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ROLE OF CRUCIAL FACTORS IN LANGUAGE PROGRESSION OF CHILDREN



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ABSTRACT

The language, a child learns, is generally determined by the society or culture in which he is born, more specifically, by his home, school or educational system and community. Learning is a term that describes the activities and strategies through which children learn. These can be identified through exploration, experimentation and discovery. For instance, children love nature and make use of their natural and man – made environment in learning and in language development. Study was conducted in Hisar city of Haryana State (India) on a sample of 120 children in the age range of 4 to 5 years. Reynell Developmental Language Scale (1985) was used to assess the language development of children. Self-structured and duly pretested interview schedule was used to examine the ecological profile of families. To delineate the effect of ecological factors on language performance of children, Duncan

Multiple Range test was computed. Results highlighted that the language performance of children was remarkably influenced by the educational level of parents showing that educated parents provided quality stimulation to their children. Children from high and middle caste with higher family income and coming from service and business class families were significantly advanced on language performance in both the settings.



The results demand for the need to plan strategies for enhancing language development of children at early stage both in school and home.

KEYWORDS :preschoolers, language development, ecological factors.

INTRODUCTION :

Learning to talk is one of the most visible and important achievements of early childhood. Language development is even more impressive when we consider the nature of what is learned. It

may seem that children merely need to remember what they hear and repeat it at some later time. Verbal communication requires productivity, i.e. the ability to create an infinite number of utterances we have never heard before. Development of language is attainment of verbal skills to be able to link thoughts in a coherent fashion. It helps children to convey their intentions and maintain conversations essential for social interaction.

Language development is never a static process; it is rather a process that is forever evolving. Language skills develop over the first five years of life through interaction with parents, teachers and care – givers. During the early years, listening and speaking are the primary ways that pre – school children learn new concepts and ideas, and express their thoughts through observation and feelings. The language, a child learns, is generally determined by the society or culture in which he is born, more specifically, by his home, school or educational system and community. By using language children talk to each other and discuss their interests and also their surroundings. Learning does not take place in a vacuum. Learning outcomes depend greatly upon the quality of the environment in which a child is growing and developing. Environmental factors play a more dominant role for broader language skills, and in relating these skills to later reading; isolated impairments in language as opposed to speech appear to have largely environmental origins (Hayiou-Thomas 2008).

The type of socio-economic status, quality of home environment and parental stimulation are the primary facets of environment that a child gets for his language development. Educational status and occupation of parents, birth order and neighborhood quality and community resources affect children's language development (Gonzalez 2001). A child learns language from the model available in his environment at the time of his language development. The language style of the child's parents plays a dominant and important role in the language acquisition process of a child learns and way he communicates. Concepts of language in children from different socio-economic backgrounds were investigated and found that children from low SES build their vocabulary at slower rate than children from higher SES (Guo and Harris 2000). In view of the above findings, the present study attempts to find out the crucial factors which affect the language development of preschoolers.

METHODOLOGY

Hisar district from Haryana State (INDIA) was considered purposively due to easy accessibility. All the six balwadis of Hisar city were considered to draw urban sample. Further, lists of children in the age range of 4 to 5 years, enrolled with these balwadis were prepared. Sample of 120 children from balwadi were selected at random. Level of language development was taken as dependent variable and ecological factors were taken as independent variables. Reynell Developmental Language Scale (RDLS), developed by Reynell (1985) was used to examine the language status of the children which constituted Verbal Comprehension A (VCA), Verbal Comprehension B (VCB) and Expressive language (EXLA). Self-structured and duly pretested interview schedule was prepared which included ecological factors i.e. personal, social and economic factors. To delineate the effect of ecological factors on language performance of children, Duncan Multiple Range test was computed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Language Development

To find out the level of language development in children mean scores were calculated component wise i.e. Verbal Comprehension A (VCA), Verbal Comprehension B (VCB) and Expressive Language ExLA). Table 1 revealed that the mean scores of urban children on the performance of VCA were 53.71 against the standard norms of RDLS (M=55.50), pointing towards the inferior performance

of children under study. Further the VCB performance of respondents also indicated the same trend as the mean scores of respondents were 49.83 which were below than the standards ($M = 53.20$). Table further elucidates the poor performance of respondents on expressive language (45.11) against norm (50.70).

