Language development and the teacher of retarded children

Faye Marko

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.stritch.edu/etd

Part of the Education Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.stritch.edu/etd/657
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND THE TEACHER
OF RETARDED CHILDREN

by
Faye Marko

A RESEARCH PAPER
SUBMITTED ON PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION
(EDUCATION OF MENTALLY HANDICAPPED)
AT CARDINAL STRITCH COLLEGE

Milwaukee, Wisconsin
1974
This research paper has been approved for the Graduate Committee of the Cardinal Stritch College by

[Signature]

(Advisor)

Date [May, 1974]
CONTENTS

CHAPTER I ........................................... 1
CHAPTER II .......................................... 4
CHAPTER III ......................................... 18
CHAPTER IV .......................................... 32
BIBLIOGRAPHY ....................................... 35
CHAPTER I

Communication has become increasingly important. Satellites have brought countries closer together. Population explosions have brought people closer together. It is more important than ever in our modern society to be successful in the use of language. Therefore it is important for children to have early success in language. Children learn language through imitation and practice. It is essential that children be stimulated to speak by the people in their environment. Since retarded children are slower in developing imitative skills, those around them may gradually cease to stimulate them. Thus they may lose necessary experiences in learning to talk.\(^1\) It becomes the task of the teacher to provide the stimulation and experiences that lead to successful communication.

Retardation is in part defined as below average functioning on a language task.\(^2\) By the age of five or six, the normally developing child has internalized a structural knowledge of grammar. He has also some knowledge of the meanings of the words

\(^1\)Patricia Hallet, Susan M. Sype, and Jane K. Gates, "A Language Based Curriculum for the Mentally Retarded," Mental Retardation, IX, 6 (December, 1971), pp. 9-11.

and structures he uses. This is not always true of the retarded child. Since he is likely to come from a lower socio-economic environment there may be little language stimulation in his home. He is required to make his own interpretations of his environment, which is found lacking when compared with the middle-class environment to which the schools are oriented. When he enters school at the chronological age of five or six, he is lost in a sea of words he does not understand.

The teacher is faced with the task of developing a program to aid the child in language development. The teacher's role in stimulating the language of the young retarded child is very individual, intense, and personal. Language acquisition includes more than a creative program of unique or enriching experiences for a child. It must have the intelligent guidance of an insightful teacher. The teacher must be acquainted with the language background of the child in order to create a sequential, dynamic program. He/she must be aware of the sequence of language

---


4 Kirkton, *op. cit.*, pp. 406-412
acquisition and the function of language. He/she must lead the retarded child to see a need for communication and help him use language to the best of his ability.

The purposes of this paper are as follows:

1. To review recent research on the effects of early intervention in language development.

2. To review the sequence of language development of children.

3. To apply the sequence for use in the language development of retarded children.
CHAPTER II

Much recent research has been done to ascertain the affects of early intervention upon the language development of young children.

Evans and Bangs combined the study of a preschool predictive instrument (Language and Learning Assessment for Training) with the effectiveness of a preschool training program. They wished to ascertain the effects of the training program on the later academic achievement of children with language and learning disabilities. A preliminary follow-up study of the children who were initially trained in a joint project of the Houston Speech and Hearing Center and the Pasadena Independent School District from 1963 to 1966 revealed marked differences in later academic achievement as compared with children with language problems not seen at the center. From a sample of subjects with language and learning disabilities, seventy per cent of those who completed the preacademic training program were found to be achieving at grade level in 1969. Of those subjects who entered the program but did not complete it, only twenty-five per cent were achieving at grade level. The results of the pilot study support the use of the Language and Learning Assessment for Training (LLAT) battery
as an initial identifying instrument during preschool years. The study also supports the use of specific preschool training methods for children with language and learning disabilities.¹

Lissitz and Cohen developed a program to aid in the development of an awareness of Standard English usage as a tool in communicating feelings, ideas, and experiences. They studied the educationally deprived children in kindergarten and first grade from three schools in Syracuse, New York. Their program provided experiences in auditory discrimination, comprehension and sound production. A test of one hundred items on oral communication was constructed and given to two groups. The experimental group consisted of forty-nine children who had had the program. The control group was made up of forty-nine children from the same schools who had not had the program. The experimental group showed greater gains than the control group,² thus suggesting that early training in language is beneficial to the academic progress of educationally deprived children.

