Hola, Shalom, Hello: Adolescent pragmatics from a cross-cultural perspective

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# Abstract

**Introduction:**

Classroom language demands increase when children enter the middle school environment (Brice & Heath, 1986; Larson & McKinley, 1998; Larson & McKinley, 1987). The pragmatic skills or social language skills of culturally and linguistically diverse adolescents from three different backgrounds were the focus of this study (North American Spanish-English speaking, Israeli Hebrew speaking, and North American English speaking).

**Methods:**

Adolescent students in Israel and the United States were compared on a standardized rating scale of adolescent pragmatics.  The *Adolescent Pragmatics Screening Scale, APSS* (Brice, 1992a; 199b; Brice & Absalom, 1997; Brice & Montgomery, 1996) was used to compare their pragmatics performance.

**Results:**

Results indicated significant differences on all topical scores and total score for the Israeli group and on three topical scores and total score for the bilingual (i.e., Spanish-English speaking) group.

**Implications:**

Cross-cultural pragmatic implications were developed for school speech-language pathologists, special education teachers, and general education teachers for instructing these adolescent groups in classroom activities.

**Introduction**

The pragmatic skills of culturally and linguistically diverse adolescents was the focus of this study.  Pragmatics is defined as the rules governing the use of language in a social context.  Children may experience pragmatic difficulties related to their language abilities. For instance, language impaired students and English language learners (ELLs) may display pragmatic problems in the classroom (Brice & Montgomery, 1996; Craig, 1993) due to different causes.  Similarly, monolingual students from other cultures are certain to have different ideations of what is pragmatically correct and incorrect according to their cultural background.  Hurley (1992) stated that each culture has its own set of  norms regarding the appropriateness of pitch, loudness, gestures, eye contact and other non-verbal pragmatics of language.   Students from varying cultural backgrounds may not be aware of the pragmatic and language demands of the mainstream classroom (Brice & Brice, 2009; Farghal, 2006).

Classroom language demands increase when the child enters the middle school environment (Bailey, 2006; Fang, 2006; Larson & McKinley, 1998; Larson & McKinley, 1987; Nippold, 2000; Schleppegrell, 2004).  The ability to use language appropriately becomes more difficult for adolescents as they progress through the different grade levels.  Nippold (2000) stated that adolescence becomes "a time when peer communication becomes an increasingly common activity and an important source of information, emotional support and well-being" (p. 16).  Hence, adolescence is a critical time period for all students to communicate and communicate well with others.

Language learners are faced with two types of tasks in acquiring communicative competence; the comparatively well known one of becoming proficient in the use of language form, and the less well understood one of learning how to use those forms in specific contexts in order to achieve desired actions (Brice & Absalom, 1997; Canale & Swain, 1981; Prutting & Kirchner, 1987).  Acquisition of these language rules requires a complex integration of linguistic, cognitive, and social knowledge (Cohen, 1996; Roth & Spekman, 1984).  Larson and McKinley (1998) found in their study that adolescents (with no apparent speech or language problems) used a variety of  different pragmatic language functions when interacting with peers compared to when interacting with adults. Specifically, differences occurred when the participants  used questions, figurative language, getting information, giving information, or getting the listener to do something. In addition, in their study the participants also differed in the pragmatic function of entertaining others.

Bilingual students, who do not speak English as their first language, are often hastily enrolled into regular education programs following transitional ESOL instruction (Brice & Montgomery, 1996).  Teachers may expect these ELL students to perform well in all aspects of language, including pragmatics, however, the period of ESOL instruction may be insufficient for these ELL students to acquire all necessary language skills (Collier, 1987).

 Schoolteachers and other education professionals may misinterpret culturally different behaviors as being indicative of a language impairment. The misunderstanding of pragmatics with culturally and linguistically different adolescents may result in their inappropriate referral for exceptional education testing or speech-language testing (Brice,

& Brice, 2009). Thus, the ability to use language appropriately is an issue for all bilingual or ELL students.  It is important for classroom teachers, speech-language pathologists, and special education teachers to have a better understanding of cross-cultural pragmatics, to lead to a better understanding of  when to refer for speech-language or special education testing.

