

AGE AND CHILD LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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Abstrak

Anak-anak bervariasi dalam perkembangan kemampuan berbicara dalam bahasa mereka. Namun, mereka mengikuti perkembangan alami untuk menguasai keterampilan bahasa. Ciri-ciri anak dalam berbahasa, yaitu mereka menggunakan bahasa mereka sepenuhnya untuk meminta informasi praktis yang mereka kurang pahami. Mereka telah belajar dua hal tentang bahasa dan mereka mengucapkan serangkaian kata-kata yang tidak terlalu berbeda dengan yang lain yang mereka dengar sepanjang hari. Dalam menggunakan bahasa, anak-anak menemukan beberapa kesulitan. Seorang anak dengan masalah bahasa mungkin dapat mengucapkan kata-kata dengan baik, tetapi tidak dapat menyatukan lebih dari dua kata. Ucapan anak lain mungkin sulit dimengerti, tetapi dia mungkin menggunakan kata dan frasa untuk mengungkapkan ide. Anak lain mungkin berbicara dengan baik, tetapi mengalami kesulitan mengikuti arahan. Ada beberapa cara untuk membantu masalah anak-anak, seperti (1) menghabiskan banyak waktu untuk berkomunikasi dengan anak-anak, bahkan selama masa bayi - berbicara, bernyanyi, dan peniruan bunyi dan gerak-gerik, (2) dimulai sedini mungkin, yaitu usia 6 bulan. Buku atau papan buku atau buku bergambar sesuai usia dapat mendorong anak-anak untuk melihat saat Anda menamai gambar, dan (3) menggunakan situasi sehari-hari untuk memperkuat bahasa dan ucapan anak-anak. Misalnya, beri nama makanan, tunjuk benda, dan lainnya.

Kata kunci: Usia, Anak, Bahasa

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is much broader and refers to the entire system of expressing and receiving information in a way that's meaningful (Vivian Cook, 1997:76). It is understanding and being understood through communication. The first signs of communication occur when an infant learns that a cry will bring food, comfort, and companionship. Newborns also begin to recognize important sounds in their environment, such as the voice of their mother or primary character. As they grow,

babies begin to sort out the speech sounds that compose the words of their language. By 6 months of age, most babies recognize the basic sounds of their native language.

The development of communication skills begins in infancy, before the emergence of the first word. Any speech or language problem is likely to have a significant effect on the child's social and academic skills and behavior. The earlier a child's speech and language problems are identified and treated, the less likely it is that problems will persist or get worse. Early

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speech and language intervention can help children be more successful with reading, writing, schoolwork, and interpersonal relationships. This information represents, on average, the age by which most monolingual speaking children will accomplish the listed milestones. Children typically do not master all items in a category until they reach the upper age in each age range.

Children vary in their development of speech and language skills. However, they follow a natural progression for mastering the skills of language. The children is using their language completely to enquire for a particular piece of information which they lack. They therefore have learnt two things about language. It can be used to convey information about the state of the world and it can be also used in an instrumental way to engage other people in the task in hand, that of discovering Mummy's whereabouts. The children sometimes uttered a string of words not very unlike others which they hear around them all day long. The children also is giving verbal expression to a very important discovery; although they cannot see where their mother is at present they do realise that they must be somewhere and that it is probably possible to find put where they are (Alson J. Elliot, 1998:1—2).

The children sometimes find difficulties in using language. Children who have trouble understanding what others say or difficulty sharing their thoughts may have

a language disorder. Specific language impairment is a language disorder that delays the mastery of language skills. Some children may not begin to talk until their third or fourth year. According to Littlewood, (2001), children who have trouble producing speech sounds correctly or who hesitate or stutter when talking may have a speech disorder. Apraxia of speech is a speech disorder that makes it difficult to put sounds and syllables together in the correct order to form words.

II. DISCUSSION

The children usually have smooth and strong motor skills. However, their coordination (especially eye-hand), endurance, balance, and physical abilities vary. Fine motor skills may also vary widely. These skills can affect a child's ability to write neatly, dress appropriately, and perform certain chores, such as making beds or doing dishes. There will be big differences in height, weight, and build among children of this age range. It is important to remember that genetic background, as well as nutrition and exercise, may affect a child's growth. There can also be a big difference in the age at which children begin to develop secondary sexual characteristics. For girls, secondary sex characteristics include (a) breast development and (b) underarm and pubic hair growth, while for boys, they include (a) growth of underarm, chest, and pubic hair

and (b) growth of testicles and penis (Jeremy Harmer, 2001).

Especially for early school-age children, they should be able to use simple, but complete sentences that average five to seven words. As the child goes through the elementary school years, grammar and pronunciation become normal. Children use more complex sentences as they grow. Language delays may be due to hearing or intelligence problems. In addition, children who are unable to express themselves well may be more likely to have aggressive behavior or temper tantrums. Children who have a problem in this area may try to cover it up with backtalk or clowning around. They will rarely ask for help because they are afraid of being teased.

It can be stated that children have different language competence and ability. Although problems in speech and language differ, the children often have common characteristics. A child with a language problem may be able to pronounce words well but be unable to put more than two words together. Another child's speech may be difficult to understand, but he or she may use words and phrases to express ideas. And another child may speak well but have difficulty following directions.

1. Warning Signs of a Possible Problem

If parents concerned about your child's speech and language development, there are some things to watch for. An infant who is

not responding to sound or who is not vocalizing is of particular concern. Between 12 and 24 months, reasons for concern include a child who:

- a. Isn't using gestures, such as pointing or waving bye-bye by 12 months.
- b. prefers gestures over vocalizations to communicate by 18 months.
- c. has trouble imitating sounds by 18 months
- d. has difficulty understanding simple verbal requests.