Hagen and Hallahan attempted to see if lessons in the structure of English would help migrant children. All children


Edwards and Stern state that children from disadvantaged homes have difficulties in school. They further state that the most important single element in their difficulties is language deficiency. They found, from their review of research, that the more structured or task oriented a language development program, the greater the gains, both in immediate intellectual competence and in later academic achievement. They chose to compare three programs designed to promote language development in disadvantaged children. The programs were: 1) the UCLA Preschool Language Program which offers a wide variety of response modes; 2) Readiness for Language Arts Program (BRL) which emphasizes basic skills, concept development, and upper and lower case letter recognition; 3) a placebo program comprised of songs, games, stories, and other teacher initiated activities. They used one hundred sixty-three four-year-olds at five sites. At each site there were four groups, one in each program and a control group. All of the children were pre- and post tested on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, the Preschool Inventories, The Gumpgookies, BRL Concepts Test, and the Visual Discrimination Test. All three programs resulted in post test scores superior to those of the control group. The conclusions of this study were

less dramatic than the authors had hoped. The children did make gains. The more task oriented UCLA Program proved to be more popular with the children and teachers than the repetitious book-directed lessons of the BRL Program.\(^1\)

Guess, Smith and Ensminger showed how one institution developed a language training program utilizing non-professional persons as "language developmentalists" for small groups of severely and moderately retarded children. The program was carried on for two years. The basic goals of the program were: 1) to train two non-professional persons to teach speech and language skills to residents of the institution; 2) to devise new teaching materials and lesson plans for very low functioning retarded children; 3) to establish language training and language developmentalists within the total treatment structure of the institution. The study was conducted at a residential facility for four hundred residents ranging in age from three to twenty-five years. The subjects were matched on the bases of chronological age, intelligence, language age, and sex. All subjects were given the Stanford-Binet and the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities prior to the start of the study and again at nine and eighteen month intervals. Two former psychiatric aides were trained to serve as language developmentalists for the program.

Their training consisted of reading assignments and informal discussions about their role, speech and language problems of the retarded, behavior modification, and materials to be used in the classes. The forty subjects were assigned to a high or low group on the basis of chronological age and intelligence. The lessons emphasized vocabulary building and functional use of speech. The difficulty of the lessons increased as the series progressed. A token reinforcement system was gradually introduced into the program and the tokens were exchanged either daily or weekly, depending upon the particular level of the children. The major findings of this study indicated that those children who attended the language classes showed significantly greater raw score gains on the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities than did a matched control group. These findings substantiate the basic hypothesis of the study that systematic and intense language training can improve performance in this area. The results from this study demonstrated that non-professional persons could be trained to develop and enhance the speech and language skills of low-functioning retarded children.  

Bricker and Bricker, in a similar study, instituted a program to train language developmentalists. They relied on the techniques of behavior modification. They built into their

---

program professional people to serve as resource persons to the developmentalists. Their premise was that many severely language handicapped children are not receiving language training, not because they cannot learn language, but because few people are skilled enough to teach them.¹

Glovsky studied the effects of different approaches to language development upon three groups of institutionalized mongoloids. The first group was comprised of five- to ten-year-olds. The program used with this group provided opportunities to receive satisfactory non-demanding individual attention for brief periods during the day. An amplified auditory stimulation system was used to structure their sound world. The second group was comprised of children from eleven to sixteen years old and they were retained in individual speech therapy. The third group were adults from seventeen to forty years old. Their program consisted totally of group discussion with everyone in the group participating. The results showed that in the first group the stimulus with the greatest personal meaning brought about the most responses. The members of this group often slipped to a lower level for no apparent reason. The greatest gains in overall language development were made by the second group who received individual therapy.²


