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PROCESSES OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND SPEECH DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY YEARS

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Abstract

Speech development is important children's development. a crucial tool to learning for communication and building relationship with others as well as enhancing language attainment in children which is top priority. It is not only the sole responsibility of those working with children to provide support for language development and sustenance of the child but a joint partnership with parents, caregiver, families and policymakers. Many parents begin communication with children once pregnancy is established in a woman and the voices of other people who communicate with this woman make contact with the baby. At early childhood stages babies cry to attract attention and communicate with adults to get what is their need. This cuts across when they are wet, hungry, in pain, need attention and adults in turn respond positively to the babies. From when children are delivered, they get integrated in the language of the day by those who interact with them as parents and other adults. They respond through meeting with eyes, making sounds and gurgling. This led the children through taking part in conversations and become communicators. The development of language is a strong bridge for a child's brain and cognitive development. When there exist many options of language to choose from, ingenuity of language usage abound and new ways of talking is generated. The creation of verbal communication cannot be viewed independently but hugely important to an all round development during the first years of his or her life.

Keywords

Children, Language, Learning, speech development and early years

1. Introduction

Speech is the basics requirement for human interactions, when children issues with communication causes frustration for the parents and the child. The development of language is a strong bridge for a child's brain and cognitive development. Yarrow's (2014) studies reveal that "having a huge terminology increases creativity and helps the individual come up with new ideas. There are a number of benefits to learn more than one language. In other words, the development of language cannot be viewed in isolation but largely important to a child's overall development during the first years of his or her life, promoting a learning friendly environment where a child reads books proportional to his or her age".

Parents and other adults find ways to play and have fun with the child as a teaching process will help accelerate a toddler's language acquisition and as a preparation for school. This would boost overall progress on other development milestones and assist also in the provision of many more giant opportunities for later life (Undiyaundeye, 2014).

Language and communication contribute to the six key areas to learning and understanding of the child. They include; creative development, social-physical development, communication, language and literacy, problem-solving, analysis and numeracy, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal social and emotional development. The eye stresses the magnitude of giving opportunities for the child to communicate thoughts, feelings, ideas and build up relationship with parents, caregivers and each other. They also affirm the importance of promoting helpful relationship with other family members as a key important role to establish children feel safe attitude, confidence and independence, anti-discriminatory roles. Children learn the act of convention by observing adults, as they take turns to speak, through watching, listening and participate.

2. Concept Clarification

2.1 What is language development?

Learning language is a life-long process where babies develop foundations that underpin speech and language to support a child's ability to communicate and express and understand feelings. The process of language development commences early in life of humans, this occurred from ten months, at this stage babies can differentiate speech sounds and engage in babbling. Undiyaundeye (2013 & 2014) observed that "learning begins in the uterus where the

fetus starts to recognize its mother's voice and differentiate them from other sounds after birth. Productive language is considered to start at stage of preverbal communication where children use gestures and vocalization to make their interest known. As a matter of general principle of growth, new forms then take over old functions to enable the child learn words to express the same communicative functions they earlier expressed by preverbal means. Language maturity is envisaged to proceed by the process of learning through the acquiring all the forms, meanings and use of words and utterances from the linguistic input".

The approaches by which humans develop language skills is worldwide; the main issue is on how these rules of syntax are acquired. The two major approaches to syntactic development according to Sage (2006), are:

“An empiricist brogue by which children learn all syntactic rules from the linguistic input;

A nativist approach this is means through which the principles of syntax are innate and are transmitted through the human genome”.

3. The Nativist Theory

According to Yarrow (2014), “language is a unique human execution and can be attributed to either millions of years of development or to principles of neural business that may be more deeply stranded in physical law”. Yarrow believes in most children having what is called an innate language acquisition device where their brain comprises of an inner language acquiring system. This system gives babies the ability to make sense of knowledge and construct novel sentences with minimal external input and little experience. Sage (2006) argues that “linguistic input from the environment is limited and full of errors. Therefore, nativists believe that it is impossible for children to learn linguistic information solely from their environment. Yarrow noted that all humans have an innate speech acquisition device known as LAD an area where the brain has a set of universal syntactic rules for all languages. This device provides children with the ability to make sense of knowledge and construct perfect and good sentences with negligible external input and little experience. However, children possess LAD, they are able to learn language despite incomplete information from their environment. Their capacity to learn is credited to the theory of universal grammar UD which posits that certain rules are innate to human's independent of sensory experience”. This idea controls and commands linguistic theory for a long period of over fifty years and remains an influence to language processing in children.