Therefore, school personnel must meet the appropriate needs of bilingual or English language learners, students with language impairments, monolingual students from the United States, and monolingual students from other countries, while also differentiating between these groups.  One way of doing this is by comparing these different groups on a measure of pragmatics.

The purpose of this study was to determine if the pragmatics of  ELL students differed from those of monolingual English students (general education), and monolingual Israeli (ISR) (Hebrew-speaking) students. It was hypothesized that the groups would differ significantly in pragmatics performance.  It was expected that the U.S. English language learner (ELL group) students and the monolingual Israeli (ISR group) students would perform differently than the monolingual U.S. general education (GEN group) students on a test of pragmatics performance developed in the United States.

**Methods**

The purpose of this study was to compare the pragmatics of three groups of adolescents: Hispanic English language learning (ELL group), Israeli monolingual Hebrew speaking students ISR group), and general education monolingual students from the U.S. (GEN group).  The Adolescent Pragmatics Screening Scale (APSS) (Brice

1992a) was used to compare the pragmatic performance of the three groups. It has been used to differentiate students who have difficulty in the pragmatic area of language versus those who do not (Brice, 1992b, Brice & Absalom, 1997; Brice & Montgomery, 1996).

*Participants*

Three groups of students were selected to participate in this study. Groups consisted of English language learner (ELL) students enrolled in an ESOL program in the U.S. (ELL group; n=25), monolingual students from Israel (ISR) (n= 35), and general education monolingual students (GEN) from the United States (n= 35). Data were obtained in public schools in north-central Florida and in Hatzor Haglilit, Northern Galillee, Israel.  ELL and general education participants were obtained from north-central Florida.  Middle Eastern participants of Israeli nationality were obtained from an intensive Israeli summer camp, which focused on English instruction.  All Israeli students were monolingual Hebrew speakers, however some subjects were familiar with common English greetings such as "Hello", and "How are you?".  Selection of the Israeli participants was based upon convenience and enrollment in the Israeli summer camp. This limitation of the study is noted by the authors.

*Raters*

Raters for the ELL and monolingual general education U.S. students were obtained from north central Florida. Five general education teachers, one ESOL teacher, and three speech-language pathologists were trained by the authors to gather this student data using exemplars and non-exemplars from the APSS.  Each teacher rated between 5 to 25 students from his or her class. Student ratings occurred after a minimum of two

weeks of indirect observation by the classroom teacher. All teachers and speech-language pathologists were familiar with their students' behavior.  The ESOL teacher was familiar with her Hispanic students and their culture.  Teachers and speech-language pathologists predominantly rated their students from classroom interaction observation.  Other settings, such as the lunchroom or hallways, were also used.

The first and second authors trained all raters to gather student data from all monolingual and ELL participant students.  The training sessions covered material related to the intent of the APSS, how to use the APSS, how to rate the behaviors, how to score the APSS, what the scores meant, and what the specific behaviors and topics meant. An Israeli bilingual (Hebrew-English) camp coordinator was trained by the first and second authors on the use of the APSS to assist in the gathering of data from the Israeli students. The coordinator was familiar with all of the Israeli participants and their culture. Student ratings occurred after a minimum of three weeks of direct and indirect observation by both the first author and the Israeli camp coordinator.  The Israeli camp coordinator rated 20 Israeli subjects, and the authors rated 15 Israeli subjects.

All raters were trained by the authors.  All were trained to gather the student data using non-exemplars from the APSS, and were familiar with the students' behaviors. The use of the APSS has been demonstrated to possess high levels of validity (content validity, construct validity) and reliability (item analysis, inter-rater reliability, and intra-rater reliability) (Brice, 1992b; Brice & Absalom, 1997; Brice & Montgomery, 1996).