Glovsky also examined the performance on the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities of thirty-four retarded children in the Training School unit of the American Institute for Mental Studies at Vineland, New Jersey. The subjects were divided into two groups, each having seventeen members. Group A were identified on the basis of being diagnosed as possibly aphasic at an early age. Group B were diagnosed as being mentally retarded at an early age. The two groups were compared on all the subtests of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities. The conclusions were limited because all subjects were in one institution. There was no attempt made to group the subjects according to mental age or intelligence within the groups. Group B was found to be superior to Group A in the areas of language ability which required verbal production and expression. On the subtests of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities which do not require verbal responses, no statistical difference was found between the two groups. The author assumed from his conclusions that lack of speech at an early age is not an indicator of aphasia, but is a problem that closely resembles aphasic phenomena. He also concluded that the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities can be used as an important indicator for measuring children's language abilities.¹

Bartel, Bryen and Keehn conducted an investigation to:
1) evaluate the appropriateness of the Carrow test for trainable retarded children; 2) compare the development of linguistic comprehension in normal children as reported by Carrow with that of trainable children. The sample used was stratified on the basis of intelligence and mental age. An examiner who had taken course work in language problems and who was familiar with the children administered the Carrow Experimental Test of Linguistic Comprehension to the children individually. The test consisted of one hundred fourteen items which measure a range of lexical, morphological, and syntactical performance. No language expression is required by the child in responding to the items; the child merely points to one of three pictures presented on a plate for each item. It was found that intelligence significantly affected the overall raw score but the effects of chronological age were not significant. The data in this study suggest that the Carrow test can provide useful information concerning the development of language comprehension in trainable children. Results of the study demonstrate that trainable children acquired mastery over vocabulary items and certain aspects of morphology and syntax. When equated with normal children on mental age, retarded children's use of lexical items did not differ from nonretarded children's to a great extent. As the mental ages of the children increased, the divergence between retarded and nonretarded children's use of lexical items decreased.
However, when equated on mental age, retarded children's use of grammatical categories was inferior to that of nonretarded children. One interesting finding was that items measuring the comprehension of the concept "same-different" were missed by more than fifty per cent of the children, even with mental age of five years-six months.¹

Guralnick developed a program to establish eye contact and initiation of simple motor responses in severely retarded subjects. The basic task structure consisted of three elements: 1) the instructor provided a discriminative stimulus which was generally presented in the form of a verbal statement such as "Do this" or "Say this"; 2) the instructor modeled the scheduled behavior; 3) if the child imitated the modeled behavior or produced an acceptable approximation, reinforcement was immediately provided. For the motor imitation task, it was first necessary to physically guide the child through the response. The supports were faded as the child was able to produce more and more of the behavior until eventually the entire response was performed without external support. Eye contact was established using the method of successive approximations with the child's name functioning as the discriminative stimulus. After successful completion of the motor imitation, the children were taught to imitate movements of

their vocal musculature, for example, opening and closing their mouths. Speech imitation was first introduced by choosing specific sounds based on the frequency of that sound currently emitted by the child. Sounds were selected that had a prominent visual component which could be exaggerated. If this step was successfully accomplished, procedures for establishing sound chains and for labeling objects were introduced. Children whose verbal repertoires were more advanced were introduced to the labeling tasks directly, although some motor imitation training was conducted for each child in order to provide instruction regarding the structure of the task. Of the eight children involved in the project, five made important progress. Three children showed little or variable change.¹

Stewart worked with four trainable, nonverbal, nondeaf children from two to seven years old to develop echoic motor or vocal responses. Working on the thesis that echoic vocal responses precede the development of imitative vocal responses, he hoped to initiate the auditory vowel sounds of the English language through meaningful verbal and motor stimulation. He divided his subjects into two groups. Each child was stimulated visually and auditorily on nine tasks involving identification and manipulation of body parts. Group one was rewarded only for echoic motor responses.

