



ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION IMPAIRMENTS USING THE TLC SCALE

IN A CONTROL GROUP VERSUS A GENDER AND AGE-MATCHED GROUP OF PATIENTS

WITH SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS COMING FROM A USERS' ASSOCIATION

Andrea Rodríguez, Antonio Arjona, Javier Cano, Javier Alonso and Natalia Jimeno. *University of Valladolid, Spain.*
natalia.jimeno@uva.es

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INTRODUCTION

- Patients with **severe mental illness (SMI)** often show **language and communication impairments** (Jimeno, 2024; Kircher, 2018; Salavera et al, 2013).
- Their study requires an **accurate assessment** using specific tests and a comparison with a **control group**.

Aim. To assess **language and communication impairments** by means of the **Scale for the Assessment of Thought, Language, and Communication (TLC)** in **oral samples** of a **healthy control group (HC)** matched to a group of patients with **severe mental illness (SMI)**.

METHODS

- Observational, descriptive and correlational study**
- Recruitment:**
 - Healthy subjects from a social network/public library, Benavente (Spain)
 - Patients from a users' association, Valladolid (Spain)
- Informed consent** and **ethical committee approval** for both groups
- Speech sample:**
 - Obtained using the standardized interview **PRESEEA** (Moreno, 2021)
 - Analyzed using the **TLC** after previous training (Andreasen 1979)
- Scale of reading habits** (Aguilar Rojas, 2018)

RESULTS

HC group: 20 subjects (40% females, mean age, 48.2 years) versus **SMI group:** 20 subjects (45% females, mean age, 51.5 years)

- Examples of poverty of speech**

HC group. Interviewer (I): What is your daughter like? Please describe her physically to me. **Subject (S): Big.**

SMI group. I: How many rooms does your flat have? **Patient (P): Four.** I: What is the flat like? **P: It is big.** I: So, you have a room for each of you, right? **P: Yes.**

I: And which is your favorite part of the house? **P: The kitchen.**

- Examples of tangentiality**

HC group. I: And are the friends that you have in childhood similar as those you have now? **S: Well, I keep some of them. In fact, two of my best friends now were my friends since the school.**

SMI group. I: This year I think it will be even hotter than last year. What do you think? **P: Well, last year we were caught by the heat wave in Málaga and we didn't go to the beach because the sand was... burning, that is, it was burning, you couldn't step on it. The environment is not being taken care of much and temperatures are skyrocketing.**