*APSS Instrument*

The APSS was developed as a screening tool for use by general education teachers, ESOL teachers, and speech-language pathologists. It defines six broad topics

across 38 individual behaviors, from which a general pragmatic total score and six sub-topic scores are calculated.  Reliability and validity information regarding the APSS is provided in earlier publications (Brice, 1992a; Brice & Absalom, 1997; Brice & Montgomery, 1996).   Topics include the following:

1.  *Affects the listener's behavior through language*- Does the student effect a response from the listener?

2.  *Expresses self*- Does the student express him/herself appropriately?

3.  *Establishes appropriate greetings*- Does the student greet others appropriately?

4.  *Initiates and maintains conversation*- Does the speaker use language to sustain and maintain the social and linguistic interactions of the group?

5.  *Listens actively*- Does the student take active participation as a listener in a conversation?

6.  *Cues listener regarding topic shifts*- Does the student regulate and monitor the conversation? Does he or she tell the listener verbally or non-verbally that a change in conversation is about to occur?

The APSS was revised to accommodate situational differences for the Israeli students, however the topic criterion remained the same.

### Results

The independent variable in this study consisted of the group assignments (ISR, ELL, and GEN groups). Dependent variables in this study were the APSS scores.  A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed indicating a significant difference between the group means ($p < 0.05$) on seven of the seven APSS measures.   The Total

Score measure, the topical scores of *Affects listener's behavior through language*, *Expresses self, Establishes appropriate greetings, Initiates and maintains conversation, Listens actively*, and *Cues the listener regarding topic shifts* revealed significant differences among the ISR, ELL, and GEN group means (p < 0.001).  A summary of these data are presented in Table 1.

<div align="center">&lt;Insert Table 1 About Here&gt;</div>

Figure one visually demonstrates these differences with the ISR group means significantly higher than the BIL and GEN groups.

<div align="center">&lt;Insert Figure 1 About Here&gt;</div>

Post-hoc analyses using Tukey analyses were performed.  Results indicated significant differences between the ISR and ELL group means on all seven APSS measures and also between the ISR and GEN group means on all seven APSS measures. In addition, differences were found for the ELL and GEN groups on four of the APSS topics (i.e., Total, Affects listener's behavior through language, Initiates and maintains conversation, and Listens actively).  These are presented in Table 2.

<div align="center">&lt;Insert Table 2 About Here&gt;</div>

**Conclusions**

Three groups were compared on an adolescent pragmatics screening measure. The groups included Israeli monolingual (Hebrew speaking) (ISR) students, Spanish-English speaking (ELL) students enrolled in an English language learning classroom, and monolingual (English) general education (GEN) students.  Results of those comparisons indicated significant differences among the groups on all measures of the APSS.

The ELL students differed from the GEN students on the Total score, topic one (Affects listener's behavior through language), topic four (Initiates and maintains conversations), and topic five (Listens actively).  The ELL students displayed difficulties, particularly in making requests of others and in listening to a speaker.  Speech language pathologists will not provide direct services to typically developing ELL students (that is, non-disordered).  With their knowledge of instructional strategies speech-language pathologists, however, may provide suggestions for the ESOL or general education classroom teacher to implement.  The ELL students' difficulties placed them at risk for cooperative learning situations in the classroom.  It is recommended that the teacher elicit, model, and possibly instruct the behaviors under the topics of making requests and actively listening (in order to increase listening comprehension and follow-through on tasks).  Instructional activities and strategies may focus on listening actively.  This knowledge may assist in learning the behaviors of making requests.  Since many of the behaviors may be  affected by an inadequate control of English grammatical structures, it is recommended that teachers also focus on the grammatical aspects of language including syntax, semantics, and morphology in improving their pragmatic skills.  A discussion of Israeli pragmatics follows.

