as social action is concerned with the study of linguistics acts in social context Green (1989).

### Pragmatics as a level of linguistic analysis

Pragmatics as a level of linguistic analysis can be distinguished from and defined in from the other levels. It is also however possible to mean more than what is literally expressed by any utterance [7]. For this reason semantics has been more precisely defined as a study of conversational or literal meaning, while other meanings have been explained in terms of pragmatics phenomena, such as conversational inferences (Brown Yule, 1983).

### Comparative studies of pragmatic in different socioeconomic statuses children

Zorzi and Hage (2004) presented tables with the pragmatic development. Children utilise language to request, inform, ask, and interact by the age of two. Children initiate and continue conversations, but only for a limited number of turns. The children converse with people in familiar settings about concrete topics and current referents. They improve and deepen the use of the functions indicated above, as well as asking questions regarding absent referents, by the age of 3 to 4 years [14].

The previous turns are understandable. Language resources for various language functions get increasingly complicated as chil-

dren age 5 and 6. They will demonstrate abilities in metalinguistics. Take numerous turns to start and maintain a conversation. Discuss missing and abstract referents with multiple interlocutors at the same time. Rephrase the intended remark as they become increasingly capable of correcting them when they believe they are not being understood [15].

Cervone and Fernandes (2005) examined the communicative profile of 40 typical children aged 4 to 5 years engaging with adults, finding that children of this age occupied the majority of the communicative space while not confining themselves to answering inquiries. The Profile revealed that verbal communication was the most prevalent and that interactive comment and information requests were the most common communicative functions [18].

The study of the development of pragmatic abilities in children has received less attention, owing in part to the therapeutic setting. Bosa, 2002 and Chiari, 2002; Mecca., *et al*. 2002; Fernandes 2002 and Hage., *et al*. 2002; Alves., *et al*. 2004; Befi-Lopes., *et al*. 2004, 2005; Souza-Morato and Fernandes, 2006) [18-20]. Many children are sent to language evaluation because they have communication challenges that aren't connected to articulation, vocabulary, morphology, or syntax, but rather to conversation (pragmatic issues). Their parents claim that they speak but don't seem to pay attention to what the other is saying because they frequently give incoherent answers or don't clearly convey their communicative aims/exhibit little interest in conversing with the communication partner. So, what is the profile of young children's pragmatic abilities? When a pre-school child's inability to utilize language and converse functionally can be considered a sign of language impairment in the youngster.

Do sociocultural factors affect these abilities? According to research, cultures can limit children's ability to develop developed conversational pragmatic abilities (Aukurst, 2004 and Villiers, 2004). Ramos., *et al*. (2002) studied the behavioural development of children in public and private day care facilities throughout their second years of life and discovered that children in public day care centers had a lower proportion of behaviors in the domain of language production and reception. In a study of grammatical comprehension in children from various socio-cultural backgrounds, Padovani., *et al*. (2004) found that children from low-income districts in Salvador BA had lower levels of grammatical comprehension than children from high-income neighborhoods [15].

In 2007, HAGE., *et al*. They chose 30 children between the ages of 36 and 47 months who attended public and private primary schools with low, medium, and high socioeconomic levels, respectively, and assessed their pragmatic abilities. Each child and evaluator had a 30-minute semi-structured chat, which was filmed on VHS. The findings show that there are statistically significant variations in the quantity of simple and expensive verbal utterances, as well as the use of the narrative function, showing that children from private institutions perform better [21,22].

In this context, the goal of this research was to look at the profile of pragmatic abilities in young normal children and see if there are any significant disparities in these abilities based on the children's socioeconomic status.

## The function of language

One of the major program factors that influences languages form is that of the function the language server, both in society and in the individual, in general and at any particular time, the most frequently referred to function is that of communication. There are function languages that are non-communicative; there are self directed functions (Rees, 1978).

A number of detailed lists of the communications functions of language exist and have be reviewed by Rees (1978). The following communicative functions of language express a consensus of a number of researchers studied on it.

