

Theory of Mind and Language in the Adult: Some Considerations from the Perspective of Speech Therapy

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therefore, the listener may feel hurt, insulted, or accepted. All this control requires a cognitive and affective support, which manifests itself throughout people's interactions and makes it possible to organize their communicative performance. In face-to-face conversation, the ability to recognize mental states in facial expressions, especially the eyes, is another advanced form of ToM that emerges in adolescence and which is perfected throughout adulthood [25-30].

Following from this, when analysing communication, many aspects must be taken into account, including the quality of the relationship

deficits in the ability to connect knowledge to action affect the emission of spontaneous words, the ability to organize speech and interpret ironies and metaphors. That is, the failures in reading the context can determine an inefficient adjustment to the demands of the context and consequently cause a poor selection of the linguistic contents with which to act.

Poletti, Enrici and Adenzato claim that the ToM has two components. The first, the cognitive, which refers to the ability to make inferences about one's beliefs, desires, thoughts, motivations and intentions. The second, the affective, referred to as the capacity to infer emotions and feelings of the subject and other actors in social and communicative relations. Kipps and Hodges conclude that in general terms the ToM represents the ability to take the perspective of another person and associate it with empathy, affirming that it is a similar ability to this one, because it refers specifically to the understanding of the feelings of another person or the capacity to appreciate their emotional concerns.

Youmans & Bourgeois argue that the cognitive component of ToM is compromised in Alzheimer's disease. Harley, Jessiman, MacAndrew & Astell state that in various types of dementia metalinguistic abilities are affected. Specifically,

rationale of this approach is to stimulate the metalinguistic performance of this population in the most natural contexts possible. It is based on the production of texts from the spontaneous and induced linguistic activity of functions such as listening-speaking or reading-writing in ten ToM skills to which have already been referred to: describe an object or situation not present, remember past events, anticipate future events, describe scenes, ability to contradict or find antonyms, read emotions, use of fictional language, ability to lie and express sarcasm. The general objective is to provide the language therapist with a structured and organised guide aimed at optimizing the necessary skills so that the person with dementia in the initial and middle stage can sustain an adequate linguistic exchange with their habitual interlocutors [34-38].

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