

A Study on the Challenges of Language and Communication for Children with Hearing Impairment at Primary Level Education with Special Reference to Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract

Primary education significantly contributes to children's long-term development by providing an enabling and stimulating environment during the foundational stages of lifelong learning. Parents, as primary caregivers, play a critical role in creating this learning environment, especially during the first two and a half to three years, which do not necessarily require formal education. The National Curriculum Framework highlights the importance of parental, familial, and community involvement. India has a rich tradition of valuing early childhood, supported by cultural practices that foster development and instill “sanskaras,” or basic values and social skills, in children. Traditionally, these practices were upheld within joint families and passed down through generations. However, recent decades have seen significant changes in family structures and social contexts. This study has two main objectives: to examine the language challenges faced by children with hearing impairments (CWHI) at the primary stage and to explore the communication challenges these students encounter at the primary level. Method: The researchers used the Descriptive Survey method. The researchers selected the 30 participants with the help of random sampling technique. Tools: The study employs the Linguistics Profile Test (LPT) and a Teacher Made Test (TMT) for data collection. Data: Data analysis will be conducted using percentile percentages. Conclusion: The study identifies various types of language and communication challenges at the primary level for children with hearing impairments. These challenges include issues related to family relationships, peer interactions, and personality development. Language and communication development are closely tied to a child's overall growth. Therefore, parents should closely monitor these developmental aspects, as they significantly influence the learning process.

Keywords: *Language, Communication, Challenges & Hearing Impairment.*

Introduction

A strong relationship between normal hearing and normal oral language acquisition is well-established in the literature. Normal hearing is crucial for oral language acquisition and

production for two significant reasons. Firstly, normal hearing enables the child to become aware of spoken language. This awareness is foundational because it allows the child to be exposed to the sounds, rhythms, and patterns of the language spoken around them. Without this exposure, the child would not have the auditory input necessary to begin understanding and eventually producing language. Secondly, normal hearing facilitates the self-monitoring of language production. When a child can hear normally, they can listen not only to the speech of others but also to their own speech. This self-monitoring ability allows the child to compare their speech with the adult model they hear and make adjustments to improve their pronunciation, intonation, and overall language production. This iterative process of listening and modifying is essential for mastering spoken language. According to Sunil Kumar Ravi (2010), speech comprehension typically precedes speech production in the process of first language acquisition. This means that even though children might begin to produce certain language structures, they may not fully comprehend them initially. This phenomenon illustrates the complexity and gradual nature of language acquisition, where comprehension and production develop in tandem but not always at the same pace. Perception of speech in children begins at a very early age, often noticeable as early as six months. During these early months, children may not have fully developed speech perception abilities, but they are on a trajectory towards reaching adult levels of speech perception as they grow older. Initially, children's speech perception may be reflexive, involving simple responses to sounds. Over time, these reflexive responses evolve into more sophisticated abilities to perceive and understand speech. This progression is crucial for language development, as the ability to perceive speech accurately forms the foundation for effective communication and language learning. Communication is a multifaceted process involving the transmission of both verbal and non-verbal messages. It requires several key components: a sender, a receiver, and a channel of communication. The sender encodes the message and transmits it through a chosen channel, while the receiver decodes and interprets the message. In the process of transmitting messages, various factors can interrupt or distort the clarity of the message. These factors, often referred to as obstructions or barriers, can significantly impact the effectiveness of communication. Understanding the behaviours associated with both the sender and receiver is crucial for effective communication. The sender must be aware of how to encode the message clearly and appropriately for the intended audience, while the receiver must be skilled in decoding and interpreting the message accurately. Potential barriers to effective communication can include physical obstructions, such as noise or distance, as well as psychological barriers, such as preconceived notions or emotional states. Furthermore, challenges often arise in establishing the source and content of what is to be communicated. This is a prerequisite for the success of any communication program. Often, communication efforts, especially those originating from professionals or government entities, fail to consider the inclusion of the intended beneficiaries in

the planning and execution stages. As a result, these communication activities may not resonate with the target audience, leading to a failure in achieving the desired outcomes. Munodawafa (2008) highlights that communication activities intended to impart knowledge and skills or to promote behavior change often fall short of their goals because the intended beneficiaries do not see the relevance or applicability of these activities to their own lives. The interplay between normal hearing and language acquisition is critical for effective communication development. Normal hearing enables children to perceive and produce language, facilitating their overall language development. Effective communication, on the other hand, requires a comprehensive understanding of the transmission process, the roles of the sender and receiver, and the potential barriers that can hinder message clarity. Additionally, successful communication programs must consider the perspectives and needs of the intended beneficiaries to ensure relevance and effectiveness. By addressing these factors, we can enhance our understanding of language acquisition and improve communication strategies to support the development and well-being of individuals with hearing impairments.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the language challenge of CWHI learners at the primary stage.
2. To study the communication challenges of hearing-impaired students at the primary level.

