

The effectiveness of psychological counseling in relieving alexithymia (difficulty expressing feelings) in children with reading difficulties

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Abstract:

The prevalence of alexithymia, as well as the prevalence of learning difficulties in general and reading difficulties in particular varies, and the effect of this behavior on learning difficulties is clear. Through the researcher's work and his knowledge, it was found that the fear of students with learning difficulties from expressing their feelings and being terrified, which has a negative impact on their general lives, which reduces their mixing with their fellow students and makes them feel completely isolated, which affects their academic achievement, behavior and social compatibility. Therefore, the aim of the research is to know the effect of Psychological counseling for the development of expressive language and its effect on reducing the symptoms of alexithymia among students with reading difficulties. The research sample consisted of (52) students with reading difficulties, (24) control groups, and (28) experimental groups, whose ages ranged between (10-11) years. The research tools included: The Diagnostic Assessment Scale for Reading Difficulties, the Speech and Language Scale in the Kuwaiti Dialect, which is standardized in the Kuwaiti environment for Professor Maryam Sami Jojo. The results of the research concluded that there are statistically significant differences at the level (0.01) between the mean scores of the experimental group members in each From the pre and post measurements on the expressive difficulties scale for children in the direction of the dimensional measurement, that is, the average scores of the experimental group members in the post measurement are statistically higher than their counterpart in the pre measurement, where the value of (Z) reached (- 3.71), which is a statistically significant value at the level of (0. 01), there are statistically significant differences at the level (0.01) between the average scores of the members of the experimental group after applying the program and the average scores of the members of the control group after applying the program on the scale of expressive difficulties in the direction of the experimental group, meaning that the average scores of the experimental group members in the post-measurement are higher In statistical terms of its counterpart in the control group, where the value of (Z) was (-2.34), which is a statistically significant value at the level of (0.01), there are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the individuals in the experimental group in each of the The two measurements of the dimension and the tracer on the expressive difficulties of children, that is, the average scores of the members of the experimental group in the post measurement in the expressive difficulties are equal in statistical significance to the counterpart in the tracer measurement, where the value of (Z) (-1.01) is a non-statistically significant value. By discussing the results, the researcher concluded that various behavioral

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programs must be supported and programs should be prepared that help in developing the behavior of children with learning difficulties, provide families with programs, courses and methods of dealing with people with learning difficulties, and activate the role of the media in educating society on the interest and positive interaction with this category.

Keywords: *alexithymia, Diagnostic Assessment, learning difficulties*

I. Introduction:

There is no doubt that the process of psychological counseling is of great importance, as it is a process aimed at helping the student to understand himself correctly, so that this understanding helps him to draw future plans for him, and to follow the right path and correct behavior, which means providing advice to others and guiding him to the ideal behavior.

The American Psychological Association (APA, 2015, 259) has indicated that psychological counseling is a professional aid to treat personal problems, including emotional, behavioral, occupational, marital, educational, rehabilitation, and various life problems, and the counselor uses various techniques such as: Active listening, mentoring, advising, clarifying and administering exams. Therefore, psychological counseling is considered for mental health, through which it is possible to help the guide to overcome crises, which stand in the way of achieving his mental health, especially with the presence of difficulty in learning, low level of achievement and its relationship to some other variables such as bullying, difficulty expressing feelings, lack of social communication, and other matters.

Expressive language is defined as the set of skills responsible for converting ideas into phonemic linguistic symbols, and here the message is verbal or it transforms visual symbols and the message is in this form in writing. It is also known as the ability to convey the message that the individual intends to convey, which is referred to in the productive language. Al-Waqfi, (2003), and Zureikat (2004) described it as the ability to express our thoughts in spoken words, and pronunciation is the ability to articulate every word clearly.