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND ECOLOGICAL FACTORS

Duncan multiple range test was performed to examine the effect of personal, social and economic variables on three components of language viz. VCA, VCB and ExLa and is depicted in Table 2-4.

Personal Factors: Data in Table 2 envisaged the effect of personal factors of respondents on language development.

Ordinal position: With regard to impact of ordinal position on language development for children, mean scores of fourth born children for VCA, VCB and ExLa ($M_s = 57.40, 53.40$ and 50.00 , respectively) were significantly higher than the children on 1st, 2nd and 3rd ordinal position.

Mother's age: It is apparent from the data that mean scores of respondents on VCA, VCB and ExLa differ significantly according to mother's age. Age of the mother made a difference in language performance of respondents, as the mean scores of children, whose mothers were in the age group of 34 years and above, were found significantly higher for VCA ($M = 57.00$), VCB ($M=53.40$) and ExLa ($M=49.80$) than the children who had mothers in the younger age group.

Father's age: Table further highlights that father's age also made significant differences in respondent's performance on VCA, VCB and ExLa. Mean scores of children who had fathers in the age group of 34 years and above, were found significantly higher for VCA ($M = 55.78$) and VCB ($M = 51.83$) than those who had fathers in younger age group. For ExLa, mean scores of children, who had fathers falling in the higher age category were significantly higher ($M = 46.89$) than those children, whose father's age range was 22 to 25 years.

Mother's education: The results of table evidenced that maternal education had influenced on language performance of children as there were significant differences in mean scores of children for different educational status of mothers. Effects of maternal education were apparent as mean scores of children, whose mothers were educated up to matric level, were significantly higher for VCA, VCB and ExLa ($M_s = 55.95, 52.00$ and 48.11 respectively) than those who had illiterate mothers.

Father's education: Table elaborated that for VCA, children of illiterate fathers scored lower ($M = 47.00$) than children of other educated fathers. Children of primary educated fathers scored lower ($M = 50.65$) than children whose fathers were educated above primary. Children of middle educated fathers also scored lower ($M = 52.17$) than children whose fathers were above matric.

Primary Care Taker: With regard to care taker of children table further explain that children whose primary care takers were mothers, scored significantly higher for ExLa only ($M = 49.09$) than those who had aunt as primary care taker.

It can be concluded from the results that ordinal position of child and parental age had impact on VCA, VCB and ExLa. Language of the children increased with the increasing birth order. With regard to parental education, higher the parental education better was the performance of child on language components i.e. VCA, VCB and ExLa. Mother, as primary care taker, had significant impact on ExLa only than any other care taker. The findings of this investigation got strength from the findings of Berget and Bryant (2000) and Sangwan et al (2000) also revealed that socio economic status influenced the child's vocabulary.

Hence, it can be interpreted that the language performance of children is remarkably influenced by the educational level of parents. Study by Bayar et al (2014) Mother's education appears as the most important controllable factor. Educated parents possess more skill in providing an ablaze and conducive environment for the development of different concepts in children as they have better comprehension and understanding of aspirations and needs of their children.

Social Factors: The effect of social factors of respondent on language development is indicated in Table 3.

Caste: It is apparent from the data that high caste children scored better on VCA, VCB and ExLa (Ms = 57.41, 53.50, 49.95, respectively) than low and middle caste children. Middle caste children also scored higher on VCA (M = 54.61), VCB (M = 50.61) and ExLa (M = 46.32) than lower caste children.

Type of family: Table elucidates that mean scores of children belonging to extended type of family on VCA, VCB and ExLa (Ms = 51.43, 48.33, 43.71, respectively) were lower than those children who belonged to joint and nuclear type of family.

Size of family: Results illuminate in Table that mean scores for VCA, VCB and ExLa did not differ significantly with the changing size of family.

The conclusions emerging from the study are that children who belonged to higher caste scored better on VCA, VCB and ExLa. Nuclear and joint type of family had better impact on children for VCA, VCB and ExLa than the extended type of family. The present findings are corroborated with the reports of Bradely and Corwyn (2002) who found that SES begins to effect child's language development even prior to birth and continues in adulthood.

The reason for the same that emerged out of the present study was that high caste families have better social status, more means and resources leading to stimulating environment necessary for children's acquisition of various skills. It has been proved that more members in the family contributed a lot towards child language as the means of interaction and communication are more in larger families.

