

THE EFFICACY OF MOTHER-CHILD SOCIAL INTERACTION AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AMONG THE DEAF INDIVIDUALS

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to find out the efficacy of mother-child social interaction, rearing styles and working class mother home influence, on the competency skills of language development and utilisation among the deaf children. This is based on the fact that the warmth of the mother promotes affectionate tendencies and attachment, which in turns have impact on language and speech proficiency of the deaf. It enhances communication and interactions of the growing child. However, the negative effect of deprivations, other language compensatory modalities, on language efficiency of the deaf cannot be underestimated. Sixty parents and sixty students were sampled in integrated schools. Questionnaires, interview, observation and video recording were used during play activities with both peers and parents in the school settings. Independent observers and raters were used to assess the mean length of language utterances as compared with normal children based on video-click. The results were collated and analysed. The findings revealed the needs for nurturant home and authoritarian rearing style as the best methods to improve the deaf language proficiency. There is, however, a negative effect of working mother on the language skills of the deaf child especially when not enrolled early in a nursery school or baby seater's home. The researchers offered relevant suggestions as well as stressed the importance of the findings to educational practices.

Introduction

There is no gain-saying in the fact that the type of home and the environment the child is reared determines the child's speech and language competence, while the overall intellectual and emotional development of the children are further affected by the type of home and the environment the child is reared. The problem is further complicated for a deaf individual, who had lost the basic tool of auditory functioning and hearing mechanism which makes it difficult for them to easily interact and understand the

environment. It is worth noting that the role of mother-child interaction, attractiveness, acceptance or rejection can mar or improve the development of a deaf child totally. In fact, it has implications right from the onset of deafness while its early discovery and identification also have implications on the child's development.

Allan (1980) suggested that, an isolated parenthood, unstimulated environment and negative mother social interaction all have serious implications on the language and speech development of a normal child not to talk of the deaf, who is language handicapped. Indeed, research findings affirmed that normal children experience the heartbeat, breath, pulses and voices of their mother constantly from the womb but for a congenitally deaf child the reverse is the case.

More so, the practice of good child rearing, feeding, discipline, maintenance, the provision of simulative environment including affection and feeling secured, according to Baumrind (1989) enhances the acquisition of language and speech skills. This is equally true for a deaf child's language development. Arguably the absence of these ideal settings would jeopardise the language acquisition of the child.

The initial social relationship that most infant experience with parents and in most cultures it is the mother who provides these experiences. According to Fogel (1979), Freud (1920) and Arrow Smith (1979) they have offered numerous data about the psychological significance of mother-child relationship. To this end, Isaiah (1998) opined that, parenting any child (deaf inclusive) seriously demands a tremendous challenge. In essence parenting deaf child demands more challenges.

Attachment is the early stable affectionate relationship between a child and another person, usually the parents. Feeding and hunger satisfaction also enhance further attachment, between care giver and the child, it also develops affection and rapport relationship thereby promoting language development. Hence when parent of children that are deaf isolate them, this could seriously impair them linguistically.

Between the early as 1940's and 1950's, the implications of early mother-child separations have been documented. In fact, Arrow (1958), Freud (1923) and Bowlby (1983) "Mother-child social relationship is essential for good mental health" of the children. Infants should therefore experience warm, intimate and continuous relationship with their mothers, mother surrogates and those that are very close to them. Parents and children do find satisfaction in their pleasant relationship and Harrow (1958) observed that attachment is triggered by "releasers" in the environment, while children react negatively to separation from their strong attachment. In fact, this resembles imprint in lower animals like birds.

In early stages of children life when they are attached to social objects, they distinguish familiar from unfamiliar people and mostly the primary care taker. They also develop true attachment and react negatively to separation from their strong attachment.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) also argued that the distinctive feature of the present day's family is the lack of involvement or sustained interaction between parents and children. Increased parents' occupational demands might have caused this; hence parents have little time to spend with their children even when watching television together. Similarly, the structuring of the physical environment within the home has also been viewed as a contributing factor to the reduced levels of interaction between parents and children.