The difficulty in describing feelings (alexithymia) is represented in the weakness of the ability to use long, complex or abstract sentences, the weakness of the use of correct phrases, words and grammar rules, the weakness of awareness of the social context of the language, and the weakness of the ability to follow the topic and choose the correct words (Smith, 2001). (2013, 64) that psychologists developed the concept of difficulty describing emotions (alexithymia) when they noticed that their patients with psychosomatic diseases had great difficulty verbally expressing their struggles. Taylor et al (1997, 234) explained that it is a condition that reflects a set of aspects Limits in the ability to deal with emotions from a cognitive point of view. It also reflects the individual's difficulties in organizing his sentiments, which makes them, miss the role that emotions can play in the conduct of human life. Alexithymia also represents a difficulty in perceiving the individual, his response in social situations, which results in a decrease in the social expressive ability, especially if the individual is a child, which may impede the process of his linguistic maturity, and cause social misconduct, and impose isolation on the other hand, his ability decreases.

On the confrontation Lundh et al. (2002) added that alexithymia is a personal construct characterized by difficulty in expressing feelings, lack of imagination and weak symbolic capacity, and it reflects the deficit of cognitive abilities to express emotion and the lack of mental perception of emotion, this deficiency causes the inability to control emotion and sentiment. Therefore, these individuals tend to have both physical and psychological symptoms (Lundh et al, 2002,1065).

Reading difficulties is one of the most common topics among students with learning difficulties, as we can find many aspects that exist among students with learning difficulties, and among these manifestations we find that the student suffers from a weakness in understanding what he is reading, and the reason may be due to his inability to analyze the sounds of words. We also find that this student reverses words and syllables from writing or reading, and it also appears that his achievement is low compared to his regular peers (Kawafa, 2005, 128).

The studies indicate that there are problems in the field of expressive and receptive language among students with learning difficulties, such as the study of Urlike&Julth, (2003), which was based on (94) children, in which they compared between ordinary children and children with learning difficulties in terms of language problems and behavioral problems, The results showed that expressive language difficulties for people with learning difficulties were represented by speaking little, having a little vocabulary, poor awareness of vocabulary meanings, shortening sentences, weak use of grammar and difficulty describing feelings, while receptive language difficulties were represented in poor understanding of simple and complex words and sentences and poor comprehension, and they are exposed. This is because of possible development of behavioral problems, as the researchers justified this by saying that language plays an active and vital role in the child's behavioral, emotional, social and cognitive development. The study of Sponer (2002) showed that children with learning difficulties often suffer from expressive language difficulties resulting from difficulties in receptive language, and that through treatment of psychological counseling and training, they can improve their ability to speak and respond.

Therefore, it is necessary to create a family and community atmosphere dominated by warmth, stability and psychological safety to reduce the social, psychological, behavioral and linguistic problems of people with learning difficulties, pointing out that people with this disorder need cultural and educational awareness and the concerted efforts of society and all ministries and government agencies in cooperation with the private sector to improve and increase life skills. And behavioral they have.

Research problem:

The percentage of dyslexia (reading difficulties) in Kuwait is (6%). The head of the Kuwait Dyslexia Society, Dr. Muhammad Yusef Al-Qatami stressed the need to support the efforts of the team with him to mitigate the effects of reading dyslexia, pointing out that a survey conducted by the association in cooperation with the Ministry of Education proved that a large percentage of our schools suffer from reading dysfunction. On the other hand, some research has indicated that alexithymia reduces the efficiency of interpersonal communication and weak relations between individuals. Likewise, Alexithymia avoids conflict and tends to approach others coldly and separately, and they avoid close social relations, and if they are close to them, they tend to be independent and relations remain superficial. Therefore, they find it difficult to establish long-term relationships due to problems affecting this relationship (Taylor &Bagby, 2000, 43).