Group two was reinforced for any echoic response, motor or vocal. Stewart concluded that:

1. Spontaneous echoic vocal responses will occur while teaching motor behavior.
2. If the echoic vocal responses are not reinforced the verbal behavior will be extinguished.
3. Echoic motor and vocal responses are automatic and occur spontaneously as a result of stimulation.
4. Verbal cues (Do this......Say this) are not necessary when developing echoic vocal and/or motor responses.
5. Motor responses will perseverate if spontaneous echoic vocal responses are not reinforced.
6. Echoic vocal and/or motor responses precede the development of imitative vocal and/or motor responses.¹

Talkington, Hall and Altman tested the effect of peer modeling on the language development of severely retarded children. The subjects were divided into three groups for basic communication training. In group one peers were used as models and social praise as reward. In group two the experimenter gave verbal commands and rewarded correct responses with social praise. In the third group no commands were given, but they had equal activity time with the other two groups. The modeling group significantly outperformed the verbal instruction group, who in turn outperformed the control

Talkington, Hall and Altman's study shows that modeling is a feasible procedure to use with the severely retarded.\textsuperscript{1}

Talkington and Hall went on to explore the use of a language training procedure, in this case the Matrix program, with mongoloids. They were interested in evaluating the program's training and remediation potential. Their subjects were forty mongoloid residents from the Boulder River School and Hospital in Montana. They were matched within the group on the basis of chronological age and intelligence. The authors prepared a questionnaire to test language and concepts as the pretest and post test. The experimental subjects were divided into five groups; each group received instruction on the Matrix program for twenty minutes a day for twenty days. The controls were similarly divided and these groups received music for the same amount of time. The areas of language usage checked were: prepositions, plurals, colors, shapes, sentences, articles, numerical analogies, total language, similarities, differences, missing parts, and total concepts. The Matrix approach proved useful and motivating for the group involved. Within the limits (time and population) the study suggested that language and concept training with mongoloids is feasible and effective in terms of immediate gains.\textsuperscript{2}


Christensen wished to discover how the oral syntactic language facility of kindergarten children was affected by programs, social class and sex. She chose eighty children in eight classes taught by four teachers. She used two programs:

1. Adapted kindergarten, which was the regular curriculum augmented with a language experience approach to reading.

2. Non-adapted kindergarten, which was the regular curriculum with no special enrichment.

Christensen hoped to show that participation in an adapted kindergarten program would influence the children's use of oral syntax. The adapted program involved weekly presentation of a stimulus, ample opportunities for children to interact with the stimulus and talk about it with their teacher and each other, the writing of the children's dictation in the precise words of the children, usually in a group story, follow-up activities designed for the day the stimulus was presented, for the following day, and for a third day during the week. The non-adapted program may or may not have used some or all of these activities. Story telling and interviews were used in pre- and post tests. Christensen's conclusions were:

1. Neither program, social class status nor sex individually exert a significant effect upon the oral language facility of kindergarten children as measured statistically in t unit scores in the first half of the school year.
2. The combined effect of program, social class status and sex is likely to significantly influence kindergarten children's oral language facility as measured by changes in t scores in the first five months of school.¹

These studies are representative of the immense volume of research in the field of language development. As can be seen by the results, intervention in this area of growth is beneficial to all children, especially the handicapped. An interesting conclusion that may be drawn from these and similar studies is that all of the programs brought forth positive results. The common element in all of the programs is the presence of a language developmentalist. In a classroom for young retarded children this is one of the primary roles of the teacher. It is the teacher's responsibility to be familiar with the sequence of language development, the level of development at which each pupil is functioning, and the basic components of the program he or she is using.