Research Questions

1. How do language challenges manifest among children with hearing impairment (CWHI) at the primary stage, and what are the factors contributing to these challenges?
2. What are the specific communication challenges encountered by hearing-impaired students at the primary level, and how do these challenges impact their educational experience and social integration?

Literature Review

Various challenges and issues of language use between monolingual and multilingual societies can be effectively addressed through the drafting and formulation of appropriate strategies and policies by the concerned authorities. These strategies must consider the linguistic sensitivities of the people involved, recognizing the profound connection between language and identity. It is crucial to remember the emotional and psychological aspects of language use: the way people speak is deeply intertwined with who they are, what they believe, and their sense of community and belonging. Ignoring these factors can lead to feelings of disenfranchisement and marginalization among linguistic communities (Mahmoudi et al., 2018). One of the primary barriers to effective communication for individuals with hearing impairments is the general lack of consideration by others. This oversight can have serious consequences, particularly in healthcare settings, where inadequate communication can result in prolonged or unnecessary illnesses due to misunderstandings or miscommunication between patients and healthcare

providers. Ensuring that healthcare workers are well-prepared and that patients are adequately informed can significantly improve communication and, consequently, access to appropriate and effective healthcare. This preparation includes understanding the specific needs of hearing-impaired patients and employing strategies such as visual aids, written instructions, and ensuring the availability of sign language interpreters when necessary. Patients with both visual and hearing impairments require even greater consideration. The dual challenge of impaired sight and hearing necessitates a heightened level of awareness and adaptability from healthcare providers. Compassion, empowerment, and inclusiveness are essential principles in providing effective care for these individuals. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for these principles has become even more apparent. Strengthening healthcare systems, expanding telemedicine services, amending relevant policies, and building capacity are critical pillars for creating a robust support system for the deaf and hearing impaired. These measures can help protect them from the adverse effects of the pandemic and ensure they receive the necessary care and information (Newton & Shah, 2013). The intersection of technology, humanity, health, and the needs of the hearing impaired must be at the forefront of efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has highlighted the necessity of integrating these elements to create an inclusive healthcare system that serves all members of society effectively. Telemedicine, for instance, has emerged as a vital tool for providing healthcare services while minimizing physical contact and the risk of infection. However, for telemedicine to be accessible to the hearing impaired, it must incorporate features such as video consultations with sign language interpreters and captioned communications. In educational settings, deaf and hard-of-hearing students face numerous challenges that require acknowledgment and action from educators and administrators. These challenges can include difficulties in accessing spoken information, social isolation, and limited access to resources that facilitate effective learning. By recognizing these challenges and implementing strategies to overcome them, teachers can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Strategies might include using visual aids, providing written materials, ensuring that classrooms are equipped with appropriate technology (such as hearing loops or FM systems), and fostering a classroom culture that values and includes all students (Garg et al., 2021). Inclusiveness in education benefits not only deaf and hard-of-hearing students but all students. When teachers take steps to accommodate diverse learning needs, they create a richer, more engaging educational experience for everyone. This inclusive approach can involve training for teachers on how to communicate effectively with deaf students, promoting awareness among hearing students about the challenges their peers face, and ensuring that all students have access to the necessary resources and support. Empathy, understanding, and proactive measures are essential in bridging the communication gap for individuals with hearing impairments. By acknowledging their unique challenges and working to mitigate them, society can move towards greater inclusiveness and

equity. Whether in healthcare, education, or everyday interactions, the effort to understand and support hearing-impaired individuals contributes to a more compassionate and inclusive society. The lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic can serve as a catalyst for long-term changes that enhance the quality of life for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community (Weber, 2016).

Addressing the communication challenges faced by monolingual and multilingual societies, as well as the specific needs of hearing-impaired individuals, requires a multifaceted approach. It involves policy formulation, system strengthening, the integration of technology, and above all, a commitment to empathy and inclusiveness. By recognizing and acting on these needs, we can create a more equitable and supportive environment for all individuals, regardless of their linguistic background or hearing ability.