Other signs are that the children can only imitate speech or actions and doesn't produce words or phrases spontaneously, says only certain sounds or words repeatedly and can't use oral language to communicate more than his or her immediate needs, can't follow simple directions, has an unusual tone of voice (such as raspy or nasal sounding), and is more difficult to understand than expected for his or her age. Parents and regular caregivers should understand about half of a child's speech at 2 years and about three quarters at 3 years. By 4 years old, a child should be mostly understood, even by people who don't know the child (Jeremy Harmer, 2001).

2. Causes of Delayed Speech or Language

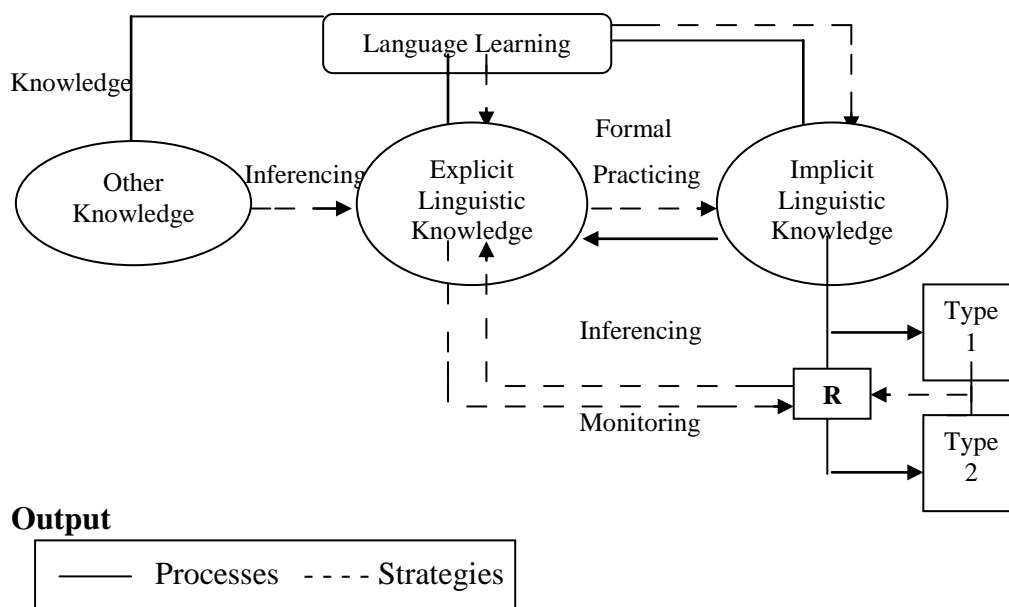
Many things can cause delays in speech and language development. Speech delays in an otherwise normally developing child can sometimes be caused by oral impairments, like problems with the tongue. Many kids with speech delays have oral-

motor problems, meaning there's inefficient communication in the areas of the brain responsible for speech production. The child encounters difficulty using and coordinating the lips, tongue, and jaw to produce speech sounds. Speech may be the only problem or may be accompanied by other oral-motor problems such as feeding difficulties.

In language, it is important for the children to express their knowledge in

different situations through the communication process. Although they the children show some problems in speech or in using language, the children can learn language through implicit and explicit linguistic knowledge. According to Bialystok (cited in Ellis, 1996), model of language learning is shown below.

Figure 1. Model of Language Learning (Bialystok: 78)



According to this theory, the implicit knowledge is developed through exposure to communicate language use and facilitated by the strategy of functional practicing (attempted by the learner to maximize exposure to language through communication). Explicit knowledge arises when children focus on the language code, and is facilitated by 'formal practicing', which involves either conscious of the second

language or attempts to automatize already learn explicit knowledge.

Formal practicing enables explicit knowledge to be derived from the implicit one. The model also distinguishes two types of output which have different functions. They are Type 1 and Type 2. Type 1 output is spontaneous and immediate, while Type 2 is deliberate and occurs after a delay. As might be expected, Type 1 relies entirely on implicit knowledge, whereas Type 2

involves both implicit and explicit. A feedback loop from both types allows for continual modification of a response.

In explaining how knowledge is developed, Bialystock (cited in Ellis, 1996) draws on the work of Karmiloff-Smith's (1986) three phases of skill development. The first phase is called 'Implicit'. Here knowledge of a linguistic item is closely associated with procedures of using it in communication and is not represented independently. The second phase is called 'Explicit 1', during which children examine, analyse, and organize their performances in order to construct explicit and independent representations of linguistic knowledge. In the final phase—Explicit 2—linguistic knowledge is available for conscious consideration.

III. CONCLUSION

The children is using their language completely to enquire for a particular piece of information which they lack. They sometimes find difficulties to use and understand language. A child with a language problem may be able to pronounce words well but be unable to put more than two words together. Another child's speech may be difficult to understand, but he or she may use words and phrases to express ideas. When speech, language, hearing, or

developmental problems do exist, early intervention can provide the help a child needs. Here are a few general tips to use at home:

1. Spend a lot of time communicating with children, even during infancy—talk, sing, and encourage imitation of sounds and gestures.
2. Read to children, starting as early as 6 months. Age-appropriate soft or board books or picture books can encourage kids to look while you name the pictures..
3. Use everyday situations to reinforce children's speech and language. For example, name foods, point out objects, and so on.

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