Specifically, it was found that the group of Israeli students differed from the Spanish-English speaking ELL students and the monolingual (English speaking) general education students on all measures of pragmatics.  These differences seem to be a direct result of cultural differences between North America and Israel since all participants displayed normal language and did not show any language disorders, the APSS is a reliable and valid scale (Brice, 1992a; Brice & Absalom, 1997; Brice & Montgomery,

1996), and the ratings appeared to be valid based on the training given to the raters.  A more thorough discussion of Israeli cultural differences is discussed under observations (as noted by the authors).  It should be noted that differences in pragmatic aspects for the ELL and ISR groups were not due to inappropriate behaviors, but can be attributed to normal cross-cultural differences.

*Observations of Israeli Students*

In addition to the quantitative observations recorded on the APSS for the Israeli subjects, certain observations were also noted offering numerous qualitative pragmatic observations during the two-month stay in Hatzor Haglilit, Northern Israel.

It was noted that Israelis have a polychronic society, versus America's monochronic society. The Israeli society is largely based on group ideals and closeness with others, while North American society is largely based on individualism.   Israeli neighbors entered other neighbors' houses at will, and there seemed to a high level of trust between these people. Neighbors automatically kept a close watch on other neighbor's children at play, and reported any mishaps immediately to the child's family. These all appear to be attributes of a collectivistic culture (Ting-Toomey, 1994; Triandis, 1995).  These traits would affect an adolescent in their use of pragmatics via initiating and maintaining conversations.

There were also the issues of time and etiquette.  Israelis always seemed to be in a hurry when it comes to etiquette and politeness (i.e., pragmatic issues of establishing appropriate greetings); however, they are never really concerned with time as a social factor. For example, if someone is in line to use an ATM machine and does not walk up to the machine just as it is his/her turn, an Israeli would not hesitate to move ahead of the

slow person in line.  Also, it was noted that drivers did not obey the speed limit or traffic rules and only did so in the presence of a police officer. This may be thought of as a rude gesture, but then one begins to understand that Israelis see this action as a time factor. They are  less tolerant than North Americans when it comes to waiting.  It is pragmatically acceptable to seize such an opportunity.

It was further noted that Israelis communicated in close proximity with their partners (pragmatics of initiating and maintaining conversations and specifically, affecting the listener's behavior through language).  Close friends and family members always touched each other during conversation, whether it was holding hands or a light touch on an arm or leg.  Pragmatically this was different from North American culture, whose members may feel offended or uncomfortable by such proxemics (i.e., body distance) or gestures during conversation.

Pragmatic differences in pitch and loudness levels were also noted. Most North Americans consider it rude for a communicative partner to interrupt while another is talking, and feel it is more appropriate to turn-take in conversation. However, Israelis had no problem interrupting a conversation to get their point across, and may have even raised their voice louder than the competition to be heard.  This reflects the concept of overlap mentioned earlier (Cordella, 1996). At times, it was observed that  several Israelis were talking at once without the flow of conversation being interrupted.

Brice and Campbell (1996) offered the following suggestions for working with students from culturally diverse backgrounds, particularly collectivistic cultures (e.g., Hispanics and Israelis).  These strategies have been modified to reflect a pragmatics nature:

1. Do not assume that similar behaviors have the same pragmatic intention (or perlocutionary effect).  Assumptions may lead to miscommunications.

2. Suspend making judgments. Avoid the tendency to stereotype behaviors and interpretations.

3. Recognize the vitality of diverse communication strategies.  Language use will be different. The type of language use will reflect cultural orientations.

4. Respect others by acknowledging their thoughts and desires.

5. Provide translation clues.  Make your thoughts explicit.

6. Seek translation clues from others.  Have them explain their  actions. Pay attention to the patient and family's feedback.

7. Meta-communicate. Tell the other person how you interpreted the message or what she/he just said.

8. Expand your communication style repertoire.

North Americans that are unfamiliar with Hispanic or Middle Eastern Israeli culture may interpret their pragmatics as inappropriate.  However, these differences should be seen as normal cultural variations. Teachers must be aware that culture affects pragmatics of language in numerous ways. Use of a pragmatics screening scale such as the APSS or use of direct observation may assist the teachers in noting where these cultural and pragmatic differences exist so that appropriate evaluation of ELL, or culturally different adolescent students, such as Israeli or Hispanic children, will result.