- To greet and to express various social routines.
- To replace. This also includes languages used to control, persuade request, convince, nag, correct, criticize, threat, demand etc.
- To exchange information. This also includes languages used to question, inform, describe, assert, state, explain answer etc.
- To express feelings. This also includes language used to express being happy, excited, sad, frightened, angry, mad, hurt, as well as to protect and to feel good.
- Imaginative function. This includes languages used in games and fantasy as well as figure native and artistic language.

### Cultural differences

When it comes to cultural views about age, the role of children, and language partners, culture has been shown to influence social skills. For example, as is prevalent in EA, moderate SES society, and several cultures do not allow youngsters to directly talk with adults or ask uninvited inquiries (Borofsky, 1987; Crago, 1988; Heath, 1982; Ochs, 1988). When compared to EA (European American) students, American Indian youngsters reacted less to their teachers' questions in Philips' (1983) study. Children's cultural distinctions are undeniable. If a kid who is CLD (cultural linguistic diverse) is uncomfortable speaking to an adult (e.g., teacher, staff, and administrator) in the same way that mainstream children are expected to, this could carry over into school, placing the child at risk for Difficulty in learning interactions.

Language and culture are inextricably linked, and multiple studies have shown that even before entering school, children are acculturated into society through language socialisation with their parents, siblings, and friends (Damico and Damico, S.K., 1993; Heath, 1983; Ochs, 1988; Sanchez, 1983; Schieffelin and Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin, 1990, Vygotsky, 1978) [32]. As a result, a child who has been impacted by a culture other than the mainstream may struggle to socialise in the mainstream classroom (Damico and Damico, 1993; Heath, 1983). Furthermore, the child's culture's social language conventions may differ from the listeners' norms, resulting in misunderstandings of intended communicated utterances and pragmatic behaviours, as well as negative attitudes toward social language standards that differ from the listeners' norms (Damico and Damico, 1993; Shuy and Williams, 1973; Taylor, 1973). The most significant advances in each of the three categories of pragmatics stated above for six age groups, ranging from infants to children aged seven and beyond. This table was created from a variety of sources from the child language literature. Users of the Profile are recommended to Halliday (1975), Bates (1976), Dore (1978), Rees (1978), Ochs and Schieffelin (1979), Golinkoff (1983), Roth and Spekman (1984a), Becker (1990), McTear and Conti-Ramsden (1990) for information on the development of pragmatics (1992) [32,33].

Table, on the other hand, provides a concise overview of the evolution of this component of language. This table depicts key developments in each of the three categories of pragmatics discussed above for six age groups, ranging from infants through children aged seven and up. This table was created from a variety of sources from the child language literature. Users of the Profile should consult Halliday (1975), Bates (1976), Dore (1978), Rees (1978), Ochs and Schieffelin (1979), Golinkoff (1983), Roth and Spekman (1984a), Becker (1990), McTear and Conti-Ramsden (1990) for more information on the evolution of pragmatics (1992) [17,20].

## Aim of the Study

To evaluate the pragmatic abilities in Telugu children with different socioeconomic statuses.

## Need for the study

- Lots of efforts have been put to assess language abilities in children especially in the area of pragmatics.
- But limited light has been thrown in clinical contexts to help in identifying, diagnosing and planning intervention strategies. Several studies have been conducted in Indian language based on tests in English language. Telugu is a Dravidian language primarily spoken in the state of Andrapradesh, India.
- In India, there are very few studies which deal with the language abilities of children with different socio-economic status, especially in relation to Telugu language. The results of this study would provide future directions to the assessment and management of children with SES. Hence, there is a scope for the current study.

## Method

### Aim

The purpose of this study was to assess the pragmatic abilities of typically developing children from various socioeconomic backgrounds.

### Subjects

Ninety Children between 6 to 7 Years were taken. The subjects were divided according to the economical status and each group consists 30 subjects. The groups are as follows:

- **Group A:** Higher class
- **Group B:** Middle class
- **Group C:** Lower class.

### Selection criteria

- Subject should follow in the prescribed age range, that is, 6-7 years, from higher, middle and lower socio economic status.
- The children should be native speakers of Telugu
- Children should be typically developing, with age appropriate development across all areas and ruling out any disorders.
- Children should not have any history of Audio logical, Ontological, and Neurological, Psychological or any other associated problems were selected.