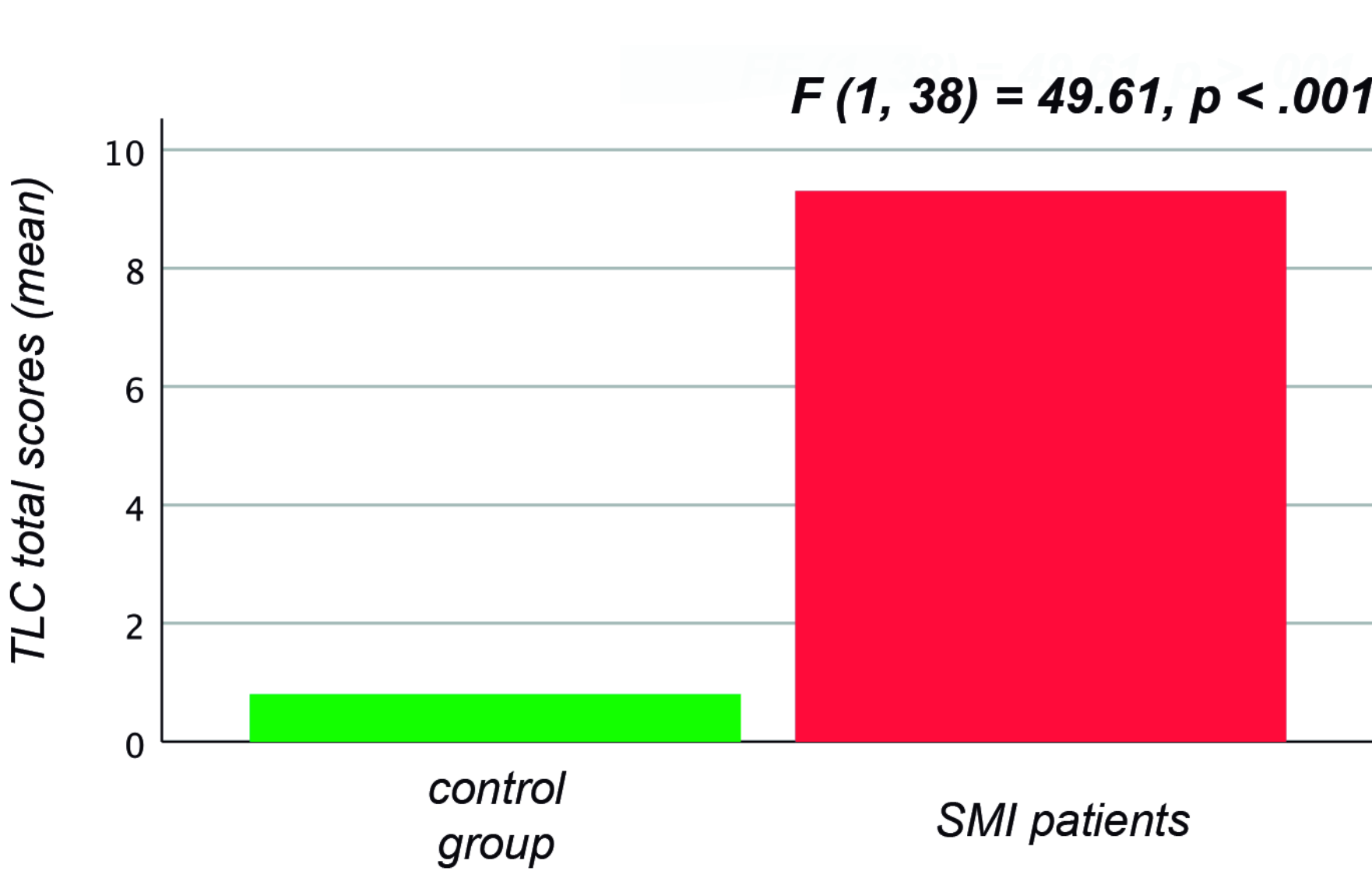


Figure 1. Comparison of the TLC total scores between the control group and patients with severe mental illness (SMI).

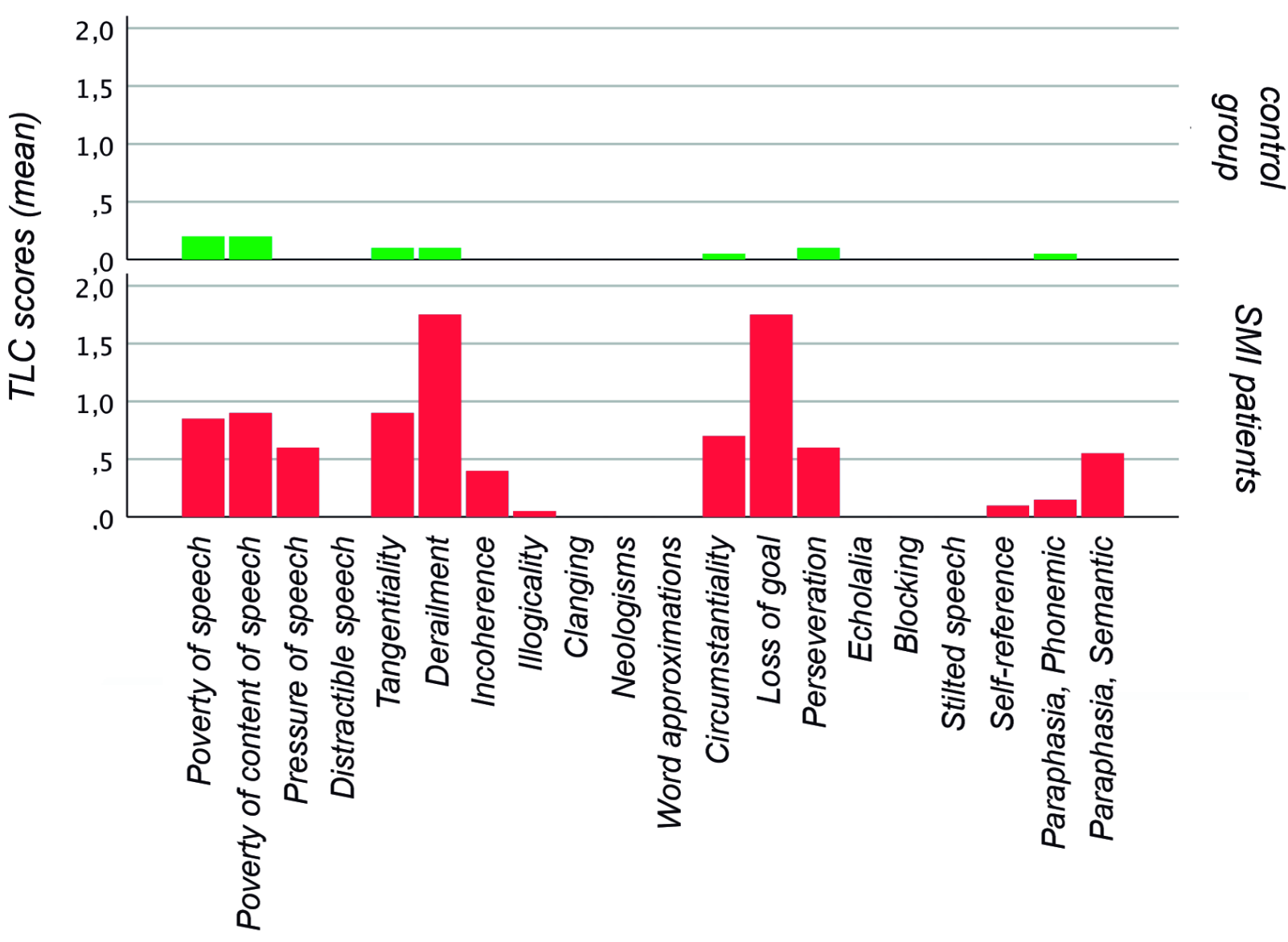


Figure 2. Comparison of the TLC scale items between the control group and patients with severe mental illness (SMI).

