

Language disorders as a socially built phenomena in Pakistan

Malik Haqnawaz Danish
Asma Iqbal
Noor Afroz Khuwaja

Abstract

Language disorder is a very common phenomenon all over the world. The research finds out the social reasons pertaining to language disorders in Pakistan. The research also examines the behavior of society and family members having such kids with them who suffer from Language disorders. Language disorders have specific impacts on the personality, behavior and the nature of the child. The study examines how society enhances the disability of language disorders in children. The basic psychological reasons of adults and oldies who unconsciously bring up language disorders in society are themselves not familiar to this phenomenon. They are unaware that they themselves support socially developed Language disorders. Researchers have focused only on socially built reasons of language disorders in children as well as in adult. Researchers investigated the reasons why the ratio of language disorders increases day by day. Researchers spent one month as a speech therapist in hospital along with one doctor who had experience of fifteen years in the relevant field. Researchers observed all the patients silently and selected 5 cases, for deep study. The behavior of schools, family and society is also discussed with respect to the Language disorders in Pakistan. How various language or multi lingual face this issue and what are the basic reasons that multi lingual are more inclined to be affected by language disorders which are socially built like excessive use of hedges and stuttering.

Key words: Language disorders, speech therapists, child, Pakistan, society, schools.

1. Introduction

Language disorders may be defined as the ‘issues’ in speaking ability. Language disorders can be divided into two categories i-e expressive

and receptive language disorder. Children who are suffering from language disorders can produce sounds but there are some issues with the ability when they use them in fluent conversations. Language development is a natural phenomenon in child.

Out of 20 children, one is suffering from language disorders. When the reason behind that disorder is not located, it is normally known as developmental-language disorder. There are many medical issues causing Language disorders like brain injury, learning disabilities, hearing loss and autistic spectrum disorders.

Researchers in this study are trying to find only those reasons which are socially involved and contributing in language disorders. Language disorders can also be caused by lack of intelligence. Some children start speaking Lil bit in elder age as compared to the others but this issue cannot be included in language disorders because language develops in natural symmetrical order. If someone is suffering from Language disorder, development of language would not be according to the natural process. There must be some difference from usual development of language.

Language can be developed by involving four factor i-e remembering, seeing, hearing and understanding. Some children having all the natural abilities required to learn language still don't learn language as a normal phenomenon.

Children who are suffering from language disorders may be suffering from one of the following causes like Autism, drug abuse, hearing loss, mental retardation, syndrome, cleft palate and Neurological disorders.

Communication disorder affects communication with reference to the production and understanding of speech which is highly affective. Researchers will find out how society increases the ratio of language disorders and the basic reasons for the multi lingual children to use more hedges, stuttering and other such socially built issues. How these socially built language disorders affect the language of normal children. What is the role of his social circle in development of language in general?

Language disorders because of lack of intelligence in whole world, is one of the major causes of socially supported Language disorders in Pakistan. Society, fellows humiliate children in such a

way that unconsciously they add more hedges or stutter when they use language in their circle.

1.1 Hypothesis

Society plays an important role in bringing up Language disorders even in those children who are medically fit and fine.

1.2 Research questions

The research aims at answering the following questions

- What are basic issues of the society which lead it towards socially built language disorders?
- How does Pakistani society overcome socially built language disorders?
- How does social circle of the children enhance their language disorders?
- What is the behavior of the family, school fellows and teachers with the children who are suffering from Language disorders?
- What are the basic techniques to overcome this issue in Pakistan?

1.3 Research objectives

The research aims at following objectives

- To find out various techniques which may help Pakistanis to avoid socially built Language disorders.
- To make society conscious about their negative behavior in the development of such children.
- To investigate the hidden ideologies behind the attitude of the society.
- To find out all the hidden patterns which develop negative attitude of the society about language disorders in children.
- To develop the critical approach of the Pakistani society in general by giving them awareness about all the devices and techniques that can be used and effect the psychological development of the children.

1.4 Delimitation of the study

The researchers set following delimitations of the study

- Researchers selected five cases only for deep analysis.
- Only those cases of language disorders are selected which are socially built.
- Faisalabad and Lahore are only selected for sampling.
- Researchers spent one month with different speech therapists having minimum experience of fifteen years.

2. Literature review

So many researchers have been conducting researches with reference to the Language disorders. All the researches discuss language disorders which are mainly hormonal or biological. Here in this research, researchers elaborate only those disorders which are socially developed in our society, resulting in sustaining disorders in the children.

Native Language plays an important role in the learning other languages. Dulay *et al* (1982) describes that we transfer the structure of the first language when we learn second language. Lott (1983: 256) considers this interference as an error when learners use second language, it traces them back to their mother tongue.

It is quite difficult to learn another language, especially for an adult. When adults learn second Language, they try to link it with 1st language (Albert & Obler; 1978, Carroll, 1964; Larson-Freeman & Long, 1991).

