



AENSI Journals

Journal of Applied Science and Agriculture

ISSN 1816-9112

Journal home page: www.aensiweb.com/jasa/index.html



## Comparison of the Effects of the Motivational and Instructional Self-Talk On the Performance of Some Soccer Skills

<sup>1</sup>NajmehAlsadat Shojaeian, <sup>2</sup>Amir Moghadam and <sup>3</sup>Hamid Arvin

<sup>1</sup>Department of Physical Education, Bojnourd Branch, Islamic Azad University, Bojnourd, IRAN.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Physical Education, Mashhad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Mashhad, IRAN.

<sup>3</sup>Department of Physical Education, ShirazBranch, Islamic Azad University, Shiraz, IRAN.

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 28 February 2014

Received in revised form 19

April 2014

Accepted 23 April 2014

Available online 15 May 2014

#### Key words:

motivational self-talk, instructional self-talk, soccer, girl student.

### ABSTRACT

Today self-talk has been considered as a cognitive technique in sport psychology by researchers, coaches and athletes. Many researches have been done on the effective role of self-talk on performance. The purpose of this research is to determine the effect of motivational and instructional self-talk on the performance of some soccer skills (shooting, passing, dribbling) of girl students. Data analysis was done by applying variance analysis test and repeated data. The results of the study showed that in three skills there is a meaningful difference between above mentioned conditions. The Bonferroni post hoc test indicated that self-talk condition particularly motivational self-talk, has a great effect on the performance of above mentioned skills. The results of the study implied the positive role of motivational self-talk in the performance of soccer skills. Thus, coaches are recommended to pay special attention to the motivational self-talk function.

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**ToCite This Article:** Najmeh Alsadat Shojaeian, Amir Moghadam and Hamid Arvin., Comparison of the Effects of the Motivational and Instructional Self-Talk On the Performance of Some Soccer Skills. *J. Appl. Sci. & Agric.*, 9(5): 2284-2287, 2014

## INTRODUCTION

Most of the time sport psychological factors have great distinction in comparison with physiological scales in run levels (Hardy, Hall & Alexander, 2001). "Self-talk" is one of the tools which is often talked about in sport psychology as a way to improve performance (Weinberg, Smith & Gould, 1984).

Self-talk as a cognitive technique in psychology can be defined as follow: what athletes say to themselves, whether overt or covert, and they use their sayings to concentrate, control their anxiety, and judge their performance. This technique could facilitate the skill learning and performing and would cause athletes to improve their physical and mental readiness (Chroni, Perkos, & Theodorakis, 2007., Hardy, Hall, & Hardy, 2005., Tahmasbi, Shahbazi, & IZANLOO, 2010., Zinnser, Bunker, & William, 2006). Recently, two functions of motivational and instructional have been considered for self-talk. The motivational function of self-talk helps athletes to build their confidence and motivation, increase their effort, and control their anxiety (Chroni, Perkos, & Theodorakis, 2007., Rushall, 2000). Instructional function of self-talk helps performance improvement by focusing on performance and choosing technical and tactical information (Chroni, Perkos & Theodorakis, 2007., Hardy, Hall & Hardy, 2005).

During these years, athletes, coaches, and sport psychologists researchers have proved common usage of self-talk. Mikes (1987) suggested 6 strategies for self-talk which cause performance improvement: short and special statement in mind, positive word, composing statements carefully, talking friendly, and repeating statements with themselves during exercising. Cohn (2011) believes that the key of applying self-talk to improve performance is the ability of recognizing words which a person say to himself, and then controlling self-talk and using it would cause an easy performance.

Thinking positively in negative situation is a criterion of successful athletes. Athletes could change their self-talk and gain maximum benefit from their success through practicing, and gain experience from their failure without causing tension for them (Blackmer, 2010., Cohn, 2011). Using self-talk leads to performance improvement, mental fitness, controlling stress, increasing motivation, improving mental status, better concentration, readiness for competition, removing bad habits, and gaining new skills (Cohn, 2011., Papaionnou, Ballon, Theodorakis, & Auwelle, 2004., Tahmasbi, Shahbazi, & IZANLOO, 2010., Tod, Thatcher, McGuigan, & Thatcher, 2009).

**Corresponding Author:** Najmeh Alsadat Shojaeian, Department of Physical Education, Bojnourd Branch, Islamic Azad University, Bojnourd, Iran  
E-mail: shojaeian@bojnourd.ac.ir

Since 1980, researches have published many articles about negative and positive factors of self-talk, its effects and non-effects, and recently about instructional and motivational self-talk. However, lack of organized researches about mechanisms in which self-talk would affect on performance is a great barrier to determine self-talk effects as cognitive approach (Chroni, Perkos, & Theodorakis, 2007., Hall, Gibbs, & Greenslande, 2005., Hardy, Hall, & Alexander, 2001., Hardy, Hall, & Hardy, 2005).