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*Table 1.*

Means, Standard Deviations, and Analysis of Variance for Israel (ISR), English

Language Learners  (ELL) and General Education (GEN) Adolescent APSS scores.

| APSS Measure | ISR Mean (SD) | ELL Mean (SD) | GEN Mean (SD) | F | df | P Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Score | 116.886 (9.474) | 79.680 (17.644) | 62.657 (18.946) | 107.960 | 2, 92 | 0.000* |
| Topic 1: Affect listener's behavior through language | 26.160 (6.681) | 34.971 (3.321) | 16.914 (7.172) | 82.164 | 2, 92 | 0.000* |
| Topic 2: Expresses self | 21.486 (2.147) | 14.800 (4.601) | 12.629 (4.923) | 45.314 | 2, 92 | 0.000* |
| Topic 3: Establishes appropriate greetings | 5.560 (1.685) | 13.829 (2.256) | 6.057 (1.748) | 188.094 | 2, 92 | 0.000* |
| Topic 4: Initiates and maintains conversation | 17.743 (2.571) | 12.360 (3.353) | 10.029 (3.494) | 54.846 | 2, 92 | 0.000* |
| Topic 5: Listens actively | 20.657 (2.473) | 14.280 (3.943) | 11.286 (3.477) | 73.707 | 2, 92 | 0.000* |
| Topic 6: Cues the listener regarding topic shifts | 8.629 (1.536) | 6.250 (2.293) | 5.743 (1.945) | 21.125 | 2, 92 | 0.000* |

 * Significant beyond p<0.05

*Table 2.*

Tukey Post-Hoc Comparisons for the Israel (ISR), English Language Learners (ELL) and

General Education (GEN) Adolescent APSS scores.

| | ELL and ISR | ELL and GEN | ISR and GEN |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 0.000 * | 0.000 * | 0.000 * |
| Topic 1: Affect listener's behavior through language | 0.000 * | 0.000 * | 0.000 * |
| Topic 2: Expresses self | 0.000 * | 0.104 | 0.000 * |
| Topic 3: Establishes appropriate greetings | 0.000 * | 0.591 | 0.000 * |
| Topic 4: Initiates and maintains conversation | 0.000 * | 0.106* | 0.000 * |
| Topic 5: Listens actively | 0.000 * | 0.002* | 0.000 * |
| Topic 6: Cues the listener regarding topic shifts | 0.000 * | 0.270 | 0.000 * |

* Significant beyond p<0.05

*Figure 1.*

Bilingual (BIL), Israel (ISR), and General Education (GEN) students' mean topic scores and mean total