4. The Empiricist Theory

This suggests that Yarrow's view has some deviations which imply that there is enough information in the linguistic input for children to receive and therefore holds the need to remove inner language system. In the words of Kennison and Sheila (2013), "instead of LAD evolved specifically for language, empiricists believe that general brain processes are sufficient for language acquisition. During this time, it is vital for the child to actively engage within their environment. For the child to learn a language, parents or caregivers need to adopt a particular way of approach. Communication with the child known as Child-Directed Speech". Child Directed Speech provides the required linguistic information needed for their language processing.

5. Speech Development

The process of talking skills are grouped as receiving and expressing language. The receiving language is more sympathetic guards and sounds, while the expressive language is the use of sounds, words and gestures to communicate eloquently. The first three years of the life of a child is the period of speech acquisition and language skills. These skills develop best in a world rich in sounds, signs and consist of exposure to the speech or the individual and language of others (Richard, 2017).

Human beings vary in their development of language skills. They follow a unusual succession or timetable to master these skills. There is an ideal checklist of milestones for normal development of speech in children from birth to five years of age. This milestone helps doctors and other health professionals to establish if a child is on tract or if he or she may need additional help. Sometimes a delay may occur as a result of hearing loss while other times it may be due to speech or language disarray. The first sign of communication occurs as the child learns that a cry will generate his or her needs. They also take note of vital environmental sounds like their mother's voice or primary caregiver. As they progress in their growth, they commence the isolation of sounds that compose the words of their language. At six months, some children begin to identify basic sounds in their local lingo/mother tongue.

There appear to be a critical period for speech maturity in the young individual. If this critical period is allowed to pass without exposure to language, it becomes more difficult to learn. When children have difficulty comprehending people's input (receptive language) and share their views (expressive language) may likely result in language disorder. Some children are likely not to commence talking until their third or fourth year. Individuals with problems of producing speech sounds rightly or delay in communication are likely to have speech disarray. Apraxia of speech is a speech disability that leads sounds and syllables together in the correct

order to form words. Once a child is identified with speech disorder proper step is to see a speech language pathologist who deals with issues of speech and language development for filling the vacuum of speech development for proper integration into learning processing and adaptation.

6. Stages of Language Development in Early Childhood

Language makes people who they are and ones relationship to the other matters a lot in language development. Communication begins even before a child is born. A pregnant mother feels her baby's communication through movement. Han (2012) is of the view that mothers should talk with their unborn babies and also play with him or her through a music by putting the headphones on the belly. A child needs to hear a word at least 100 times before he/she can begin to say it.

In other words, parents need to talk to their infants everywhere;

Talk when eating

Talk when cooking

Talk when cleaning

Talk when drinking

Talk when shopping etc.

Children develop language in sequence from 0-5 years according to each month or year expected capacity for proper human interaction in the world of life.

6.1 -0-3 Months

At this stage the child looks back at familiar sound and gets frightened by loud noises and recognizes caregivers/parent's voices. Make vocal sounds like cooing, gurgling, gaze at faces and copies facial movement like sticking out tongue, make eye contact for fairly long periods.

6.2 -3-6 Months

The child watches others talks. By shows excitement at sound of approaching voices, make vocal noises to get attention, make sound back when talked to, laughs during play and babble to self.

6.3 -6-12 Months

The child at this age identifies source of voice with the right focus on varying sounds, example, telephone, doorbell and clock. Understand frequently used words such as bye-bye, no, stop and looks when hears his or her name, understand common instructions when aided by gestures and context. Also use speech sound to communicate with adult's example, sounds like

“baba”, “no-no”, “go-go”. At about year, begin to use simple words like “dada”, “mama among other”. Enjoy action rhymes and songs and try to copy other people speech and lip movement.

