Improving Language Acquisition And Prosocial Outcomes For Culturally Diverse Groups With Tootling

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1. Introduction

- Current developments in the German school system:
  - Transformation towards inclusive schooling
  - Rapidly increased migration since 2015 due to wars & economic crises
- Multilingualism at German Schools:
  - German language of students with a migration background are evaluated as a problematic issue (Bundesamt für Migration and Flüchtlinge, 2008)
  - A lot of these students also show language disorders or school performance problems (e.g., Luke & Ritterfeld, 2011, Schütte & Lohde, 2013)
- Difficulties in language acquisition can have negative effects on various areas of social-emotional development (e.g., Rilling et al., 2016)
- Necessity of effective and at the same time practical approaches that promote language skills and also focus on emotional and social support ➔ Tooting PLUS
- Tooting (Skinner, Skinner & Cashwell, 1998) is a classroom-based intervention and one variant of Positive Peer Reporting used to increase peer prosocial interactions while decreasing negative and disruptive peer interactions
- No corresponding studies in classrooms in Germany (Hinz et al., 2014)

2. Tooting PLUS (TL+)

- Implementation in analogy to Chikah et al. (2009) and Hinz et al. (2014)
- Additionally adapted in order to promote social-emotional outcomes and language acquisition
- Teacher praises the students for meeting the goal
- Providing the reward as soon as possible
- Setting a new goal
- Teacher places tickets on the students’ desks and reminds them to pay attention to prosocial behaviors within the classroom environment
- At the end of each school day tootles are read out loud (by the students), reflected and rewarded
- Defining and naming examples of prosocial behaviors
- Learning how to fill out a tootle-ticket correctly
- Cooperative collection of realizable and attractive rewards
- Common agreement upon reward for group contingency in prior
- Transparency regarding the number of correct tootle-tickets needed for receiving the reward (tootling progress chart)

3. Purpose of the current study

- Adaption of TL+ for school settings in Germany
- Implementation and evaluation of the effects of TL+ on:
  - disruptive behavior
  - prosocial behavior
  - social integration
  - language skills

4. Method

4.1 Sample & Setting

- New 2nd grade classrooms of different inclusive elementary schools (Grundschulen) in North Rhine Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany
- Conditions of participation: at least five students with speaking- or behavior problems in each class

4.2 Design

- ABAB reversal design to evaluate the effects of TL+ (disruptive behavior)
- Standardized pre-post-measures will be used to evaluate the effects of a variant, modified to support language acquisition, prosocial behavior, and disruptive behavior
- Duration of study: 7 weeks (Feb 17th to Apr 3rd, 2020)

4.3 Measures

- Socratic (e.g., Kulwals & Wilbert, 2015; Moreno, 1996)
- Strength & Difficulties Questionnaire (teacher version) (SDQ-Deu, Klasen, Woerner, Rothenberger & Goodman, 2003)
- Social-emotional experiences in school from student perspective (questionnaire) (Fragebogen zur Erfassung emotionaler und sozialer Schülererfahrungen von Grundschulkindern erster und zweiter Klassen (FEISS 1-2), Rauer & Schuck, 2004)
- Different standardized German language tests of grammar and speaking comprehension with the high-risk students (e.g., ESGRAF 4-8 (Motsch & Rietz, 2016); TROG-D (Fox-Boyer, 2016))
- Literature on high-risk-students (e.g., ESGRAF 4-8 (Motsch & Rietz, 2016); TROG-D (Fox-Boyer, 2016))
- German language skills of students with a migration background are evaluated as a problematic issue (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2008)

4.4 Pre-Training and Implementation

- Teacher and TL+ training and materials at a later time
- Pre-Training of the Tooting procedure (carried out by teachers)
- Learning how to fill out a tootle-ticket correctly
- Defining and naming examples of prosocial behaviors
- Translating the Tooting procedure (carried out by teachers)
- Setting a new goal
- Pre-Training of the Tooting procedure (carried out by teachers)
- Setting a new goal
- Defining and naming examples of prosocial behaviors
- Teaching how to fill out a tootle-ticket correctly
- Collecting of realizable and attractive rewards
- Common agreement upon reward for group contingency in prior
- Transparency regarding the number of correct tootle-tickets needed for receiving the reward (tootling progress chart)

5. Materials

5.1 TOOTLING PLUS (Vendor)

- TOOTLING PLUS
- Standardized pretest
- A-Phase
- B-Phase
- Teacher praises the students for meeting the goal
- Providing the reward as soon as possible
- Setting a new goal
- Teacher places tickets on the students’ desks and reminds them to pay attention to prosocial behaviors within the classroom environment
- At the end of each school day tootles are read out loud (by the students), reflected and rewarded
- Defining and naming examples of prosocial behaviors
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6. Discussion

- Current state of TL+ study:
  - Positive feedback from the teachers of the intervention groups (good start, good materials, etc.)
  - Negative feedback from some of the teachers of the waiting-list control groups (pre-testing requires too much teaching time)
- Challenging conditions like extenuating circumstances (e.g., stormy weather ➔ schools were closed for 2 days)
- Combined support of language and social-emotional skills with TL+ could be an economic and practical approach
- Limitations: Due to the design and the sample, the results could not be generalized beyond this study

References


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