Moreover, Beckwith (1977) opined that maternal behaviours such as smiling, eye-to-eye contact with their kids by mothers and reactions to different faces by the children enhance the language development of these children. Essentially the child's home environment and the style of rearing impact on the child, largely determine the speech and language competences of children. They further exert considerable effect on the children's personality.

However, the complexity of mother child interaction has been widely recognised and this was explicitly documented by Awanbor (1984) for the deaf, hence it is easy to assess the frequency, variety and contingency of behaviour as well as functional characteristics of behaviours, such as arousing, orienting, drive reducing and so on in the children upbringing.

Carter (1983) opined that, the mother interacts with children in different styles and on different occasions, starting from breast-feeding warmth, which its inadequacies may lead to aggressiveness, intolerance and other unhealthiness. This can further affect the language and speech development of the child especially the deaf which warrants that the family relationship with the deaf child, should be cordial, intimate and stimulating so as to lessen the family anxiety, tension as well improves the overall achievement of the deaf child ability in the use of language.

Therefore this study was conducted to assess the effects of mother-child's social interaction on language development and achievement cum the overall adjustment capabilities of the deaf children.

HYPOTHESIS: On the basis of problem stated earlier, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested.

Ho1: There will be no significant difference in language proficiency of accepted deaf children and non-accepted deaf children.

Ho2: There will be no significant difference between the rearing pattern (styles) and the rate of deaf children language development.

Ho3: There will be no significant difference between the language proficiency of deaf children reared by working mothers and those reared by non working class mothers.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research survey was used for this study since it allowed the researchers to observe, videotape, the mother child interaction and language development. Coupled with the free usage of language during play. The parents were also interviewed, this allowed the description of the type of rearing home that favours language proficiency of the deaf children in Nigeria society.

SUBJECTS - Sixty parents and sixty deaf children were used for this study.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Purposive sampling techniques were used to select randomly sixty parents and sixty deaf children for the study in some deaf schools that offer pre-school training for the deaf.

INSTRUMENT

Three sets of instruments were used to collect data for this study. Video tape observations were made of each selected child interacting with their mother as well as for the recording of the child's verbal out put during free play setting time among their peers and other siblings. A scale prepared by the researchers was used to measure the mean length of utterances of the deaf and the normal children for an accurate comparison.

More so, graded interview and observation were done for the parents with the use of structured questionnaire as to determine the patterns of rearing and whether the mother class or non-working class. The interview questions as well as the questionnaire were previously validated with the assistance of the experts in the psychometrics at the University of Ibadan. The instrument was carefully used, the structured questions were divided into two sections comprising of the Biodata information in part "A" as well as the part "B" which was made up of 20 graded questions in "Yes" or "No" format.

A video recording of parents' child interaction was done in the bugged classroom where the parents and children were given sets of standard toys to play with for ten minutes as an arouser for each extra lesson. The recording of each child mother interactions was done for ten minutes during the 'arouser' sessions at about 2 weeks apart without their awareness. Similar video recording was done for children interacting on the play field in the integrated schools used during play activities. Independent observers and recorders were used to interpret and record the children activities with their peers or mother.

ADMINISTRATION

Letters were written to the deaf school including, the pre-nursery school to seek permission to carry out a research in their schools. The schools used were:

- (i) Ijokodo High School, Ijokodo, Ibadan.
- (ii) Methodist School for the Deaf, Ibadan.

The two schools are integrated schools where the normal children attend the same school but different classroom environment and where the class unifies the children used.

Parents that were visited at home to complete the questionnaires and be interviewed were later invited to the schools to join the teachers in educating their wards on selected topics. Prior to their arrival, the classroom to be used was bugged with video tape recorders and stand by technicians. Although the researchers explained the purpose of the studies to the parents, the researchers used the video recording to get the mean length of utterances of the deaf wards, as well as to observe the caring style of the parents of the deaf. Brown and Bellugi (1973) standard measure of syntactic complexity was used to correlate the result of 30 randomly selected normal school children language achievement *via* mean length of utterances with that of the deaf in each selected school.