scores on the *Adolescent Pragmatics Screening Scale (APSS).*
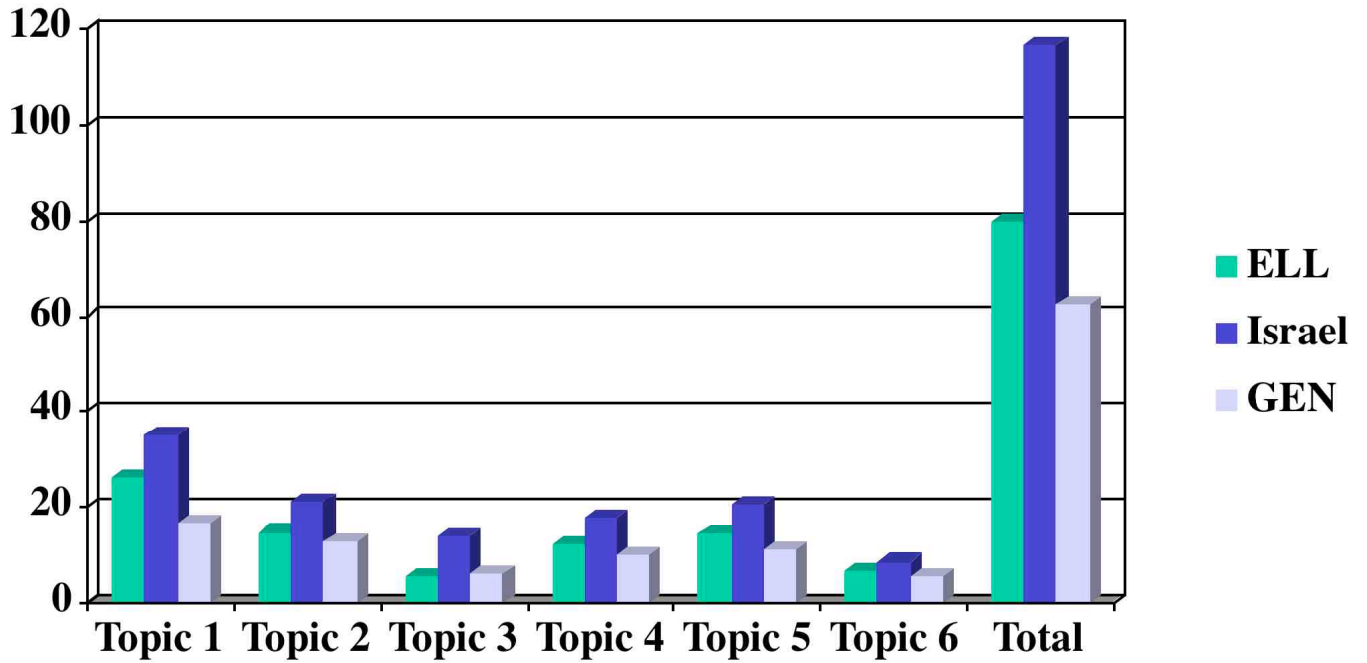
Appendix A
The *Adolescent Pragmatics Screening Scale (APSS)* Israel Adaptation

## The Adolescent Pragmatics Screening Scale (APSS), Israeli Adaptation

**Student Information :**

Name_____ Age_____Grade_____

School_____Date_____

1. Indicate the student's first language background

_____

2. Indicate the student's home language background if different first
   from the home language_____

3. Indicate student's English language proficiency level from 1 to 5
   (1= native-like, 2= near native-like, 3= medium, 4= limited, 5= very limited)

4. Indicate the student's cultural/ethnic background (e.g., Middle Eastern, Euro-
   American, African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American, Native-American or the
   student's specific cultural background)

_____

5. Indicate the number of years the student has been in schools in Israel

**Teacher/Rater Information :**

6. Indicate your professional background (camp counselor, Speech-Language
   Pathologist, Bilingual teacher, ESL teacher, General Education teacher, Special
   Education teacher)

7. Indicate your first language background

8. Indicate your proficiency level from 1 to 5 in English (1= native-like,
   2= near native-like, 3= medium, 4= limited, 5= very limited)

9. Are you proficient in another language other than English (Yes/No)?

10. If yes, indicate what language

11. Indicate your proficiency level from 1 to 5 in your other language (1= native-
    like, 2= near native-like, 3= medium, 4= limited, 5= very limited)

12. Are you culturally knowledgeable or aware about another culture?

13. Indicate your cultural knowledge/awareness level of the other culture   from 1
    to 5 (1= native-like, 2= near native-like, 3= medium, 4= limited, 5= very limited)

14.  Indicate which culture or cultures
Test Score Information :
**Scoring :  Mean Topic  Scores (M.T.S.)**
Topic 1 Sum of the individual behaviors ___  divided by 11=___ No.  1.
                                                                                    **M.T.S**.