Economic Factors:

Table 4 elaborates the effect of economic factors i.e. parent's occupation and income of family on language development (VCA, VCB and ExLa) by computing Duncan test.

Mother's occupation: Pursuance of the results show that mean scores of children, whose mothers were house wife, were significantly lower on VCA (M = 54.03), VCB (M = 50.39) and ExLa (M = 46.18) than the children whose mothers were engaged in occupation of business and service. Children of mothers who were labourers scored lower on VCA, VCB and ExLa (Ms = 52.23, 48.48, 43.66, respectively) than children of service and business class mothers.

Father's occupation: Results in Table assert that mean scores of children whose fathers were labourer scored lower on VCA (M = 50.11), VCB (M = 46.68) and ExLa (M = 42.32) than the children whose fathers were engaged in business and service.

Family income: Results in table illuminate that children who had family income more than Rs. 10001, scored significantly higher on VCA, VCB and ExLa (Ms = 58.75, 54.75, 50.63, respectively) than the children who had family income less than Rs. 10001/-. Mean scores were also significantly higher for those children who had family income between Rs. 7501 to Rs. 10000 than the children with family

income less than Rs. 7501. Also, the children, who had family income between Rs. 5001 to Rs. 7500 scored higher on VCA (M = 52.34), VCB (M = 48.55) and ExLa (M = 43.74) than the children who had family income less than Rs. 5000.

Concludingly, the results revealed that parental occupation of children had significant impact on VCA, VCB and ExLa. It means that children who belonged to service class and business class families performed better on language components. Results further conclude that with the increasing family income the performance on language component was also found to be advancing. Riley et al (2004) also revealed that better economic conditions of the family enable the parents to afford educational and stimulating materials for their children. It can be inferred that family occupation contributes to the quality of stimulation as service and business class parents are economically sounder and socially more active thus provide an enriching environment to their children.

In nut shell it can be said that better the SES of child better will be the language development as families with high SES have more sources to provide better opportunities and conducive environment for the optimum development of their children.

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Table 1 Mean scores of respondents on the performance of RDLS

N = 120

RDLS Component	Calculated Mean scores	RDLS standard scores
VCA	53.71	55.50
VCB	49.83	53.20
ExLa	45.11	50.70

Note : RDLS = Reynell Developmental Language Scale
 VCA = Verbal comprehension A

VCB = Verbal Comprehension B
 ExLA=Expressive Language

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviations for language development according to personal factors

Variables	Language component			
	N	VCA	VCB	ExLa
1. Ordinal Position				
1 st	66	53.56 ^b ±0.49	49.61 ^b ±0.43	45.36 ^b ±0.48
2nd	36	53.19 ^b ±0.68	50.19 ^b ±0.58	45.06 ^b ±0.74
3rd	13	53.31 ^b ±0.87	48.69 ^b ±1.06	44.08 ^b ±1.27
4th	05	57.40 ^a ±1.50	53.40 ^a ±1.17	50.00 ^a ±0.84
2.Mother's Age(years)				
22-25	40	53.17 ^b ±0.66	49.63 ^b ±0.51	45.10 ^b ±0.60
26-29	58	53.38 ^b ±0.50	49.66 ^b ±0.46	45.25 ^b ±0.56
30-33	17	54.24 ^b ±0.94	49.94 ^b ±1.03	44.82 ^b ±1.20
34& above	05	57.00 ^a ±1.52	53.40 ^a ±1.17	49.80 ^a ±0.73
3. Father's Age(years)				
22-25	08	52.13 ^b ±2.17	48.63 ^b ±1.84	43.00 ^b ±1.83
26-29	41	52.73 ^b ±0.60	49.15 ^b ±0.50	44.88 ^{ab} ±0.55
30-33	53	53.72 ^{ab} ±0.50	49.89 ^{ab} ±0.49	45.49 ^{ab} ±0.59
34& above	18	55.78 ^a ±0.73	51.83 ^a ±0.65	46.89 ^a ±1.08
4.Mother's education				
Illiterate	44	51.11 ^c ±0.55	47.75 ^c ±0.51	43.00 ^b ±0.51
Primary	41	53.51 ^b ±0.48	49.49 ^b ±0.42	44.66 ^b ±0.60
Matric	35	55.95 ^a ±0.55	52.00 ^a ±0.48	48.11 ^a ±0.62
5.Father's education				
Illiterate	02	47.00 ^d ±2.00	42.50 ^c ±1.50	38.50 ^c ±0.50
Primary	20	50.65 ^c ±0.80	47.20 ^b ±0.69	43.25 ^b ±0.76
Middle	36	52.17 ^{bc} ±0.57	48.33 ^b ±0.50	43.86 ^b ±0.58
Matric	40	54.80 ^{ab} ±0.47	51.17 ^a ±0.41	45.75 ^b ±0.67
>Matric	22	56.95 ^a ±0.68	52.95 ^a ±0.50	49.45 ^a ±0.49
6.Primary care-taker				
Aunt	06	54.50 ^a ±0.92	50.50 ^a ±0.99	42.67 ^b ±1.54
Sibling	—			
G.Mother	32	53.22 ^a ±0.58	49.16 ^a ±0.49	43.88 ^{ab} ±0.65
Mother	82	53.66 ^a ±0.47	50.06 ^a ±0.43	49.09 ^a ±0.47