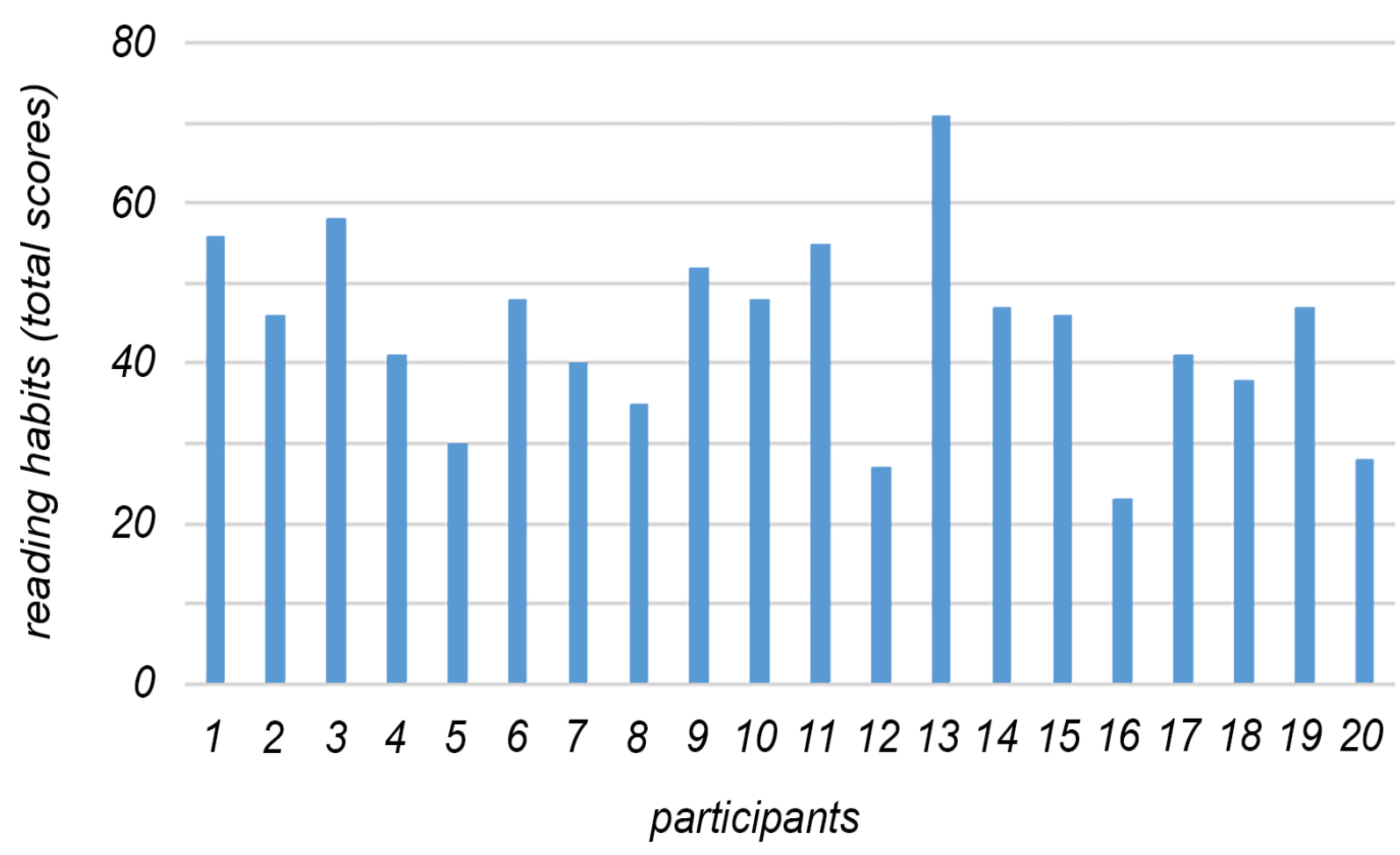


Figure 3. Reading habits of the control group.

CONCLUSIONS

- Language and communication impairments according the TLC scale were **significantly lower in the HC compared with the SMI group**.
- Most of the HC participants **showed adequate reading habits**.
- Speech therapists** play a key role in the assessment and rehabilitation of the **language and communication impairments of patients with SMI**.

FUTURE RESEARCH

- Increasing the **sample size** for both groups.
- Assessing **other clinical or neurobiological variables** (including reading habits in the SMI group).
- Efficacy of **specific language interventions in schizophrenia?**

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