LANGUAGE AND LEARNING DISABILITY

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Abstract
        Language is a very important part of acquisition of knowledge. Language development is very critical to all children and especially the learning disabled children. Language is a code in which we make specific symbols stand for something else. Spoken language is made up of phonological, semantic, syntactic and morphological systems besides the pragmatic aspect of it.
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Phonology
        This term refers to the sounds that comprise a language and the rules that determine how the sounds are used.

Semantics
        This deals with the referents for words and the meanings of utterances. Primarily this involves the vocabulary of a language.

Syntax
        This refers to the sets of rules that govern how words are to be sequenced in utterances and how the words in utterances are related.

Morphology
        This deals with the rules for deriving various word forms or the rules for using grammatical markers such as plurals, adverbs etc. Eg: act, acts, acting, acted, react, active, etc.

Discourse
        Organisation of sentences into a conversation or discourse.

Pragmatics
        Language is used for specific reasons and it has definite uses. It is used for communicating. It conveys the intentions, of the speakers in the most appropriate verbal expression. This aspect of language calls for coherence of sequential statements, fluency; listening, ability to g67]participate in conversation, to comprehend spoken language, to clarify messages that are not clearly understood, and appropriate use of nonverbal communicative cues.
        When we refer to language acquisition we are also interested in the Inner language, the receptive language and expressive language.

Metalinguistics

Thinking about language

Inner language refers to the cognition and concept development of the child.

Receptive Language refers to the understanding of all aspects of language – oral, written, gestures, body language.

Expressive language refers to the production of language- oral and expressive and gestures and body language.

Stages of Development of language and speech

9-18 months	- single word utterances
18 months - 2 years	- two word utterances
2- 21/2 years	- 3 word utterances
21/2 - 3 years	- 4 word utterances
3-31/2 years	- sentences with more than one clause Eg. Use of conjunctions, generality of language
31/2-41/2	- perfection of various linguistic systems, Eg. Pronouns
41/2 onwards	- still acquiring new structures up to age 7 or so enjoys riddles

Children with difficulty in language exhibit problems in various aspects of language. Some of them are listed below

Word meaning Associations

- Children have problems with:
- Multiple meanings of words
- Spatial terms and temporal words (over/under, first/last)
- Language-learning disabled children take idioms literally.
- Interpreting the meaning of the indefinite pronouns "this" and "that"

Word Retrieval

- These children have difficulties in selecting proper words.
- Use a number of pauses
- Use a related, semantic word substitution
- Some word substitutions may even share visual attributes with the target words.
- Substitute indefinite words when they cannot retrieve the specific words
- To describe without naming or to circumlocute by "talking around"
- Excessive use of "filler" or stereotyped phrases to hold their conversational turns
- May repeat correct or incorrect initial sounds of words
- Simply change certain subjects to avoid dealing with retrieval of certain words
- Using the words inconsistently

Syntax and Morphology

These children have problems with grammar.

- They may omit auxiliary verbs
- Past tense verb formation can be another problematic area
- Misinterpret statements involving past and future verbs
- Show a mixture of past, present and future tenses, so that they say such things
- The finer distinctions of time and meaning denoted by complex verb forms, such. as "has been" Verb tenses are a reflection of time

Word Endings

- Understanding and use of other word endings, such as noun plurals, possessives and comparatives, may be delayed in onset and rate of acquisition
- Use grammatical morphemes even though they may not fully comprehend the meanings of the morphemes
- Frequently fail to use appropriate morphological endings according to voicing agreement, especially if the forms are irregular
- May over generalize
- Mix the various endings indiscriminately
- Omit them altogether
- With third person verbs and possessive endings

Pronouns

- May not understand what or who the referents are ore may lose track of the referents in conversation.
- "he/him" and "she/her"
- "I", "he", and "she"
- Incorrect reflexive pronouns such as "hisself" or "theirselves"
- Communities and backgrounds
- Language e-learning-disabled-adolescents
- Identifying pronoun antecedents embedded on short paragraphs written to match their reading capabilities.
- Identifying single referents than extended referents
- Suggest these students demonstrated a general inability to discern pronoun antecedent relationships

Negatives

- Negative statements are abstract
- Depends on .the stress and intonation pattern
- May not perceive the changes in meanings signified by intonation and stress or may not use context to interpret negatives correctly.