According on other studies and considering that soccer is a popular sport and interest in it is growing, it deserved to measure the influence of instructional and motivational self-talk in order to suggest approaches to improve performance in this sport.

#### Method:

##### Participants:

This study was done in a semi-experimental way and by using a within-group study. The participants in this study were 20 girl students of Azad University of Bojnourd who had enrolled in summer courses of academic. First they were asked to cooperate, then 20 right foot students in age range of 20-25 were selected among the volunteers who hadn't have any sport experience especially in soccer. Then subjects were exposed to soccer skills over one period of training, but they were examined of basic soccer skills, such as shooting, dribbling and passing. Considering the design of the present research in which the conditions of kinds of self-talk were measured as repeated scales, participants, according on order of repeating self-talk statements (motivational and instructional), were interactive cloned randomly in order to eliminate the influence of orders and transmission of presentation of kinds of self-talk. That is after performing basal condition, half of the participants were examined under conditions of motivational-instructional self-talk respectively, and the other half was examined vice versa. Participants didn't do any self-talk in basal condition; and they were asked to repeat motivational statements, which was the key words of "I can", in motivational self-talk condition. In instructional self-talk condition, participants repeat instructional statements by themselves, such as: "slow, kick" while dribbling, "inside the foot, quick" in passing, "on foot, center" in shooting.

##### Materials and procedure:

Three skills of dribbling, passing and shooting were used to evaluate players' soccer skills. Used tests were taken from Iranian Football Federation and American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) (Frankl, 2003; Hardy, Hall, & Hardy, 2005). Dribbling test square was a space with 1.6 meters length and 4.57 meters width. In dribbling test, player started to dribble the ball from the start line over barriers and by passing finish line, stopwatch was stopped. The subject was allowed to use her both feet to dribble the ball. Each hitting to barrier was fined 2 seconds. If the subject overturned the barrier, she should turn back and go around it.

In passing test, the subjects stood in 2.14 meters distance from the wall and pass the ball to the wall. The pass was supposed to be so powerful to turn back to the start point and the subject should control it and pass it again to the wall. This pass-control was held within 30 seconds. In shooting test, the subject stood along the first goalpost and in 5.16 meter distance from the goal; and by first kick she forwarded the ball ahead, which was not more than 270 cm away, and she shot the ball into the goal by second kick. Each subject shot three times from the right side and three times from the left side. Total score for each part added together and the final record of the subject was recorded. Needed time for each subject was 3 minutes. One minute for right foot, one minute for left foot and one minute to organize. The purpose of shooting test was to achieve the highest score in shooting ball into the goal of course to the farther post than the location of the player.

For analyzing data we used descriptive statistics to calculate the average, standard deviation (SD), and also illustrating diagrams of the three conditions (control conditions, motivational self-talk condition, instructional self-talk condition) in soccer skills of dribbling, passing and shooting; the Kolmogoroff-Smirnoff test for data normal distribution, Sphericity test for covariance homogeneous, variance analysis with repeated data and also Bonferroni post hoc test and paired T-test were used to examine the hypothesis according on the aims.

#### Results:

**Table 1:** The score average of three skills of passing, shooting and dribbling in self-talk different conditions.

	Dribbling	passing	shooting
Basic condition	16/35(2/81)	9/65(2/10)	9/70(2/79)
Motivational self-talk	14/69(2/83)	12/95(3/84)	11/70(2/79)
Instructional self-talk	15/10(2/74)	11/75(3/71)	10/65(2/89)

Note: In parentheses data is the SD

In this study, by confirming the assumption of the homogeneity of variances, the mean was significant in alpha level of 0.05. In other words, there is a significant effect in the type of self-talk in dribbling ( $F_{(2,38)}=3.299$ ;  $p=0.048$ ), passing ( $F_{(2,38)}=4.330$ ;  $p=0.020$ ), and shooting ( $F_{(2,38)}=3.479$ ;  $p=0.041$ ). The hypothesis of the

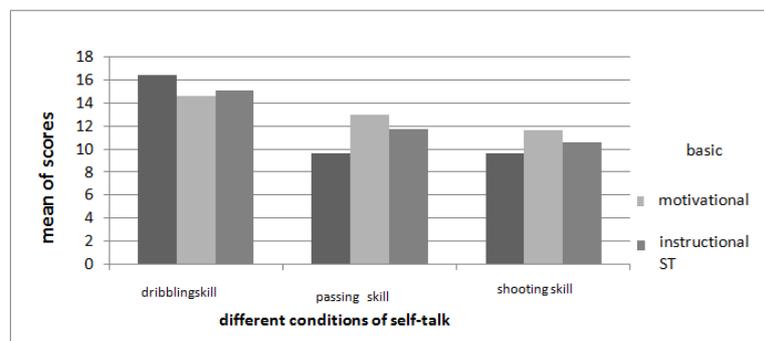
equality of means in three conditions of self-talk in performed skills was rejected; and Bonferroni post hoc test was used to see which means are different. According to this method, and by using paired T-tests, conditions were compared two by two. The results are shown in table 2. "

**Table2:** The results of Bonferroni post hoc test (paired t) to compare the scores of dribbling, passing and shooting in different conditions of self-talk.