## Material

Kuppuswami socioeconomic-statuses scale was utilized to categorize subjects into different SES, i.e., high, middle and low. Socioeconomically statuses scale was based on major three components, such as EDUCATION, OCCUPATION and FAMILY INCOME PER MONTH. These components are marked/rated as in the questionnaire.

The SES was classified according the rated scoring.

- 25-29- higher socio economical statuses
- 16-25- middle socio economical statuses
- <16- lower socio economical statuses.

Kuppuswami scale included in appendix-A

- The pragmatic assessment tool developed by Prutting and Kirchner (1987) was adapted to Telugu by Prashanthi, 2011. This adapted version has been used in the present study to collect the data. This assessment tool mainly focuses on three main pragmatic aspects. Verbal, Paralinguistic and Nonverbal.
- Pragmatic assessment protocol is included in appendix-B to assess conversational skills.
- The REELS (Receptive Expressive Emergent Language Scale) was used to screen for receptive and expressive language impairments.

## Method

### Data collection

All the 90 subjects were administered Pragmatic assessment tool REELS, SES pragmatic assessment tool. This was followed by tasks of rhyme The examiner conversed naturally on topics like storytelling, family members, friends, daily activities, schools and classroom description, festival and birthday celebrations, play items and activities both at school and at home for 30 minutes duration. This whole conversation was video recorded using canon power shot A3000IS 10.0megapixels camera.

Each child conversed for thirty minutes with the examiner which was video-recorded while recording the environment was monitored to maintain less distraction. The intentions of recording were to observe and judge communicative interaction of all the subjects from different socioeconomic statuses in three groups. As a pragmatic consist of the verbal, paralinguistic and non-verbal aspects, it was necessary to observe both verbal and nonverbal behavior.

Data was taken at home and in their respective school environment as per convenience. The vocal intensity of the examiner was maintained in between 60-70 dB. The children were made to sit in a chair and subjects are covered by the video frame properly.

### Analysis

The speech sample of all the subjects were analyzed and scored according to the pragmatic assessment tool. Individual scoring on Verbal, paralinguistic and non verbal aspects were obtained, scoring. Along with this, children SES was categorized according to Kuppaswamy SES, where subjects were categorized as high, mid and low socio economic status.

For each group's responses, the mean and standard deviations were calculated. The difference between each group's responses was determined using one-way ANOVA. To compare and contrast the responses of each group.

## Results and Discussion

The aim of the present study was to evaluate the pragmatics abilities of typically developing children in different socioeconomic status. Total 90 subjects participated in the study are in the age range of 6-7 years were divided in to three groups based on their

SES. The speech samples were video recorded and analyzed by the examiner as appropriate or inappropriate on the developed pragmatic protocol. The scoring was done by assigning a score of one to each aspects found appropriate and a score zero was assigned to those judged as inappropriate.

Table 1 show total score obtained by typically developing preschool children in different socioeconomic status children. In order to study the difference in score on pragmatic assessment in preschool children in statistical mean, standard deviation (S.D) and ANOVA test were computed.

| Groups | N | Mean | SD | F-value | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HSES | 30 | 25.17 | 2.937 | 10.54 | 0.00 |
| MSES | 30 | 22.00 | 3.162 | | |
| LSES | 30 | 20.67 | 5.195 | | |

**Table 1:** Means, SDs, F value and p-value of pragmatic skills for the three socio-economic status groups.

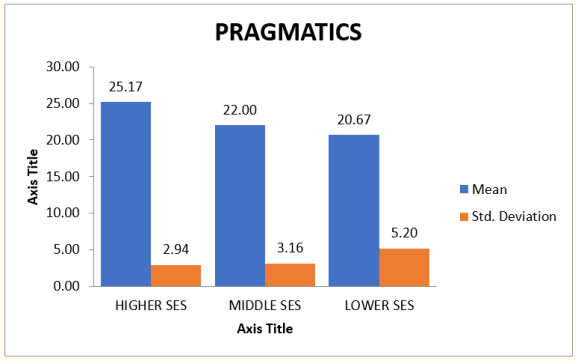


**Figure 1:** Mean and SDs of three socioeconomic classes.

From the above table 1 the mean values of HSES, MSES and LSES are 25.17, 22 and 20.67 respectively and the p- value of the difference between the three groups is 0.00 which is <0.01 and hence, highly significant difference is noted between three groups.