Questions

- Difficulties interpreting questions beginning with "what", "who", "where", "when", "why", "which" and "how"
- "wh" questions
- Semantic bases of the introductory wh-words affect the children's understanding
- If not more than the syntactic formulation of the questions
- Understanding yes/no questions with complex auxiliaries or helping verbs
- Tend to use a restricted range of questions, such as tag questions
- Even with tag questions
- May form them without the proper use of grammar rules.
- Use incorrect auxiliaries and or delete the negative
- Questions which rising intonation is simply added to the ends of declarative· sentences

Passives

- Passive sentences can be particularly difficult for language-learning-disabled children to comprehend
- Passives include not
- Passive wh-questions
- Reversible passive
- Non reversible passive
- Language learning disabled children more easily understand non reversible passive than reversible passives, because the first type has only logical interpretation

Compound, Complex and Multi transformational sentences

- Complex sentences using subordinate clauses beginning with conjunctions
- Containing relative clause introduced by words such as "who", "whose", "what"; "which" and "that"
- Compound and complex sentences tend to be longer than simple sentences, they may tax the children's auditory memories
- Overall syntactic complexity
- The problems may lie in the children's inadequate comprehension of the subtle meanings conveyed by the conjunction themselves since the meanings of many conjunctions involve complex relationships and/or temporal concepts.
- The more transformations involved, the more complex a sentence becomes and the harder it is for language learning disabled children.
- Study of learning-disabled adults
- 75% of them demonstrated oral language or auditory processing problems
- Metalinguistic abilities

Pragmatics
- Include taking turns, maintaining a topic, providing necessary information, and considering the characteristics of different listeners and situations
- Problems taking turns in conversations can even have difficulties with cooperative games, team's sports or group work based on the premise of turn taking
- Tend to interrupt speakers or monopolize conversations. Do not respond to information imparted by their conversational partners not elicit comments form their listeners
- Gauging listeners needs for background information and often tend to assume that their listeners share the same knowledge they themselves possess.
- Communicate attempts may lack key elements pertaining to who, where or when because of the use of indefinite words without referents
- Fail to understand or learn the rules for providing sufficient and specific background information for listeners. Word finding problems lead to the use of nonspecific language.
- Not as flexible as normal children in modifying their language to suit different speaking environments. Children talk more about themselves and use less imaginative utterances.
- Tend to misinterpret emotions, lacking adaptive social behaviors and demonstrating inadequate social perceptions.
- Pragmatic deficits and linguistic deficits may be operating concurrently

Auditory Processing
- Remembering spoken messages
- Statements or individual words may be understood but not retained because of intervening distraction

Speech
- Exhibit articulation disorders
- Articulatory deficits are likely to result in difficulties producing speech sounds
- Show a general inability to derive rules, whether syntactic or phonologic, in order to produce words and sentences accurately
- Inconsistent rules, faculty rules or-lack of rules in their oral language

Implications for language intervention
- That sentence length and syntactic complexity must be controlled when teaching new words or new information because the children need to focus their attention and effort on the new material
- Phonological complexity. Complexity added to either the phonological or syntactic aspects of language tends to disrupt performance in the other aspect during

sentence production. Complexity is added to both levels simultaneously simplification of both the phonological and syntactic structures results; Linguistic levels be controlled on all levels - semantic, syntactic and phonologic

- Background noise
- Extensive verbal interjections, even positive reinforcements between stimuli presentations and the children's productions of linguistic material, may interfere with retention and learning. Non verbal feedback.
- The need of extended practice establishing automatic use of language skills cannot be stressed enough for language-learning-disabled children.

Some hints for developing pragmatics
- Small-group interaction.
- Role playing (different contexts).
- Humorous demonstrations of the literal interpretations of indirect requests facilitate understanding of the implied meanings.

Effectiveness of Visual Input and Imagery
- Visual imagery is an excellent technique to facilitate word retrieval, memory, spelling, listening and reading comprehension
- To use visual imagery for self-cueing
- Relaxation procedures may need to be incorporated into intervention for some language-learning-disabled children

Auditory Processing and Comprehension
- Speaking more slowly to them and stressing key words is good when presenting new information.
- Short messages

Word retrieval
This is an area of great difficulty for the SLD child. Children can be helped in the following ways:
- Children learn to self-cue
- Visual imagery
- To teach children to describe items or their functions include color, size, shape,. texture or a typical location
- Use of gestures may trigger verbs during the occasional instances when they are the blocked words.
- Sentence completion tasks also supply semantic context.
- The initial sound of the word can be supplied for the child
- Use categorization

Language Teaching

Inner Language

Actual experiences, play, manipulation of objects pictorial representation dramatization Parents have to be counseled to provide experiences to the children, which are meaningful, talk to the children to build up receptive *vocabulary,* make use of social and family settings.

- Teach from objects to pictures to verbalization alone.
- Teach from concrete to abstract
- Teach from the child's experiences to the outside world

Receptive Language

- Develop listening skills gross sounds, loud and soft, far away and near sounds
- Speech sounds- whisper to normal speech, understanding of body language, facial, expression - through drama, mime, short instructions, descriptions, stories, questions, picture reading and word reading.
- Oral receptive and written receptive skills are to be developed with listening and reading material.
- Inner language and receptive language should be tied up

Expressive Language

- Instruction on how to speak clearly and confidently
- Use of intonation and pitch of voice, loudness of voice to suit the situation
- Use of everyday conversation, stories and dramatization
- Use of body language
- Marching to music, miming, dumb charades, dramatization, role play

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