Topic 2 Sum of the individual behaviors ___   divided by  7 =___ No.  2.
                                                                                    **M.T.S.**

Topic 3 Sum of the individual behaviors ___   divided by  4 = ___No.  3.
                                                                                    **M.T.S.**

Topic 4 Sum of the individual behaviors ___   divided by  6 =___ No.  4.
                                                                                    **M.T.S.**

Topic 5 Sum of the individual behaviors ___   divided by  7 =___ No.  5.
                                                                                    **M.T.S.**

Topic 6 Sum of the individual behaviors ___   divided by  3 =___ No.  6.
                                                                                    **M.T.S.**

Sum of **ALL** the individual behaviors


Sum of ALL the individual behaviors                    ___      divided by 39 = ___  **Total
                                                                                    Score (T.S .)**

15. Do you feel that this student's performance was influenced by the student's
cultural background?   _____Yes _____ No.

If the answer is **yes**, please indicate which behaviors lead you to this conclusion by
making a notation in the **Observation** section next to the corresponding behavior
and score.

# The Adolescent Pragmatics Screening Scale (APSS)

Name:_____Page One

**A. Performance Rating Scale**

**B. Observations**

Please indicate the student's level of
performance using the scale below.
1. Behavior is highly appropriate.
2. Behavior is moderately appropriate.
3. Behavior is borderline appropriate.
4. Behavior is moderately inappropriate.
5. Behavior is highly inappropriate.

This section is reserved for
observations that you feel
are pertinent to your
rating.

1.  Affects listener's behavior through language          SCORE                    OBSERVATIONS

    1. Asks for help (e.g., "I don't know how to do

       this problem", "Can you show me how  to

       look up a word in the dictionary ?",  "How

       do you spell _?")                                         **1._____**

    2. Asks questions (e.g., "How many times

       does 9 go into 72?" , "How  does a

       President get elected?")                             **2._____**

    3. Attempts to persuade others  (e.g., "I

       really think John is  the best candidate

       because_", "I don't think  I  should have  to

       do this because.._")                                     **3. _____**

    4. Informs another of important information

       (e.g., "Teacher, someone wrote some bad

       words on the wall outside", "I saw a snake in

       the boy's bathroom down the hall.")               **4. _____**

    5. Asks for a favor of a friend/classmate  ___

       (e.g., "Can you give me a ride to Kefiada ?",

       "Will you ask Sally out for Friday night for

       me ?")                                                          **5._____**

    6. Asks for a favor of the teacher (e.g., "Can

       I redo the art project??", "Can I

       get out of class five minutes early so I can

       catch the new bus?")                                     **6._____**

# The Adolescent Pragmatics Screening Scale (APSS)

Name:_____Page Two

**SCORE**

**OBSERVATIONS**

7. Asks for teachers and/or  adults' permission (e.g.,

   going to the bathroom, asking to get a drink of

   water, asking to sharpen a pencil)                    **7._____**

8. Asks for other student's permission (e.g.,

   "Can I invite John to go with us?", "Can I ask

   your girlfriend for her phone number?")               **8._____**

9. Able to negotiate, give and take, in order to reach

   an agreement ("I'll give you a ride to Kefiada if you

   pay me five dollars a week for gas.",  "I'll help you

   with your project if you help me paint

   my art assignment.")                                  **9._____**

10. Is able to give simple directions (e.g., telling how

    to find the bathroom or how to

    find the bathroom.)                                  **10._____**

11.Rephrases a statement (e.g., "You meant this,

    didn't you ?" "Did you mean this _?")                **11._____**

                    TOPIC 1 SUM OF SCORES _____


   2. Expresses self

1.Describes personal feelings in an acceptable

   manner (e.g., says, "I wish that this English class

   wasn't so boring." "I'm feeling really frustrated by

   all   the setbacks on my sculpturing project.")       **1._____**

2. Shows feelings in acceptable manner (e.g.,

   taking audible breaths to contain one's anger or

   smiling with enthusiasm to show pleasure).            **2._____**

3. Offers a contrary opinion in class discussions

   (e.g., "I  don't believe that Columbus was the first

   to discover  America, Leif Ericson was said to have

   reached Greenland and Nova Scotia before

   Columbus")                                            **3._____**

# The Adolescent Pragmatics Screening Scale (APSS)

Name:                              Page Three

**SCORE**

**OBSERVATIONS**

4. Gives logical reasons for opinions (e.g., "I think we should work on something else; we did something like this yesterday.")  **4._____**