DATA ANALYSIS

In analysing the data collected, hypothesis one made use of chi-square (X^2) while hypothesis two and three used Pearson's correlational Coefficient statistical packages. The mean length of utterances of the normal children were compared subjectively with that of the deaf children via the video recorded tape analyses.

The groups mean lengths were used as yardstick for comparison of language proficiency scores.

RESULTS

In testing the first predicted Null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the child home (nurturant, interactive and accommodating) and the non-accepted deaf children with reference to language development, the null hypothesis is rejected since the calculated value 4.448 is greater than 3.841 as revealed in Table I below.

X2 Table of Nurturant Home and Non-Nurturant Home (Deaf Children)

Variables	Rate of Language Development		Total	Cal-t	Tab.t	d.f
Nurturant Home	45.6(46.03)	62.5(62.2)	108.1			

Non-Nurturant Home	38.3(38.04)	51.4(51.6)	89.7	4.448	3.841	28
Total	83.9	113.9	197.8			
P>0.05						

There is a significant relationship between the language achievement of the deaf from nurturant home as compared to non-language development, which is hampered and retarded as demonstrated in the mean length of utterance of the non-nurturant home.

HYPOTHESIS: 2

The null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the rearing pattern (style). Authoritarian and permissive home and the rate of language development of the deaf children is hereby rejected based on the below Pearson correlation coefficient calculation that is lesser than the table value.

Table II

Authoritarian and Permissive Home Language Development of deaf children table (rearing styles)

Variables	N	X	S.D	Cal r	Tab r	D.f
Authoritarian	30	2.76	0.502	-3.326	0.361	28
Permission	30	1.04	0.460			

P>0.05

KEY: Table value is greater than calculated value hence accept hypothesis. Although there is a negative correlation, since calculated r is negative, while the hypotheses stands accepted there is no significant differences between the language achievement of deaf children from Authoritarian homes as compare to deaf children language or those who are from permissive home.

HYPOTHESIS 3 States that there are no significant differences in relationship between the deaf children language achievement of the working class mothers and non-working mothers.

Table III

Working class mother of deaf children language compared with Non-working class mother language achievement of deaf children using Pearson correlation coefficient.

Variable	N	X	SD	Cal r	Tab r	D.f
Working class Mother Home	30	2.42	0.58			
Non-working Class Mother Home	30	0.94	0.418	0.588	0.361	28

P > 0.05

Calculated r is greater than the table t hence the hypotheses is rejected that there is a significant difference between the deaf children of working class mother and their language achievement since the table value is lesser than calculated value ($P > 0.05$).

DISCUSSION:

Awenbor (1984) stated that parents can help their handicapped children to grow and cope with the handicapping condition using peers or other siblings to develop language of the deaf and to act as co-therapist. Buscaglia (1975) aptly remarked that it is the parents who play the very important role of educating the siblings in the home about the disabled member of the family; as well they also have the responsibility of carrying the family through to adjustment, and to the reality of the situation. Hence parents who are authoritarian in rearing techniques but nurturing could enhance the language achievement of the deaf, although the syntactic complex configuration and increase mean length of utterance characterised the nurturing home deaf children speech and language usage. The grammatical composition and prosodic content of language are nearly similar to the normal speech of normal children hence better than the permissive rearing because of uncared attitude, feeling of guilt, shame and hostility of some parents to their handicapped deaf children.

