

Language Disorders in Bilingual Children and Adults

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Abstract

Language is a fundamental aspect of human communication and interaction. It plays a vital role in our daily lives, allowing us to express ourselves, comprehend information, and establish meaningful connections with others. However, for some individuals, the acquisition and use of language can be a complex and challenging process due to language disorders. In this article, we will explore the world of language disorders, examining their causes, different types, and available treatment approaches. Language disorders refer to a range of conditions that affect an individual's ability to understand, use, or produce language. These disorders can manifest in various ways, including difficulties in speech production, comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and grammar usage. Language disorders can occur in both children and adults and may be caused by a variety of factors, such as genetic predisposition, neurological damage, or developmental delays. Early identification and intervention are crucial in managing language disorders and promoting effective communication skills. This abstract provides an overview of language disorders, their causes, manifestations, and the importance of timely intervention.

Keywords: Aphasia • Dyslexia • Speech therapy

Introduction

A language disorder refers to a significant difficulty in the comprehension and/or use of spoken, written, and/or other forms of language. It affects an individual's ability to express themselves, understand others, and communicate effectively. Language disorders can occur in children and adults, impacting various aspects of communication, including vocabulary, grammar, sentence formation, and pragmatic language skills (social use of language). Expressive language disorder primarily affects an individual's ability to use language to express their thoughts, ideas, and needs. Individuals with expressive language disorder may have trouble with word retrieval, formulating grammatically correct sentences, and organizing their ideas in a coherent manner. They may struggle with vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure, leading to difficulty in conveying their intended message. Language is an essential tool for communication, allowing individuals to express their thoughts, feelings, and needs [1].

However, for some individuals, language development does not follow the typical trajectory, leading to language disorders. Language disorders are neurodevelopmental conditions that affect the acquisition, comprehension, and expression of language. These disorders can significantly impact an individual's academic, social, and emotional well-being. This article aims to explore the causes, types, and treatment approaches for language disorders, shedding light on this complex and often misunderstood condition. Language disorders encompass a range of conditions characterized by difficulties in one or more areas of language development. These disorders can manifest in various ways, such as limited vocabulary, poor grammar, and impaired comprehension. According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), approximately 7-10% of preschool children have language disorders, highlighting their prevalence and significance. Language disorders can have multiple underlying causes, including genetic factors,

neurological conditions, environmental influences, and language deprivation. Genetic factors may contribute to language disorders through inherited traits and gene mutations. Neurological conditions, such as autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disabilities, and specific language impairment, can also disrupt language development.

Expressive language disorders involve difficulties in formulating and producing spoken or written language. Individuals with expressive language disorders may struggle with vocabulary retrieval, sentence construction, and organizing thoughts coherently. These challenges can affect their ability to convey ideas effectively and may result in frustration and reduced social interaction. Receptive language disorders refer to difficulties in understanding spoken or written language. Individuals with receptive language disorders may struggle with following instructions, comprehending complex sentences, and understanding abstract concepts. This can hinder academic progress, social interactions, and overall communication skills. Mixed receptive-expressive language disorders involve impairments in both understanding and producing language. Individuals with this type of language disorder may have difficulty with vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, and verbal expression. The combined challenges of receptive and expressive language deficits can significantly impact their ability to communicate effectively in various contexts [2].

Literature Review

Receptive language disorder primarily affects an individual's ability to understand and comprehend spoken or written language. Individuals with receptive language disorder may have difficulty understanding the meaning of words, following instructions, or comprehending complex sentences. This can lead to challenges in academic settings, social interactions, and everyday communication. Mixed receptive-expressive language disorder is a combination of expressive and receptive language difficulties. Individuals with this type of language disorder may experience challenges both in expressing themselves and understanding others. They may struggle with grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and overall language comprehension. AAC systems, including low-tech options like picture communication boards and high-tech devices like speech-generating devices, can support individuals with severe language disorders in expressing themselves. AAC systems can facilitate communication, improve language comprehension, and enhance social interaction [3].