5. Says that they disagree in a conversation (e.g., "I don't agree with you.", "We can't agree on this one.")  **5._____**

6. Stays on topic for an appropriate amount of time.  **6._____**

7. Switches response to another mode to suit the listener  (e.g., speaks differently when addressing the counselor than when addressing a friend, speaks differently to a younger child of 2-3 years than addressing peers of the same age.)  **7._____**

TOPIC 2 SUM OF SCORES _____


**3. Establishes appropriate greetings**

1. Establishes eye contact when saying hello or greeting.  **1._____**

2. Smiles when meeting friends  **2._____**

3. Responds to an introduction by other similar greeting.  **3._____**

4. Introduce self to others ("Hi, I'm _", " My name is_, what's yours ?)  **4._____**

TOPIC 3 SUM OF SCORES _____

# The Adolescent Pragmatics Screening Scale (APSS)

Name:_____Page Four

**SCORE**

**OBSERVATIONS**

**4. Initiates and maintains conversation**

1. Displays appropriate response time

**1._____**

2. Asks for more time (e.g., "I'm still thinking",

   "Wait a second", "Give me some more

   time.")

**2._____**

3.Notes that the listener is not following the conver-

   sation and needs clarification or more infor-

   mation (e.g., "There's a thing down there, down

   there, I mean there's a snake down in the boy's

   bathroom down the hall.")

**3._____**

4. Talks to others with appropriate pitch and loud-

   ness levels of voice (e.g., uses  appropriate levels

   for the classroom, the lunch-

   room, or after camp.)

**4._____**

5. Answers questions relevantly (e.g., Nine goes

   into72 8 times.", "The President gets

    elected by the people.")

**5._____**

6. Waits for appropriate pauses in conversation

   before speaking.

**6._____**

TOPIC 4 SUM OF SCORES _____


**5.  Listens Actively**

1. Asks to repeat what has been said for better

   understanding (e.g., Could you say that again ?",

   "What do you mean?")

**1._____**

2. Looks at teacher when addressed (e.g., through

   occasional glances or maintained eye

    contact)

**2._____**

3. Listens to others in class (e.g., head is up,

   leaning toward the speaker, eyes on the

   speaker.)

**3.**

# The Adolescent Pragmatics Screening Scale (APSS)

Name:_____Page Five

**SCORE**

**OBSERVATIONS**

4. Changes activities when asked by the teacher

   (e.g., is able to put away his or her paper and pen-

   cil or close a book or pull out something different

   without  having to be told personally).      **4._____**

5. Acknowledges the speaker verbally  (e.g., Says

   "Uh-huh, yeah, what else?")      **5._____**

6. Acknowledges the speaker nonverbally (e.g.,

   looks at the speaker through occasional glanc-

   es, maintained eye contact or nodding.)      **6._____**

7. Differentiates between literal and figurative

   language (e.g., The student knows that the ex-

   pression "John is Sharp as a tack" actually it means

   that John is very smart, or  that if "Sally's leg is

   killing her" it does not mean that Sally will die.)

      **7._____**

      TOPIC 5 SUM OF SCORES _____

**6.  Cues the listener regarding topic shifts**

1. Waits for a pause in the conversation before

   speaking about something else (e.g., waits for a

   pause of approximately 3-5 seconds at the end of a

   thought or sentence.)      **1._____**

2. Looks away to indicate loss of interest in

   conversation (e.g., looks away and maintains this

   look for approximately 3-5 seconds.)      **2._____**

3. Makes easy transitions between topics (e.g., the

   listener does not question what they are talking

   about.)      **3. _____**

      TOPIC 6 SUM OF SCORES _____

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