The study of Mellor and Dagnan (2005) shows that alexithymia is associated with many mental disabilities, learning difficulties, health problems, and slow learning, and that the prevalence of alexithymia among students with learning difficulties is (20%), and there is no doubt that it affects the academic achievement, as he suffers Students with learning difficulties have difficulties in any aspect of the language, such as receiving sounds and understanding their meanings, remembering verbal material, and clarity of expression. These difficulties range from mild to profound. Some researchers have emphasized the difference in the method of identifying, describing and awareness of feelings from one person to another. There are those who can express them verbally - low alexithymia - and there are those who have difficulty expressing them verbally expressing them, with illness, pain, fear, anxiety, distress, or high alexithymia. The emotional life of individuals with alexithymia inability to express emotions, which makes them miss the role that emotions can play in the conduct of human life, and alexithymia represents a difficulty in the individual's awareness and response to social situations, which may result in a decrease in the social expressive ability, especially if the individual is a child, which may It impedes his linguistic maturity process, creates social misconduct, imposes isolation on him on the other hand, and reduces his ability to confront (Abu Al-Diyar, 2013, 65). Lerner (2000) notes that these difficulties are characterized by all or some of these difficulties:

1. Delay in speaking and falling into syntactic or grammatical errors.
2. The answer to the questions is limited to one word, due to the inability to answer the questions in one sentence.
3. Stuttering or very slow in word of mouth, or prolongation in talking about a certain idea.
4. Avoid talking, especially in front of strangers and groups.
5. Failure to describe objects, images, or experiences.
6. Frequent use of signs to indicate the correct answer.

Therefore, psychological counseling must be intervened, as it is an organized process that interferes with the treatment of people with learning difficulties in understanding his needs, training him masterfully in various ways, modifying his behavior, developing the positive side in his personality and satisfying his various needs in order to achieve the greatest possible scientific and practical successes.

The research problem crystallized in the following questions:

- 1- Are there differences between the mean scores of the pre and post scales on the speech and language scale for the members of the experimental group after psychological counseling?
- 2- Are there averages of the post-measurement scores on the speech and language scale between the experimental and control groups after psychological counseling?
- 3- Are there differences between the mean scores of the post and tracer scales on the speech and language scale for the members of the experimental group after psychological counseling?

The Research aims:

The aim of this research is to know the effect of psychological counseling for expressive language development and its effect on reducing the symptoms of alexithymia among students with reading difficulties.

The research importance:

1- The importance of the current research lies in the importance of the research sample, which are reading difficulties, as it focuses on developing expressive language and its effect on reducing alexithymia. Students can also be trained on self-confidence and inner conviction to learn.

2- Shedding attention and highlighting the dimensions of reading difficulties, which would have the greatest impact on the emergence of various disorders, which calls for counseling and treatment programs to help increase their level of achievement.

3- The lack of training programs in Arab societies to reduce alexithymia among students with learning difficulties.

4- This research can contribute to increasing the information balance of researchers on the same topic.

5- In the event that the program used in the research is effective in reducing alexithymia, it is recommended for students with reading difficulties to learn positively, improve their level, and develop their self-esteem.

6- This research could open the way for other studies to benefit from the training program in the Arab environment, as it would benefit the curriculum supervisors and special education teachers in the field of learning difficulties.

7 - Providing the opportunity to review the plans and curricula developed at the different stages of education, in order to ensure a reduction in the rates of Alexithymia among students.

II. The research terms:

1- Psychological counseling.

A professional relationship that enables individuals, families and groups to enjoy mental health, wellness, education, and career goals (Mclead, 2013,7).

The researcher defines psychological counseling among students as a procedural relationship between a mentor, a guide based on principles, laws and methods derived from psychological theories, the purpose of which is to help the guide to modify his behavior, develop the positive side of his personality and satisfy his various needs to achieve the greatest possible scientific and practical successes.

2- Alexithymia.

Neurological dysfunction, due to insufficient communication between neurons in the limbic system and the neocortex, resulting in delusions, difficulty describing emotions and a pattern of operative thinking (Timary.,Luts., Hers &Luminet, 2008).