Phonological disorder is a language disorder that primarily affects speech sound production. Individuals with this disorder may have difficulty producing and organizing speech sounds, resulting in speech that is difficult to understand.

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They may substitute, omit, or distort sounds, leading to speech intelligibility issues. Pragmatic language disorder, also known as social communication disorder, is characterized by challenges in using language appropriately in social contexts. Individuals with pragmatic language disorder may struggle with turn-taking, maintaining eye contact, understanding nonverbal cues, and using language in social situations. This can significantly impact their ability to form and maintain relationships, as well as navigate social interactions successfully. Involving parents and caregivers in the intervention process is crucial. They can reinforce therapy goals at home, provide language-rich environments, and support the individual's communication development through daily interactions and activities.

Early identification of language disorders is crucial for timely intervention and support. Parents, caregivers, and educators should be aware of typical language development milestones and seek professional assessment if they observe significant delays or difficulties in language acquisition. The assessment of language disorders involves a comprehensive evaluation conducted by speech-language pathologists. This assessment typically includes standardized tests, observation of language skills, interviews with parents and caregivers, and collaboration with other professionals, such as psychologists and educators. The aim is to understand the individual's strengths, weaknesses, and specific language difficulties. Speech-language therapy is the primary treatment approach for language disorders. Individualized therapy sessions are designed to address the specific language needs of the individual. Therapy may focus on improving vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and comprehension skills. Strategies such as visual aids, repetition, modeling, and play-based activities are often employed to enhance language development [4].

Discussion

Some language disorders have a developmental origin and may emerge during childhood. These may be influenced by genetic predispositions, neurological factors, or an underlying developmental delay. Environmental factors, such as a lack of exposure to language or a language-rich environment, can contribute to language disorders. Children growing up in linguistically impoverished environments may experience delays or difficulties in language development. Certain neurological conditions, such as autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disabilities, traumatic brain injury or Specific Language Impairment (SLI), can lead to language disorders. These conditions affect the brain's ability to process and produce language effectively. Hearing impairment can significantly impact language development, as it affects an individual's ability to perceive and comprehend auditory information. Children with hearing loss may experience delays or difficulties in acquiring language skills [5].

Some language disorders may be associated with other medical conditions, such as Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, or hearing loss. These conditions can affect various aspects of language development and communication abilities. The diagnosis of a language disorder typically involves a comprehensive evaluation conducted by a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) or a multidisciplinary team of professionals. The assessment process may include: A detailed case history is obtained to understand the individual's developmental milestones, medical history, and family background. Standardized tests are used to assess the individual's language abilities in areas such as vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, comprehension, and social language skills. These tests provide objective measures and help identify specific areas of difficulty. Observations of the individual's communication skills in various

settings, such as home, school, or therapy sessions, provide valuable insights into their pragmatic language abilities and social interactions.

Collaboration with other professionals, such as educators, psychologists, and audiologists, may be necessary to gain a comprehensive understanding of the individual's communication abilities and any associated conditions. Language disorders can be effectively managed and treated through various intervention approaches. The specific treatment plan will depend on the individual's needs, age, and the type and severity of the language disorder. Speech-language therapy, conducted by a qualified speech-language pathologist, is the primary mode of intervention for language disorders. Therapy sessions are tailored to target specific areas of difficulty, such as vocabulary development, grammar skills, sentence formation, comprehension, and pragmatic language skills. Therapy techniques may include structured activities, play-based interventions, visual supports, and social communication strategies [6].

Conclusion

Language disorders can significantly impact an individual's ability to communicate and connect with others. Understanding the causes, types, and treatment approaches for language disorders is crucial in providing appropriate support and intervention. By raising awareness and promoting early identification and intervention, we can help individuals with language disorders overcome their challenges and reach their full potential in communication and social interactions.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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