Language disorders are very common phenomenon now days. Multilingualism is also one cause of language disorders. Multilingual speaker means a person who can use several languages for communication. All the countries on map probably have bilingual or multilingual speakers. It's a very common phenomenon nowadays to learn other languages but to learn all the language having same fluency is not possible, or rare. There are very few persons who are translators and proficient interpreters (Check following authors to get general overviews about bilingualism: Baetens-Beardsmore, 1986; Grosjean, 1982; Haugen, 1969; Weinreich, 1968; Apple and Muysken, 1987; Romaine, 1989; Hakuta, 1986; Clyne, 1972).

Phonetics also plays an important role in the learning other Languages. Some sounds are not common in all languages and it is not possible for the users to some time, produce the sounds of other languages because their vocal-cords are not as much developed according to those languages which they try to learn.

Language disorder in children because of multi-language culture is also a major cause in Pakistan. What type of difficulties learners face when they learn a 2nd or 3rd language? What is the behavior of society at the time of learning process and how this behavior leads them towards language disorders?. Researchers elaborate all those issues which learners face and they are the main reasons of language disorders in those learners who are medically fit.

3. Research methodology

The research falls into the realm of qualitative research. Research doesn't include any statistical results in it. The research basically includes case studies to analyze language disorders deeply. How society develops this phenomenon in children. Vygotsky (1978) zone of proximal development is also discussed the behavior of society in the development of the child. According to ZPD, we observe the phenomenon what children can do when we guide them or when we don't guide them. Goodman 1990s (pp. 223-250) firmly believes that when we use language as a social phenomenon, it gives us a basis for his literacy. According to (Griffin, Cole and Newman, 1989), the activities which we involve in ZPD have some cultural and social background of the children or learners.

In this research, we use this ZPD theory with reference to the behavior of society as to how society demotivates and degrades the learners with language disorders. Pakistan is a multi lingual country and the number of the Pakistani communities is quite ambiguous about different language, especially in Punjab. The educated or even uneducated families who speak Punjabi as their mother tongue in their home never like to speak this language outside.

To study this phenomenon, both researchers spend one month with a speech therapist to check this phenomenon and both researchers observed all patients for one month and later on, selected five cases for deep study. We studied or analyzed results with reference to the ZPD.

Research observes all patients sufferings from Language disorders in a natural setting with a speech therapist to study this phenomenon elaborately. To follow the ethical guidelines of the research, the name of the sample patients, speech therapists, and hospital where researchers were engaged, is not mentioned over there.

4. Analysis

In Pakistan, a language disorder because of social behavior is a very common issue. The percentage also discusses earlier that is for every 20 persons, one must be suffering from Language disorder (statistics taken from on-line resource). This ratio also seems true in Pakistan as well. During the month of researchers with speech therapists, only those patients were keenly observed who don't have any biological or hormonal issue but still they are suffering from Language disorders.

Some are suffering from stuttering and some parents said that their children use too many hedges when they communicate; it seems like they can't speak fluently. Some children are there who don't speak well even at the age of twelve without having any biological issue.

All the five cases which researches selected for the deep analysis were not suffering from any biological and hormonal issue. They are being totally fit and fine medically, but still facing issues when they speak.

According to the researchers, there are several other social reasons in Pakistan on the basis of which they can't speak well.

- Multi lingual skill imposed on them without learning.
- Mother tongue in social circles is considered to be a shameful activity.
- English is much preferred in schools and in educated community.
- Languages can't be treated equally.
- Role of society towards various Languages.

Pakistan is a multi lingual country. More than thirty Languages are being consumed in Pakistan. Urdu is a national language of Pakistanis and people normally use this language in their Quiet formal social circle. But formal environment like offices and schools, it compulsory for the learners to speak English in a formal environment. Instructors fine those learners who are not able to speak English in

classroom. At the same time, they produce Language disorder without proper guidance. As Vygotsky's theory of ZPD, society plays an important role in the development of children. He said result is different when we guide children and we don't guide them same is the case over there. When society doesn't guide learners about different languages and expect learners to use various languages of their own according to the environment, language disorders mature.

In case one, researchers find out the following reasons of stuttering. In case one and two, when children use their mother tongue in the social circle of their family, it is considered to be a a shameful activity, particularly in Punjab. To speak Punjabi outside home is just like a crime in-front of the family, claiming their low prestige and social degradation. Uneducated families, especially in cities dislike Punjabi. Punjabi in the Punjab is considered to be a language of the lower class. The educated class of the community avoids speaking Punjabi in their formal and informal circle. When uneducated community observes the attitude of the higher class towards their mother tongue, they unintentionally try to avoid Punjabi and they consider it compulsory for their children no to speak Punjabi at any cost. This attitude of their parents develops some negative attitudes towards various languages of the society.

Children normally spend 8 hours in school and it's almost one third time of the whole day and from the time left, they join academies even at the level of very initial classes. English is the most preferable Language and its quite impossible for the learners to speak any other language without having the basic information, so when they try to speak another language in which they are not master, they stutter or use hedges excessively. It shows that when another language is imposed on them to speak, they use hedges and stutter just to bring fluency in their language. Code switching and code mixing is also involved at this level.