Comparing conditions two by two:	dribbling	passing	shooting
	t (sig)	t (sig)	t (sig)
Basic condition-Motivational ST	(0/029) <sup>*</sup> 2.364	(0/000) <sup>*</sup> 5.726	(0/002) <sup>*</sup> 3.685
Basic condition-Instructional ST	(0/140) 1.538	(0/086) 1.813	(1/102) 1.721
Motivational ST-Instructional ST	(0/201) 1.324	(0/428) 0.810	(0/615) 0.512

Note: In parentheses data is the significant level of the test

Generally according on the table and by comparing the mean scores of dribbling, passing and shooting two by two in different conditions of self-talk, by 95% certainty we can say that motivational self-talk has significant effects in compare with instructional self-talk; and both conditions of self –talk in compare with basic condition led to better performance in these skills of dribbling, shooting, and passing."



**Fig. 1:** The comparison of mean scores of dribbling, passing and shooting in different conditions of ST.

#### Conclusion and discussion:

The results of the study showed that among these three conditions of control, motivational self-talk and instructional self-talk, motivational self-talk significantly led to better performance. The findings showed positive effects of self-talk and significant facilitating of motivational self-talk; and they were similar to the results of A. Sanatkaran (personal communication, August, 2007) research. A. Sanatkaran (personal communication, August, 2007) studied on teen basketball players; subjects who had applied motivational self-talk had better performance in dribbling than control group. Chroni, Perkios, and Theodorakis (2007) in the same study on dribbling skill in basketball showed that participants prefer motivational self-talk. In these findings, better concentration on performance and feeling comfortable were known as the results of self-talk effectiveness. Georgidias *et al.*, (2004) in support of these findings also stated that motivational self-talk leads to reduce disturbing thoughts while performance (Cohn, 2011., A.Sanatkaran, personal communication, August, 2007.,Theodorakis, Chroni, Iaparidis, Bebetos & DoumaI, 2001). David Ted *et al.*, (2009) also studied on the effects of motivational and instructional self-talk on performance and vertical jump kinematics. Subjects in the conditions of motivational and instructional self-talk had better performance than those in neutral self-talk and control conditions. Better performance in moving and faster jumping angle in knee was obvious (Tod, Thatcher, McGuigan, & Thatcher, 2009). Hatzigeorgiadis *et al.*, (2009), studied on the mechanisms and the relationship between self-talk and performance. The purpose of the study was investigation on the effects of motivational self-talk on confidence, tension and performance of athletes. Subjects' results showed more stable performance, higher confidence and less competitive tension in compare with control group (Hatzigeorgiadis, Zourbanos, Mpoumpaki, Theodorakis, 2009). These findings show that motivational self-talk, considering the kinds of skills, leads to higher confidence, and enables athletes to control their emotions and have a better performance. Hatzigeorgiadis & *et al.*, (2006) studied on the cognitive functions of self-talk in the skill of breaststroke in swimming. Results showed that instructional and motivational self-talk along with participants' perceive would improve functions, attempt, confidence, and automation in performance.

Hardy & *et al.*, (2001) stated that motivational self-talk would help athletes to clarify disturbing thoughts out of their minds and concentrate on their job; however, Doneho *et al.*, (2000) showed that function improvement

was seen in self-talk condition, especially in instructional self-talk condition (Chroni, Perkos, & Theodorakis, 2007; Hardy, Hall & Alexander, 2001). Considering the type of the test in researches, where test was more complicated, the instructional self-talk in athletes was more effective. Results show that self-talk decrease disturbing thought and increase its accuracy (Schneider, 2002).

As it has been mentioned, the motivational nature of self-talk creates confidence, motivation, effort, anxiety control, and arousal; and its effect in passing test was obvious. However, in doing jobs which need timing and accuracy, instructional self-talk would help participants more than motivational self-talk. In self-talk through concentrating on job-related indicators, the implementation of desire patterns would facilitate; and coaches are recommended to use it considering the kind of skill (Landin, & Hebert, 1999; Rushall, 2000; Tod, Thatcher, McGuigan, & Thatcher, 2009).

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors wish to thank Fateme Farokhi for her suggestions.

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