The researcher defines alexithymia in children procedurally as the difficulty of identifying and describing feelings, the weakness of expression, and distinguishing feelings and emotions as a result of processing emotional information, and it is procedurally measured by the degree to which students obtain through their responses to the paragraphs of the scale prepared for the purposes of the current research.

3- Dyslexia

It is a type of inability to learn based on language and refers to a group of symptoms that occur in people who have difficulties in specific language skills, especially reading, and students with reading dyslexia have special difficulties in other language skills such as spelling, writing, and pronouncing words, and it is related to the different way it receives The brain contains information, stores and retrieves it, sometimes accompanied by problems remembering and arranging information, and in skills of organization and sequence (Abu Al-Diyar et al., 2012, 100).

The researcher defines procedurally speaking students with reading difficulties that they are those who get a low rating in the ability to read by the teacher, they get low scores in the Arabic language test for the previous year, and they get a poor grade in the diagnostic interview for the level of reading aloud and reading comprehension inaccuracy and very slow performance in computerized tasks for reading dyslexia.

4- Cognitive-behavioral counseling

CBT refers to a set of principles and procedures that share the assumption that cognitive processes influence behavior, and these processes change through cognitive-behavioral techniques (Muhammad, 2000, 21).

This study adopts the definition of the cognitive-behavioral counseling program as a set of training sessions that stem from the behavioral theory that was developed using the specific techniques of this theory such as self-awareness, dialogue, reinforcement, modeling, pleasant activities and other behavioral techniques.

5- Training program

It can be defined as an organized plan to train a group of individuals to master the training course (Abu Al-Diyar and others, 2012, 43).

The researcher defines the procedural instructional training program as to the degree obtained through its responses to the program sessions for the purposes of the current research.

The research instrument:

- Psychological counseling
- Speech and Language Scale in the Kuwaiti Dialect, which is codified in the Kuwaiti environment,

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The research limits:

1- Human limits: The current research was limited to primary school students in the fifth grade with reading difficulties that are in Al Sadeem Primary School in the State of Kuwait. One group (experimental) was chosen to apply the scale before and after the program and a tracer measurement.

2- Spatial limits: Al Sadeem Primary School in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate, State of Kuwait.

3- Time limits: the first semester of 2017-2018

III. The results:

1- There were statistical differences at the level of (0.01) between the average scores of the experimental group in the College of Pre and Post measurements on the Difficulty Scale, difficulties for children in the dimensional measurement. The mean scores of the experimental group in the telemetry were higher in statistical significance than their counterpart in the pre-measurement. Where the value of (Z) reached (- 3.71), which is the value of a statistical function at the level of (0.01).

2- There are differences in the degrees of the experimental group after applying the degrees of the experimental group in the degrees of the experimental group after the degrees of the degrees of the experimental group in the degrees of the experimental group statistically than its counterpart in the control group, where the value of (Z) reached (-2.34), which is a statistically significant value at the level of (0.01).

3- There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the individuals in the experimental group in both the post and tracer measurements on the expressive difficulties of children, meaning that the average scores of the experimental group members in the post measurement in expressive difficulties is equal in statistical significance to its counterpart in the tracer measurement, where the value (Z) is (-1.01) It is a non-statistically significant value.

IV. Recommendations:

In light of the research procedures and the researcher's findings, and through the difficulties encountered during the course of the study, the researcher presents a set of recommendations, as follows:

1. The various behavioral programs that help in developing the behavior of children with learning difficulties must be supported financially and morally by government agencies.

2. Special programs and special curricula should be prepared targeting people with learning difficulties of all kinds, appropriate for their ages and the difficulties they face.

3. Providing families with programs, courses and methods of dealing with their children with learning difficulties.

4. Activating the role of the media in educating society on the interest and positive treatment of this group, which would allow them to have a healthy social growth.

5. The necessity to establish special schools for the category of learning difficulties, consisting of qualified specialists and teachers that deal with different age groups and vary in their modern programs and curricula.

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