



Language Development Profile in Children Under Five Years Old: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Language development in humans is part of cognitive development. Children's language development is a process in which they acquire the ability to understand and communicate through speech. Before achieving fluency, a child may gradually comprehend basic verbal patterns and enhance their vocabulary during this stage. Children's grammar development progresses from one word or sentence, but some sentences, especially those with prepositional phrases, rules, and plurals, need correction. Early language development involves many errors, so parents must patiently correct mistakes. Language development in early childhood is fundamental. This paper aims to review the language development profile in children under the age of five. The research method used is literature review and library research. The results show that the language development profile in children under five follows stages that include word usage in sentences and comprehension building.

Keywords: early childhood, cognitive, development, language, verbal, vocabulary.

1. Introduction

Early childhood refers to children aged from birth to eight years, characterized by different, unique traits, including being great imitators and having various potentials that need to be developed in learning. According to Hutaaruk (2015), learning is a change in behavior or performance through a series of activities. As parents or caregivers, it's essential to motivate and monitor children's development to determine whether they are developing quickly or slowly, as each child's development and growth varies (Mahmudah & Setiadi, 2021).

Language and behavior development begin around the age of one. For example, as children grow more active, they may start walking, teething, or crawling, depending on their developmental timeline (Alsafiah et al., 2023). Children also begin to communicate through language, even from birth. Babies express themselves through crying when hungry, uncomfortable, or when their diaper is full. Crying is a baby's language. Language is a tool for communication, primarily verbal language, used in daily interactions (Mahmudah & Setiadi, 2021).

Children learn language by listening, observing, and imitating those around them. Other factors also influence the speed of language development, as every child's language abilities differ (Al-Hamzi et al., 2021). Stimulating early childhood language development is essential to ensure their growth aligns with developmental stages (Mahmudah & Setiadi, 2021).

2. Materials and Methods

Language development is a critical aspect of early childhood growth, directly linked to cognitive and social development. Children acquire language through a combination of listening, observing, and interacting with their environment, particularly through engagement with their caregivers. Numerous studies have explored the stages and factors influencing language development in children under five, identifying patterns in vocabulary acquisition, grammatical understanding, and verbal communication skills.

2.1. Stages of Language Development

Language development in early childhood progresses through distinct stages. According to Schaerlaekens (Hutaaruk, 2015), these stages can be divided into two main periods: the pre-linguistic period (0-1 year) and the linguistic period (1-2 years). In the pre-linguistic phase, infants express themselves through cries and other non-verbal cues, which

gradually evolve into sounds resembling speech. The linguistic period marks the beginning of real speech, where children utter their first words, gradually expanding their vocabulary to include phrases and short sentences.

Research has also found that children's ability to form grammatically correct sentences progresses over time. As children move from single words to more complex structures, they begin using prepositions, plurals, and various tenses (Mahmudah & Setiadi, 2021). However, early errors in sentence construction are common, requiring parental correction and support.

2.2. Factors Influencing Language Development

Several factors influence the pace and quality of a child's language acquisition. Al-Harbi (2020) emphasizes that while children naturally learn language through their interactions, the speed at which they develop language skills varies from child to child. Genetics, social environment, and the amount of stimulation from caregivers play significant roles. Alsafiah et al. (2023) also suggest that gender differences are observed, with girls often developing language skills more quickly than boys, potentially due to neurological development.

In addition to natural developmental milestones, external stimuli are crucial for language learning. Mahmudah & Setiadi (2021) suggest that regular exposure to speech, songs, and storytelling enriches children's vocabulary and helps them understand grammatical rules. Furthermore, parents and caregivers who consistently engage children in conversation, read to them, and avoid "baby talk" can significantly accelerate language acquisition.

2.3. Cognitive and Emotional Aspects of Language Development

Language development is closely linked to cognitive growth. As children begin to understand and imitate the world around them, they develop the ability to attach meaning to words and concepts. Mahmudah & Setiadi (2021) highlight that the ability to process information, solve problems, and think symbolically is integral to acquiring language. As children interact with objects and people, they learn to associate words with their meanings.

Emotional development also plays a key role in language learning. Al-Harbi (2020) notes that strong emotional bonds between children and their caregivers enhance language development, as children feel more secure in expressing themselves. However, emotions like frustration or anger can manifest through language, often requiring caregivers to guide children in expressing these feelings constructively.

2.4. Techniques for Enhancing Language Development

Various techniques have been proposed to optimize language development in young children. Mahmudah & Setiadi (2021) recommend that parents:

- Communicate with children in a clear and simple manner, avoiding complex words or phrases.
- Read books together and sing songs to introduce new vocabulary and foster a love for language.
- Provide feedback by correcting mispronounced words or incorrect grammar without discouraging the child.
- Create a stimulating environment where children are encouraged to ask questions, experiment with new words, and explore their world through language.

It is crucial that parents and educators understand the importance of patience and avoid pressuring children to speak before they are ready. Allowing language development to proceed naturally, while providing support and enrichment, can lead to more confident and capable communicators.

3. Research Method

This research uses a literature or library review method. Therefore, the research relies solely on written works, including published and unpublished studies. Data sources are crucial in ensuring successful research, and these include books, articles relevant to the topic of early childhood language development, as well as direct observations of children aged one to two years (Mahmudah & Setiadi, 2021).

4. Discussion

4.1. Language Development Stages from Ages 1-2 Years

Language development in children is an indicator of their overall growth. When children start speaking, it signals their entry into the second stage of development. Here are some ways to optimize children's language abilities (Mahmudah & Setiadi, 2021):

- a). Encourage communication in a fun and engaging environment.
- b). Provide effective communication examples and avoid using baby talk.

- c). Prompt children to use understandable words before giving them what they want.
- d). Read stories and sing simple songs to enhance their interest in language and vocabulary.
- e). Avoid forcing children to speak, and maintain a positive environment for them to communicate.

4.2. Cognitive Development

Children begin to develop the ability to think, learn, and remember, understanding symbols and imitating behavior. Engaging children in interactive play helps foster their creativity and independence (Al-Harbi, 2020). Emotional development is also crucial during this time, as children express strong attachment to caregivers.

4.3. Interaction and Language Development

Children learn language through interactions, primarily with their mother or closest caregiver. Mothers play a vital role in their child's language development.

5. Conclusion

Children's language development follows specific stages, involving word usage and comprehension formation. The combination of interaction with caregivers, cognitive and emotional development, and motor skills plays a role in shaping their language acquisition.

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