6.4 -12-15 Months

The child now enjoys music and singing, knowing simple words in context, for example, cup, daddy; also understands simple directions like kiss daddy, give to mummy, stop. Can say 10 solitary words although may not be clear. Reach or point to impressive of interest; like watching adults for a short period of time and like being with recognizable adults.

6.5 -15-18 Months

The child hears and answers to instructions like “boy put on your shoes”, give to mummy” can use up to 2 simple words correctly but may not be clear. They copy gestures and words from adults.

6.6 -18-2 Years

Now focuses on behavior of their own acceptance but finds it hard to be instructed by an adult. Also understands more simple instructions, follow language including pointing and facial expression, begins to put 2 to 3 words together.

6.7 -2-3 Years

They Begin to listen and talk with interest though easily carried away, understand simple phrases/concepts like “put teddy in the box”, “get your book”, understands simple stories supported with pictures. Can use 300 words including expressive language and link four to five words. Holds a conversation but jumps from topic to topic.

6.8 -3-4 Years

The child understands gestures or instructions with two parts uses sentences of four to six words e.g. “I want to play with cars”. Use of future and past tense may have problem with irregular words e.g. “runned for ran”, “swimmed for swam”.

6.9 -4-5 Years

Attention is now more flexible. The child now understands spoken instructions related to a task without stopping to look at the speaker. Can use well formed sentences e.g. “I played with chicken at lunch time”. Take turns in longer conversations, can follow simple stories without pictures.

7. Warning Signs of Possible Speech Problem

The following problems may be observed in the child as observed by Alladi et al (2013) and Peran & Salleman (2011).

Not responding to sound at 12-24 months

Not using gestures such as pointing or waving bye-bye

Preference for gestures over vocalization by 18 months

Find it difficult to imitate at 18 months

Has trouble identifying oral request

Can only replicate action and cannot produce words

Has a strange tone of voice such as raspy or nasal sounding

Says only certain sounds repeatedly and does not use oral language to communicate.

Parents and caregivers are required to note about half of child's speech at 2-3 years and by 4 years, a child should be mostly understood even by people outside the aforementioned who are familiar with the child.

8. Strategies to Improve Speech and Language Development

Speech development is mixture of nature and nurture. Genetic makeup determines a child's intelligence, speech and language development. A child's adequate stimulation at home or crèche improves communication disorder, disability or delay Belvementfield & Farogi (2009). "The kind of feedback a child get through eating, interaction provides a child's needs, speech and language assessment is appropriate when a young child displays a significant functional communication disorder or delay" Poulins & Blayne (2011) "communication disability manifest along a range of children with major issues while functional communication to speech and language capabilities below expectation levels for their developmental age". A variation of intervening skills are available for the child's functionality based on his or her capacity to function. This provides a better understanding of interaction by peers and others who encounter this child. They include:

- From the delivery room, begin talking with the child in a habit through stages of development. Sometimes singing and imitating the child's gesture helps.
- Reading to a child as early as six months and letting the child point to recognize picture in books;
- Reinforce the child in all the responses of a child
- Adopting parents training pre-guards on speech and language intervention;
- Build relationship through neutrality
- Participate with the child to understand his language
- Talk to the child always in different language forms.
- Use the for E approach that is Encourage the child by listening, expand formal logics and arrangement of words in the child's understanding to explain difficult and long words and increase language model replication.

- Use formal logic response speaking. The cooing sound of babies which may be seen as boring to adults, the infant delights in the eyes, emotional connection and continues development of infant's language are recording to the caring adult
- Use of questions and control carefully.

9. Conclusion

Oral language capability gives rise to many systems in transmitting ideas. It behooves on children to get hold of the mode which connotes and represents things in their concepts. Children require having ways and forms of language varying from sound structure to words to grammar structures in sentences to increase knowledge in their social aptitude.

Getting this knowledge during pre-school period allows the individual to function as a good listener and speaker in various communication circumstances. Many times, learning is completed through unspoken process with no prescribed process of instruction.

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