Although, at times the home that is permissive in its rearing style may favour adequate language achievement but the essential characteristic of this home must be acceptance and care for the deaf child. The home must be nurturant with lots of play toys, and the interactions must be adequate with peer groups, family members and age mates. More so, there must be adequate educational learning materials and exposure, good diet and total integrative environment are required for language development via appropriate linguistic awareness and training programme embarked upon by the home with strict discipline. Many times, surrogate mother could develop better the language of the deaf as in pre-nursery and nursery school homes, which are done early for the deaf. Most of these schools taught language, rhythm, poem, song, story, reading, as forms of languages.

which enhance the speech of the deaf especially with application, for those who can benefit from it. The Authoritarian home proof useful in this research with table value being less than calculated value. (3.841 to 4.448)

Beumrind (1980) suggested that identical parental styles may even foster different behaviour patterns in boys and girls. In essence effect of childcare on children social development has yielded contradicting findings. While some reports no differences in social behaviour, between children without child care experience (Golden *et al* 1978), Kegan *et al* (1978); others show that children who had no maternal child care, are more socially competent. Clarice Stenwart (1984); Homesand Olenick (1986); 1987; McCarthy and Scarr (1987) Peloenstein, Hones and Boyle (1980) positive out come, includes Howes and Olenic (1986); McCarthy (1984); teacher positive interaction with children McCarthy, (1984) Vandell and Powers (1983).

Hurlock (1967) stressed that, a healthy family relationship between the child and the mother facilitates speech development and otherwise its speech defectiveness. However, child care is not only a women issue, but it is rather a family affairs, based on the fact that the entire family must accept a deaf child for better adjustment and total integration into language development, orientations, communication and achievement.

A high quality child care that is temporarily affordable and needed by a deaf child, may be lacked at the children from working mother homes, especially the nursery school programmes, that is necessary early in life, due to poveritirised home. In essence the qualities of day care programmes varied, as well as types of home baby seaters, hence the working mother deaf children, do not surpass much the non working mother deaf children language achievement with a mean of 2.42 to 0.94 and the calculated r is 0.588, hence greater than the table value of 0.361 which is significant, that there is significant difference in the relationship.

In essence high quality day care settings have been shown to always compensate for the poor family environment. Daaney, Bryan and Suarez (1985); hence high quality day care further promotes adequate language, hence the rearing pattern should try to include both little permissiveness mixed with authoritarian as the researchers advocated in this study, especially to rear a deaf child in a language community implies an additional involvement of everybody concerned as well as nurturant environment.

Burgess (1973) stated that being a good parent is not a matter of wealth, but a matter of attitude hence parent should communicate and socialise with the child in all their interactions, right from birth till adolescent age, even when the child is abnormal.

SUGGESTION/RECOMMENDATION, CONCLUSION

Parents should make use of information centers, resource centers, parent references library, toy library, etcetera, to ~~Enliven~~ ^{Enliven} the life of the deaf and the entire family, parents should endeavour to combine warmth with moderate restrictiveness with

authoritative style as to foster maturity in children, even as early as the pre-school years for the deaf.

Omoluwabi (1980) asserted that in African societies women should include virtually all domestic work and child bearing care, rearing and meals preparation for the entire family as their job. and how family values parenthood, and rearing of children, is always in their rearing customs while women naturally accept the responsibility of training their children.

Isaiah (1998) put it succinctly that parents are effective and influential partners in the educational and language process of their children, and functions as an agent of change and developments.

To this end, parents need skills, knowledge, sensitivity, wisdom and patience, in order to maintain cordial relationship with their deaf children as to facilitate their language competences and efficiency, via learning in highly nourished linguistically environment that is much accommodating, stimulating rather than hostile.

To buttress the situation of mother with defective speech children, Arrow Smith (1979) emphasised that parents of defective speech children or language/learning impaired, show feelings of guilt. And this affects their reactions to the child. Some parents do punish the child for any small mis-conduct, which causes maladjustment, when they become over authoritative and these seriously hinders language growth.

Disturbed family/child relationship causes the child to be withdrawn, isolated, insecure, emotionally imbalance and socially maladjustment which finally result in speech defect children, who have organic speech problem, sometimes have speech problem due to environment conditions as confirmed by McCarthy (1954).

In conclusion, a practical approach, as Oladele (1987) opined, is to involve the parent to help make a beginning in the training of the child and should then be actively involve, from on-set of life and deafness, to the adolescent self employed person. This will surely yield more positive result with good management rather than when parents remain aloof, unconcerned, and permissive with bad attitude and low self-esteem and low acceptance of their deaf wards.

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