Research Methodology

In the research, a Descriptive research design has been done. Population refers to hearing-impaired students studying at the primary level in Uttar Pradesh. A total of 30 hearing-impaired students studying at the primary level have been taken as a sample. Purposive sampling has been done. The LPT for language and a self-made questionnaire for communication have been used to collect the data related to the research study. Analysis of data % statistics has been used for analysis of data.

Data analysis:

LPT-adapted tests and self-made questionnaires for communication challenges was used to study the language challenge of hearing impaired students. After that responses were taken from the students. Based on the responses given by the students, the challenge level was divided into four parts to find out the maximum and minimum levels of challenges. Students who have language and communication challenge levels of more than 76% in response group A, who scored between 51-75%, and in response group B, who scored between 25-50% marks were placed in response group C, and those who scored less than 25% marks were placed in response group D.

Placed in Whose details are as follows

Table-1

Percentage of marks on language challenge	Response group	language challenges
More than 76 %	A	Maximum
Score between 51-75 %	B	Normal
Marks between 25-50 %	C	Less
Less 25 %	D	Minimum

4.1- To study the language challenge of CWHI learners at the primary stage.

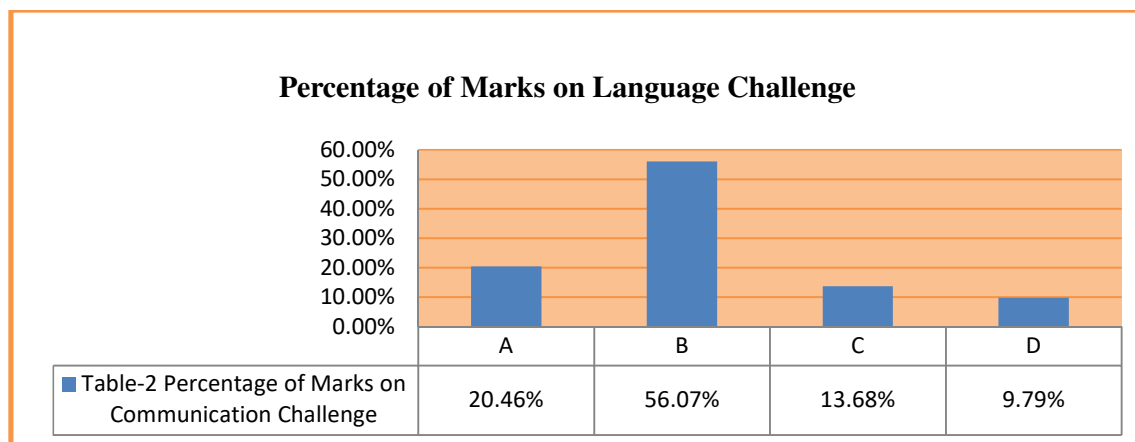
Table-2

(Percentage analysis of responses given to the language challenge of hearing impaired students at primary level)

Response Group	Percentage of Marks on Language Challenge
A	20.46%
B	56.07%
C	13.68%
D	9.79%

It is clear from table 02 that language challenge response in hearing impaired children was found to be 20.46 higher in language challenge group A. In group B, 56.64% language challenge was found to be normal. 13.68% less language challenge was found in Group C. Language challenge was found to be minimum in Group D at 9.79%.

For the convenience of the study, the said details are being displayed by the graph.



4.2-To study the communication challenges of hearing-impaired students at the primary level.