From the table 2, the p-values for pair-I, II and III are 0.002, 0.189 and 0.00 respectively. The p-values of pair-I and III are <0.01, hence highly significant difference is noted. The p-value of pair-II is >0.05, hence there is no significant difference between pair-II groups. Similar results were reports by Hage (2007) on performance on pragmatic skills in children with different socioeconomic status attending public and private schools. There is a significant difference between the groups, simple, expansive verbal utterances and the narration tasks were better performed children attending private schools. Padovani et.al (2004), in a study about grammatical comprehension of children from different socio-cultural environments showed that children from low-income neighborhood presented lower levels of grammatical comprehension when compared with children from a high-income neighborhood.

| Pair | Groups | Mean difference | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pair-I | HSES | 3.16 | 0.002 |
| | MSES | | |
| Pair-II | MSES | 1.3 | 0.189 |
| | LSES | | |
| Pair-III | HSES | 4.5 | 0.00 |
| | LSES | | |

**Table 2:** Mean difference and p-values of pairs I, II and III for pragmatics.

| Parameters | Groups | N | Mean | Std. dev |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Verbal aspects | HSES | 30 | 14.2333 | 2.063 |
| | MSES | 30 | 13.4333 | 2.38795 |
| | LSES | 30 | 11.6667 | 4.55869 |
| Paralinguistic aspects | HSES | 30 | 4.6667 | .80230 |
| | MSES | 30 | 4.8000 | .48423 |
| | LSES | 30 | 4.3000 | .98786 |
| Nonverbal aspects | HSES | 30 | 5.9667 | 1.09807 |
| | MSES | 30 | 5.6667 | 1.29544 |
| | LSES | 30 | 5.2667 | 1.04826 |

**Table 3**: Mean and SDs, of the responses of three SES for verbal paralinguistic and nonverbal aspects.

From the table 3 the means of responses for verbal aspects of higher, middle and lower SES are 14.4, 13.4 and 11.6 respectively. The means of responses for paralinguistic aspects of higher, middle and lower SES are 4.6, 4.6 and 4.3 respectively. The mean responses for nonverbal aspects of higher, middle and lower SES are 5.9, 5.6 and 5.2 respectively.

| Parameter | Pairs | Groups | Mean difference | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Verbal aspects | Pair-I | HSES | 0.96 | 0.245 |
| | | MSES | | |
| | Pair-II | MSES | 1.76 | 0.035 |
| | | LSES | | |
| | Pair-III | HSES | -2.73 | 0.001 |
| | | LSES | | |
| Paralinguistic aspects | Pair-I | HSES | 1.33 | 0.000 |
| | | MSES | | |
| | Pair-II | MSES | -0.26 | 0.103 |
| | | LSES | | |
| | Pair-III | HSES | -1.06 | 0.000 |
| | | LSES | | |
| Non-verbal aspects | Pair-I | HSES | 0.3 | 0.316 |
| | | MSES | | |
| | Pair-II | MSES | 0.4 | 0.182 |
| | | LSES | | |
| | Pair-III | HSES | -0.7 | 0.021 |
| | | LSES | | |

**Table 4:** Mean difference and p values of verbal, paralinguistic and nonverbal aspects of pair-I, II and III.

From the above table the p value of verbal aspects for pair-I, II and III are 0.245, 0.035 and 0.001 respectively, the p-value for pair-I is >0.05, hence there is no significant difference. The p-value for pair-II is <0.05, hence there is a significant difference. The p-value of pair-III is <0.01, hence there is a highly significant difference.

The p-values of paralinguistic aspects for pair-I, II and III are 0.00, 0.103 and 0.00 respectively. The p-values of pair-I and III are <0.01, hence there is a highly significant difference among the groups. The p-value of pair-II is >0.05, hence there is no significant difference in pair-II.

The p-values of nonverbal aspects for pair-I, II and III are 0.316, 0.182 and 0.021 respectively. The p-value of pair-I and II are >0.05, hence there is no significant difference among the groups. The p-value of pair-III is <0.05, hence there is a significant difference in pair-III.

