



# Promoting social interaction among children with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder using a tabletop role playing game

Kohei Kato<sup>(1)</sup>, Hiroshi Fujino<sup>(2)</sup>, Syusuke Yoneda<sup>(3)</sup>

(1)The United Graduate School of Education Tokyo Gakugei University  
(2)Tokyo Gakugei University (3)Myoujinshita Clinic



## Introduction

- As a method for promoting social interaction among children with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder (HFASD), we focus on small-group activities using a tabletop role playing game (TRPG).
- TRPG is an interactive game played using a pencil, paper, and dice, instead of a computer, creating fictional stories through dialogues.
- This study used TRPG for examining the effect of spontaneously promoting social interaction and consensus making among children with HFASD in small-group activities.



## Methods

- Four children with HFASD in an outpatient clinic (ages 13~14) participated in TRPG activities (total 16 sessions).
- A transcript was made from an audio recording of the 1st and 14th sessions.
- The utterance directed to other participating children was coded and counted as “intentional speech directed to other children” .
- In addition, “making decisions as a group through negotiation among members” was defined and counted as “making consensus” .



## Results

- The rate of “intentional speech directed at other children” was 36.7% in the 1st session and 52.4% in the 14th session. It significantly increased in the 14th session ( $p < .001$ , Fisher’s exact test). (Fig1)
- The number of “making consensus” was zero time in the first session and five times in the 14th session, i.e., it significantly increased in the 14th session. (Fig2)
- Furthermore, the manner of “making consensus” also changed qualitatively.
- The 1st session mainly involved decision by majority, whereas the 14th session considered logical discussion by listening to other children’s opinion.

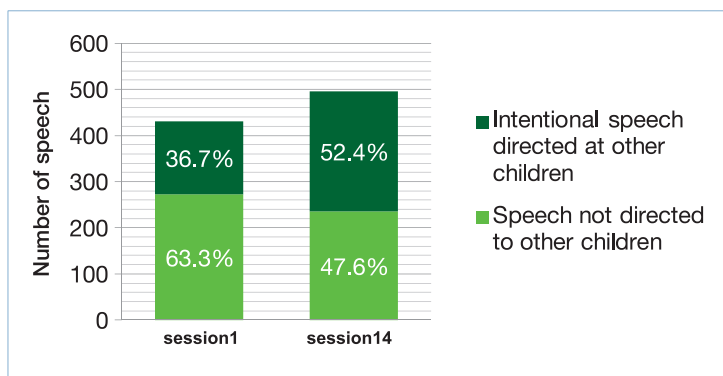


Fig1 change of “intentional speech directed at other children”

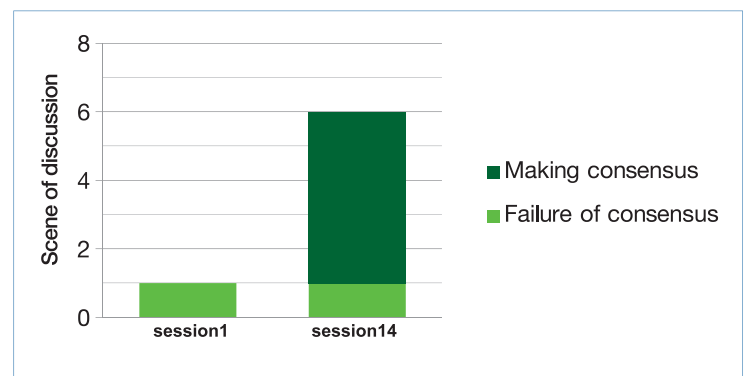


Fig2 change of “making consensus”

## Discussion

- It is suggested that small-group activities using TRPG promote intentional communication and cooperative interaction among children with HFASD.
- A characteristic structure (i.e., rules and settings as a framework of the activities, indirect communication through a character of the story, and so on) in TRPG might be the factor responsible for the effectiveness of this intervention.

## Reference

- Kato, K., Fujino, H., Itoi, T., Yoneda, S. (2012). Communication support for small groups of children with High Function Autistic Spectrum Disorders : Effectiveness of Table-Talk Role Playing Game (TRPG). The Japanese Journal of Communication Disorders, 29, 9-17. (in Japanese)