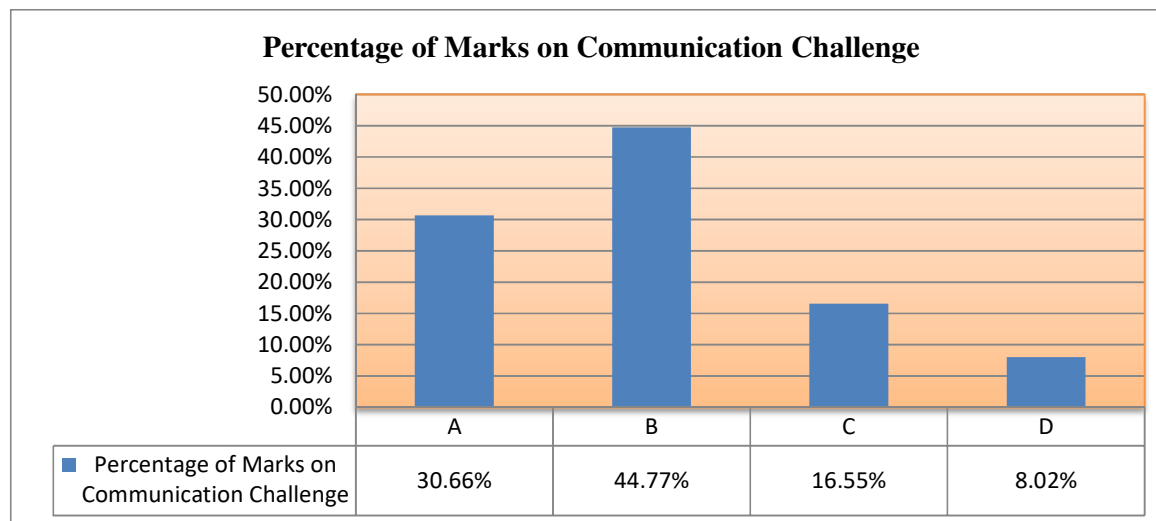
Table-3

(Percentage analysis of responses to challenges in the communication of hearing-impaired students at the primary level)

Response Group	Percentage of Marks on Communication Challenge
A	30.66%
B	44.77%
C	16.55%
D	08.02%

It is clear from Table 03 that communication challenge response in hearing-impaired children was found to be 30.66 higher in communication challenge group A. In group B, 44.77% communication challenge was found to be normal. 16.55% less communication challenge was found in Group C. Communication challenge was found to be minimum in Group D at 08.02%.

For the convenience of the study, the said details are being displayed by the graph.



Discussion

The findings highlight significant issues in both language acquisition and communication abilities among these students.

Language Challenges

According to the data, 20.46% of students face severe language challenges, necessitating intensive support and interventions. These students often struggle with basic language skills, which impacts their overall academic performance and social integration. The majority, 56.07%, face normal challenges, indicating that while they can manage with standard educational resources, they still require some level of consistent support. A smaller group, 13.68%, faces fewer challenges, needing occasional assistance, and 9.79% face minimal challenges, likely having developed effective coping mechanisms or benefiting from less severe impairments.

These findings suggest a significant portion of hearing-impaired students require specialized strategies to aid their language development. Effective language acquisition is critical as it forms the foundation for all subsequent learning and social interaction (Sunil Kumar Ravi, 2010). Without adequate support, these students are at risk of falling behind their peers, both academically and socially.

Communication Challenges

The communication challenges appear even more pronounced, with 30.66% of students facing severe difficulties. Effective communication is not only about linguistic competence but also involves social and pragmatic skills, which can be particularly challenging for hearing-impaired

students. The data shows that 44.77% of students face normal communication challenges, indicating they can benefit from regular classroom accommodations such as visual aids and sign language interpreters. However, 16.55% face fewer challenges, and 8.02% face minimal challenges, indicating a disparity in communication skills that needs addressing.

The higher percentage of severe communication challenges compared to language challenges (30.66% vs. 20.46%) underscores the complexity of effective communication, which involves more than just language proficiency (Munodawafa, 2008). This discrepancy suggests that while language acquisition might progress reasonably well for many students, their ability to effectively communicate remains a significant hurdle.

Comparative Insights

The comparative analysis reveals that a higher percentage of students face maximum communication challenges (30.66%) compared to language challenges (20.46%). This highlights communication as a more pressing issue that requires targeted interventions. The normal challenge group for communication (44.77%) is also smaller than that for language (56.07%), emphasizing the multifaceted nature of communication skills, which include understanding social cues, body language, and context—all areas where hearing-impaired students may struggle more

Recommendations

Enhanced Support: Providing specialized support for students in Group A is crucial. This includes individualized education plans (IEPs), speech and language therapy, and advanced technological aids such as hearing aids or cochlear implants.

Inclusive Teaching: Implementing inclusive teaching strategies that cater to the diverse needs of hearing-impaired students is essential. This can include visual aids, sign language interpreters, and classroom accommodations that facilitate better learning and communication.

Parental and Community Involvement: Engaging parents and the community in the educational process can provide additional support and reinforcement of language and communication skills outside the classroom.

Teacher Training: Continuous professional development for teachers in special education techniques and communication strategies for hearing-impaired students is crucial for addressing the varied challenges these students face.

Policy and Infrastructure: Educational policies should prioritize the inclusion of hearing-impaired students by ensuring adequate resources, infrastructure, and support systems are in place to address both language and communication challenges.

Conclusion

This study underscores the diverse challenges faced by hearing-impaired students at the primary level. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach involving specialized support, inclusive teaching practices, and robust policy measures. By focusing on both language and

communication needs, educators and policymakers can create a more equitable and effective educational environment for hearing-impaired students.

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