## Verbal aspects

| Aspects | Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Speech acts | Higher SES | 30 | 1.93 | 0.254 |
| | Middle SES | 30 | 1.73 | 0.450 |
| | Lower SES | 30 | 1.37 | 0.615 |
| Topic | Higher SES | 30 | 2.77 | 0.817 |
| | Middle SES | 30 | 2.73 | 0.980 |
| | Lower SES | 30 | 2.40 | 1.831 |
| Turn taking | Higher SES | 30 | 8.13 | 1.137 |
| | Middle SES | 30 | 7.90 | 1.539 |
| | Lower SES | 30 | 6.97 | 2.846 |
| Lexical selection | Higher SES | 30 | 0.80 | 0.407 |
| | Middle SES | 30 | 0.57 | 0.504 |
| | Lower SES | 30 | 0.50 | 0.509 |
| Stylistic variations | Higher Ses | 30 | 0.77 | 0.430 |
| | Middle Ses | 30 | 0.50 | 0.509 |
| | Lower Ses | 30 | 0.43 | 0.504 |

**Table 5:** Mean difference and SDs of verbal aspects in three SES groups.

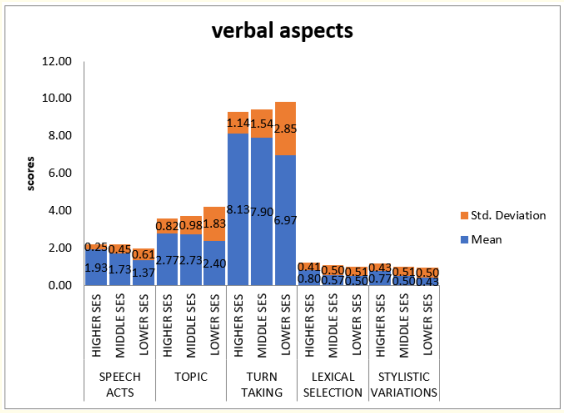


**Figure 2:** Means and SDs of all the verbal aspects.

From the table 5 the means and SDs of all the three SES are explained for verbal aspects speech acts, topic, turn taking, lexical selection and stylistic variation.

- The mean values of HSES, MSES and LSES for speech acts are 1.93, 1.73 and 1.37 respectively.

- The mean values of HSES, MSES and LSES for topic are 2.77, 2.73 and 2.40 respectively.
- The mean values of HSES, MSES and LSES for turn taking are 8.13, 7.90 and 6.97 respectively.
- The mean values of HSES, MSES and LSES for lexical selection are 0.80, 0.57 and 0.50 respectively.
- The mean values of HSES, MSES and LSES for stylistic variation are 0.77, 0.50 and 0.43 respectively.

The above table shows that the mean values of HSES are higher than MSES; MSES values are higher than LSES.

| Aspects | Pairs | Groups | Mean diff | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Speech acts | Pair-I | HSES | 0.2 | 0.098 |
| | | MSES | | |
| | Pair-II | MSES | 0.36 | 0.003 |
| | | LSES | | |
| | Pair-III | HSES | -0.5 | 0.00 |
| | | LSES | | |
| Topic | Pair-I | HSES | 0.03 | 0.920 |
| | | MSES | | |
| | Pair-II | MSES | 0.33 | 0.31 |
| | | LSES | | |
| | Pair-III | HSES | -0.36 | 0.27 |
| | | LSES | | |
| Turn taking | Pair-I | HSES | 0.23 | 0.64 |
| | | MSES | | |
| | Pair-II | MSES | 0.93 | 0.071 |
| | | LSES | | |
| | Pair-III | HSES | -1.16 | 0.025 |
| | | LSES | | |
| Lexical selection | Pair-I | HSES | 0.23 | 0.061 |
| | | MSES | | |
| | Pair-II | MSES | 0.06 | 0.58 |
| | | LSES | | |
| | Pair-III | HSES | -0.3 | 0.017 |
| | | LSES | | |
| Stylistic variations | Pair-I | HSES | 0.26 | 0.035 |
| | | MSES | | |
| | Pair-II | MSES | 0.06 | 0.59 |
| | | LSES | | |
| | Pair-III | HSES | -0.3 | 0.009 |
| | | LSES | | |

**Table 6:** Mean difference and p-values of verbal aspects comparison between the all three groups.

The above table shows the p-values for the pair-I, II and III for all the verbal aspects.