When parents and instructors supposed that their children follow the rule of language change according to the situation, they are probably victims of language disorder because it is tough for them to switch to their language. In school, probably English Language is the most preferred language, in society, people prefer to talk in their national language and at their homes, people normally speak their

mother tongue. Children normally are unable to switch to so many languages in many situations, and because of the attitude of the society and threat from family side, they try to use different languages according to the situation.

A deep study of case 3, researchers came to know the Role of society towards the various languages in Pakistan. People use various Languages to show off their class and status. English is considered to be a language of an elite class and Urdu is considered a middle class language and Punjabi, in Punjab is a language of a lower class. Sindhi, Pushtu and Balochi languages are not considered as tag languages on the users like Punjabi which is a tag Language for the people of the lower class. The thinking of the various communities about the different languages in Pakistan is also a big social cause of all those Language disorders in Pakistan which are neither biological nor hormonal.

In analysis of the case 4th and 5th, both children belong to the multi-lingual family, their parents belong to Sindhi and Pathan family, they live in Punjab and children study in an English medium school and they were supposed to use Urdu in the society. There are so many languages which they were supposed to use and they don't have proper training of any of the Language they are exposed to. When they speak any of the Languages, they are not fluent on them and they stutter and use too many hedges because of multi language culture.

Phonetics and phonology also play an important role in the language disorders. When children switch to their language, they are not familiar with the spoken pattern of the other language. If someone from their circle knows the pattern of the language which the child tries to speak, they mimic them and point out their mistake in-front of everyone so they feel embarrassed and tried to speak well next time. Lack of knowledge about the other languages creates a dump effect on them. They consider themselves un-talented. This causes a very negative effect on their speaking skill and whenever they speak, they stutter and use so many hedges to avoid such embarrassing situation.

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development discusses the behavior of the society in the development of the child, but in this research, ZPD is involved to study the behavior of the society to enhance language disorders in the children. How society behaves with

the children who are suffering from any language disorder and raises the ratio of disorder in the patients. They behave in a negative way and degrade the patients by irritating and mimic them.

5. Conclusion

Language disorders as researchers discussed are quite common phenomena in Pakistan, but researchers discussed only those disorders which are socially caused. They came to know after the deep study of the cases selected that the positive and educated behavior in the society can reduce the ratio of these disorders and they can easily be minimized in Pakistan. The role of society and multi-lingual learners learn other languages just because to get high social status without having any interest in other languages. Lack of interest is also a big social cause of language disorders in Pakistan.

All socially developed or created Language disorders in Pakistan can easily be avoided if we change the attitude of the society towards Languages. Language should not be a status symbol as in Pakistan it is considered. If society behaves positively and by not mimicking the children when they are wrong, the ratio of the patients of language disorder can easily be minimized.

References

- Albert, M.L. & Obler, L.K. 1978, *The Bilingual Brain: Neuropsychological and Neurolinguistic Aspects of Bilingualism*, Academic press, New York.
- Appel, R. and Muysken, P. *Language Contact and Bilingualism*. London: Edward Arnold, 1987.
- Baetens-Beardsmore, H. *Bilingualism: Basic Principles*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters, 1986.
- Carroll, J.B. 1964, *Language and Thought*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs.
- Clyne, M. *Perspectives on language contact*. Melbourne: Hawthorne Press, 1972.
- Dulay, H., Burt, M. & Krashen, S. 1982, *Language Two*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Goodman, Y. M., & Goodman, K. S. (1990). Vygotsky in a whole language perspective. In L. C. Moll (Ed.), *Vygotsky and education: Instructional implications and applications of sociohistorical psychology* (pp. 223-250). New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Grosjean, F. Life with two languages: An introduction to bilingualism. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Hakuta, K. Mirror of Language: The Debate on Bilingualism. New York: Basic Books, 1986.
- Haugen, E. The Norwegian language in America: A study in Bilingual Behavior. Bloomington, Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 1969.
- <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001545.htm>
- <http://www.home-speech-home.com/language-disorder.html>
- <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/multilingual>
- Larson-Freeman, D. & Long, M.H. 1991, An Introduction to Second Language Acquisition Research, Longman, New York.
- Lott, D. 1983, Analyzing and counteracting interference errors, ELT Journal, vol.37/3, pp 256- 261.
- Newman, D., Griffin, P. & Cole, M. (1989). The construction zone: Working for cognitive change in school. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Romaine, S. Bilingualism. London: Blackwell, 1989.
- Sharp HM, Hillenbrand K. Speech and language development and disorders in children. *Pediatr Clin North Am.* 2008;55:1159-1173.
- Simms MD. Language disorders in children: classification and clinical syndromes. *Pediatr Clin North Am.* 2007;54:437-467.
- Simms MD, Schum RL. Language development and communication disorders, In: Kliegman RM, Behrman RE, Jenson HB, Stanton BF, eds. *Nelson Textbook of Pediatrics.* 19th ed. Philadelphia, Pa: Saunders Elsevier; 2011:chap32
- **Vygotsky, L. S.** (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Weinreich, U. *Languages in contact.* The Hague: Mouton, 1968.