Means with the same letter are not significantly different.

Note: VCA=Verbal comprehension A, VCB=Verbal comprehension B, ExLA=Expressive Language

Table 3 Mean and Standard Deviations for language development according to social factors

Variables	Language component			
	N	VCA	VCB	ExLa
1. Caste				
Low	67	51.85 ^c ±0.44	48.28 ^c ±0.41	43.51 ^c ±0.45
Middle	31	54.61 ^b ±0.50	50.61 ^b ±0.40	46.32 ^b ±0.61
High	22	57.41 ^a ±0.69	53.50 ^a ±0.50	49.95 ^a ±0.68
2. Family Type				
Joint	33	54.67 ^a ±0.42	50.24 ^a ±0.46	45.45 ^a ±0.68
Extended	21	51.43 ^b ±0.68	48.33 ^b ±0.57	43.71 ^b ±0.72
Nuclear	66	53.73 ^a ±0.56	50.12 ^a ±0.50	46.27 ^a ±0.54
3. Family Size	N	VCA	VCB	ExLa
Large	01	52.00 ^a ±0.57	50.00 ^a ±0.45	44.00 ^a ±0.74
Medium	35	54.86 ^a ±0.43	50.40 ^a ±0.48	44.83 ^a ±0.67
Small	84	53.07 ^a ±0.47	49.61 ^a ±0.42	45.58 ^a ±0.47

Means with the same letter are not significantly different.

Note: VCA=Verbal comprehension A, VCB=Verbal comprehension B, ExLA=Expressive Language

Table 4 Mean and Standard Deviations for language development according to economic factors

Variables	Language component			
	N	VCA	VCB	ExLa
1. Mother's Occupation				
House-wife	33	54.03 ^b ±0.57	50.39 ^b ±0.43	46.18 ^b ±0.57
Labour	71	52.23 ^b ±0.43	48.48 ^b ±0.39	43.66 ^b ±0.44
Service	09	58.67 ^a ±0.75	55.00 ^a ±0.47	51.00 ^a ±0.67
Cultivation	—	—	—	—
Business	07	58.71 ^a ±0.75	54.43 ^a ±0.61	50.86 ^a ±0.96
2. Father's occupation				
Labour	37	50.11 ^b ±0.54	46.68 ^b ±0.53	42.32 ^b ±0.53
Service	64	54.89 ^a ±0.40	51.16 ^a ±0.33	46.56 ^a ±0.46
Agriculture	—	—	—	—
Business	19	55.95 ^a ±0.69	51.58 ^a ±0.64	47.00 ^a ±1.05
3. Monthly Income(Rs.)				
> 5000	11	48.82 ^d ±0.89	45.91 ^d ±1.07	41.64 ^c ±1.26
5001 - 7500	53	52.34 ^c ±0.45	48.55 ^c ±0.42	43.74 ^c ±0.46
7501 - 10000	48	55.19 ^b ±0.47	51.35 ^b ±0.36	47.04 ^b ±0.50
10001 - 12500	08	58.75 ^a ±0.75	54.75 ^a ±0.82	50.63 ^a ±1.43

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Means with the same letter are not significantly different.

Note: VCA=Verbal comprehension A, VCB=Verbal comprehension B, ExLA=Expressive Language

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