### Speech acts

- The p-values of pair-I, II and III for speech acts are 0.098, 0.03 and 0.00 respectively, the p-value of pair-I is >0.05, hence there is no significant difference in pair-I.
- The p-value of pair-II is <0.05, hence there is a significant difference in pair-II
- The p-value of pair-III is <0.01, hence highly significant difference is noted.

### Topic

The p-values of pair-I, II and III are 0.920, 0.312 and 0.273 respectively which are >0.05, hence there is no significant difference among all the three SES. Similar results were reported by Hage (2007), the children all the socioeconomic status maintained and responded for topic but did not initiate.

### Turn taking

- The p-values of pair-I, II and III are 0.649, 0.071 and 0.025 respectively.
- The p-values of pair-I and II are >0.05 hence, there is no significant difference among the groups.
- But the P-value of pair-III is <0.05, hence there is a significant in pair-III

### Lexical selection:

- The p-values of pair-I, II and III are 0.061, 0.588 and 0.017 respectively.
- The p-value of pair-I and II are >0.05, hence there is no significant difference among the groups.
- The p-value of pair-III is <0.05, hence there is a significant difference in pair-III.

### Stylistic variations

- The p-values of pair-I, II and III are 0.035, 0.59 and 0.009 respectively.
- The p-value of pair-I is <0.05, hence there is a significant difference in pair-I.

- The p-value of pair-II is >0.05, hence there is no significant difference in pair-II.
- The p-value of pair-III is <0.01, hence there is a highly significant difference in pair-III.

Hence, there is a significant difference in pair-III for speech acts, turn taking, lexical selection and stylistic variation but there is no difference in topic. There is a difference in pair-I for lexical selection and stylistic variations but no difference in speech acts, topic and turn taking. There is a difference in pair-II for speech acts but no difference in topic, turn taking, lexical selection and stylistic variations. The results are similar to those of Klekan (1988), narrative skills are better performed by children attending the private schools than public schools i.e. children of HSES. In some moments the children used non-verbal means of expression when taking their turns, as head affirmative or negative movements, gestures as response to researcher's demands, questions or comments or to drive attention to something in the room. The maximum and minimum values of occurrence in each institution and the means are present, without statistical significant difference between HSES and LSES.

## Paralinguistic aspects

| Groups | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| HSES | 30 | 4.66 | .484 |
| MSES | 30 | 4.80 | .802 |
| LSES | 30 | 4.30 | .988 |

**Table 7:** Mean and SDs of paralinguistic aspects in three SES groups.

From the above table, the means of paralinguistic skills for HSES, MSES and LSES are 4.6, 4.8 and 4.3 respectively.

| Pairs | Groups | Mean diff | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pair-I | HSES | -.133 | 0.513 |
| | MSES | | |
| Pair-II | MSES | -0.500 | 0.016 |
| | LSES | | |
| Pair-III | HSES | -0.367 | 0.074 |
| | LSES | | |

**Table 8:** Mean difference and p values of paralinguistic aspects in pair-I, II and III.

**Figure 3:** Mean and SDs of paralinguistic aspects in three SES groups.

From the table 7, means and SDs of paralinguistic skills are explained for all the three SES groups. The means of HSES, MSES and LSES are 4.6, 4.8 and 4.3 respectively. The results show that there are significant results between HSES and MSES only; there is no significant difference between any other groups, which are HSES-LSES, MSES-LSES.

| Pairs | Groups | Mean diff | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pair-I | HSES | -.133 | 0.513 |
| | MSES | | |
| Pair-II | MSES | -0.500 | 0.016 |
| | LSES | | |
| Pair-III | HSES | -0.367 | 0.074 |
| | LSES | | |

**Table 8:** Mean difference and p values of paralinguistic aspects in pair-I, II and III.

The table shows the comparison between different socio Economic status groups which shows a no significant difference between HSES to MSES and LSES, with a p-value 0.0513. However, there is no significant difference found between MSES and LSES. HSES to LSES.

