

ABSTRACT

THESIS: The Role of the Right Hemisphere in Processing Sarcasm in Asperger's Disorder

STUDENT: Darren Smucker

DEGREE: Master of Arts

COLLEGE: Science and Humanities

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Individuals with Asperger's Disorder (AD) have difficulty with social interactions and understanding sarcasm. One source of these deficits is the deficient use of pragmatic language. Right hemispheric (RH) dysfunction has been linked to trouble understanding sarcasm and using pragmatic language. This study attempted to determine the role of the RH in sarcasm comprehension by using a computerized dichotic listening task. Participants with AD were matched with typically developing participants and completed a dichotic listening task, brief intelligence assessment and a perceived accuracy questionnaire. The results showed participants from both groups performed similarly on the dichotic listening task. Interestingly, those with AD did not appear to have insight into their ability to identify sarcastic or sincere tones while the typically developing group did.