

METACOGNITIVE PROCESSES IN JUSTIFYING THE SOLUTIONS OF THE RAVEN'S SPM38 TEST AND METALINGUISTIC ABILITIES. STUDIES ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.

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Two studies are reported: the first one focuses on the ability to verbally argument the solutions of Raven's SPM38 test, whereas the second analyzes meta-linguistic abilities in High school students. Participants received a specific instruction for eliciting verbal argumentation of solutions for each item; two scales were developed for the assessment of the argumentations: one (R.ARG.S.) tapped on the right solutions, by measuring the level of abstract reasoning; the other (W.ARG.S.) tapped on the wrong solutions, by measuring the level of incorrectness of the wrong answer. These two kind of scores were calculated in addition to the canonical score (C.S.), based on the number of correct solutions. In order to assess meta-linguistic abilities, the TAM-3 (Pinto e Iliceto, 2007), specifically designed for adolescents and adults, was administered.

In the first study, carried out in Naples with 100 High school (Scientific Lyceum) students, 50 girls and 50 boys (mean age: 18.6) with average SES, girls significantly outperformed boys in all the totals of the MAT-3 and in the W.ARG.S., although mean C.S. scores were similar between the two gender subgroups. Correlations between meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic measures were only found within the two tests (SPM38 and MAT-3), but not across them.

In the second study, carried out in Rome with 50 High school (Scientific Lyceum) students and 50 High school (Classic Lyceum) students (mean age: 17.6), equally distributed by gender, once again girls outperformed the boys in all the totals of the TAM-3, the R.ARG.S and the W.ARG.S, despite the highly similar averages from the SPM38 C.S. Correlations were found both within and across the various tests, except for the only score which did not require argumentations at all, i.e. the C.S. of the SPM38.

Results were discussed from theoretical and practical perspectives: on one hand, analysis of argumentative abilities can improve the assessment of cognitive processes in normal students, but on the other hand, it can also contribute to elicit and assess cognitive strategies in persons with Specific Learning Disorders.

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