## Nonverbal aspects

From the above table the means of nonverbal skills for HSES, MSES and LSES are 5.9, 5.1 and 5.2. The mean values of HSES are higher than those of MSES and LSES.

| Groups | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Higher SES | 30 | 5.97 | 1.098 |
| Middle SES | 30 | 5.10 | 1.269 |
| Lower SES | 30 | 5.27 | 1.048 |

**Table 9:** Mean and SDs of nonverbal aspects in three SES groups.

**Figure 4:** Mean and SDs of nonverbal aspects in three SES groups.

| Pairs | Groups | Mean diff | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pair-I | HSES | 0.8 | 0.004 |
| | MSES | | |
| Pair-II | MSES | -0.16 | 0.57 |
| | LSES | | |
| Pair-III | HSES | 0.7 | 0.02 |
| | LSES | | |

**Table 10:** Mean difference and p values of nonverbal aspects in pair-I, II and III.

The results show that there are significant results between n HSES and MSES only, there is no significant difference between any other groups, which are HSES-LSES, MSES-LSES.

The results of this study states that HSES perform better on pragmatic skills compared to MSES and LSES, and the socioeconomic status/ethnicity may show impact on the pragmatic skills of the children. These factors often expose children to different discourse styles and vocabulary in LSES than MSES and HSES (Ogbu, 1981).

## Summary and Conclusions

The results, which were based on pragmatic analysis of 90 children, aged 6-7 years, were involved in general conversation. These subjects were divided into three groups, show that most of the children indulged in conversation including verbal paralinguistic and nonverbal aspects. Comparing the performance of children from higher middle and lower SES, significant difference was observed in verbal aspects such as speech acts, turn taking, lexical selection and stylistic variation. On comparison of these aspects, HSES children performed better than MSES and LSES children. Whereas MSES showed slightly better performance compared to LSES.

However, it is important to note that there was no statistical significant difference between the mean of paralinguistic and nonverbal aspects, of children from different socioeconomic status, which showed that all the 90 children from different SES groups have performed equally on paralinguistic and nonverbal aspects.

Review also supports the current study, that is Aukrust, 2004 and Villiers,2004 explains culture and SES acts as major influential factor toward the development of conversation abilities in children language development, and there are universal aspects that can be identified regardless of the socio culture environment, as well as individual aspects, however some characteristics are dependent on the environment in which the subjects lives his/her personal family, socioeconomic or education as characteristics [3,36-42].

### From the obtained results it is inferred that

- There is exists a significant difference in the verbal aspects of pragmatic skills of HSES compared to MSES and LSES and a slight difference between MSES and LSES, where, HSES performed good followed by MSES and finally LSES.
- Verbal aspect is an influential factor, which are influences by SES factor. Some of the parameters such as speech acts, turn taking, lexical selection, stylistic variation are directly dependent on the quality of the environment, child's interaction in the society, responses from the listener, which differs based on the different SES.
- In paralinguistic and nonverbal aspects there is no significant difference noticed among three groups of SES in the age range 6-7years i.e., all the three groups performed equally on paralinguistic and nonverbal aspects.

### Merits of the present study

- The present study provides normative data on performance of typically developing Telugu speaking children within the range 6-7 years on pragmatic protocol.
- The results present study can be used for clinical purpose i.e. while assessing and intervention.
- The study detailed assessment of pragmatic in different socio economic status (like higher middle and lower).

### Limitations of the study

- The number of subjects studied is limited.
- Only Telugu speaking children were studied.
- The selected age range for the children was limited i.e. 6-7yrs.
- The subjects pragmatic skills vary according to the knowledge, I.Q, situation, person (speaker) but efforts were made to reduce the art factory in the conversational intervention but few factors could not be controlled.
- Gender differences were not studied.

### Implications for future research

- Different regional and cultural populations can be compared.
- The same study may be taken up using different methodology (i.e. video recording of the Childs daily communication interactions) along with parental interview.
- Each parameter can be intensively and extensively studied separately rather than accessing all parameter together.
- Similar study can be in any conducted clinical populations.

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