CHAPTER III

As stated in the previous chapter, children improve in language skills when language development is part of their early education. The major purpose of language is most obvious; one must have the idea and the desire or need to communicate it. To do this one, therefore, needs good usable speech and a sound and symbol system that has meaning to both the speaker and the listener. Good or usable speech also requires the proper machinery to speak, lips, tongue, jaw, palate, and voice.¹

Academic success depends upon this receiving and transmitting of ideas through language. Children, as they acquire basic language skills, need guidance and motivation to perfect those skills. Simpson has outlined six levels of motivation or degrees of intensity for human behavior. When the six degrees are applied to the acquisition of language they form a helpful guide for the teacher. Simpson's six levels are as follows:

1. The child learns to communicate orally based on fear of consequences of not learning to talk.

2. The child learns to communicate for external reward.

3. The child understands that he must learn to communicate but rejects the reasons and continues to strive for rewards.

4. The child acquires oral language - understands why he should - accepts the purposes and works to accomplish them.

5. The child participates in setting up goals.

6. The child independently sets up goals and works to accomplish them with minimum supervision.

These six levels apply to retarded children as well as non-retarded children, but as with other phases of intellectual and physical development, at a later age and with overlying circumstances. Perhaps an example will clarify this statement.

Jane is chronologically six years old and functions at a four year mental level. She is enrolled in a class for mildly retarded children. Jane has speech but it is delayed even for a four-year-old and she has been discouraged from using it in her home and previous school environments. She must now be encouraged to use her speech and to lose her fear of ridicule or punishment for her delayed speech. Jane's teacher couples tangible rewards with much praise for Jane's first attempts at communicating. When Jane freely offers to express herself, her teacher insists on an approximation of the correct sound before either reward or praise is given. Jane will gradually realize the rewards of communicating for its own sake as others in her environment relate
favorable to her attempts at proper communication. This process may take several school years to complete. The teacher must also work closely with the parents to help them to understand and accept Jane's problem. The six levels serve as an outline in guiding Jane toward the purpose of language, to communicate an idea to another person.

Language acquisition follows a logical sequence of developing skills. First cognitive development gives the child the capacity to recognize, discriminate and manipulate the features and processes of the world around him. The next step staggers the imagination—the child must now develop the capacity to discriminate and comprehend the speech he hears from others in his environment. This step is known as psychoacoustic discrimination. In the next phase of language acquisition the child develops the ability to produce speech sounds and sequences of speech that conform more and more closely to the patterns of adult speech. Morphological development follows in which stage the child learns inflections. This occurs in three steps:

1. The reduction process which is telegraphic speech made up mostly of nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

2. The imitation with expansion process which includes interaction with parents where the parent expands upon the child's utterances.
3. The latent structure process which is the creation of new utterances where the child derives a generalized rule of structure. The child acquires patterns and structure, not constituent elements. In this phase of language development the child's speech is strongly grounded in basic subject-verb-object order. He can rearrange these elements for questions and negative transform actions. He can also use conjunctions, pronouns and passive transform actions.

Semantic development is a lifelong process. It grows and develops just as the other language phenomena, but at a much slower rate and over a much longer time.¹

Language is the medium through which concepts flow. Two major trends in development of natural language concepts are:

1. Concepts in younger children are fragmented—in other words they have food for their meals but not for snacks. Their meanings are different from adult meanings. With development their fragments integrate into broader concepts.

2. Young children show a strong dependence upon perceptual attributes in their definitions of concepts. Development decreases the tie to perceptual attributes.²

Through observation, the teacher of the retarded decides which conceptual level the child is on and strives to supplement natural development with enrichment activities.

As previously stated, academic success depends upon receiving and transmitting ideas. Academic achievement, therefore, depends upon oral language and its components: phonology, semantics and syntax, so necessary to reading and arithmetic. The avenues of language learning include tactual, visual, auditory, proprioceptive, gustatory and olfactory channels. Language skills are developed through sensation, perception, attention, memory-retrieval and integration. Opportunities for acquiring language skills are provided by the family, teachers, physicians, prosthetics and orthodontic specialists. Motivation is provided by effective programming.  

The teacher of young retarded children must be aware of their language experiences, and must be sure that the program provides for the individual needs of each child. This can be done in a group lesson by using variations on a single activity. If the topic is "Things I Like to Eat" for example, the teacher may require a range of responses from one word to phrases to simple sentences to descriptions. The children on lower levels learn by listening to the more advanced pupils and through imitation add to their language skills.

It is helpful for the teacher of young children to keep in mind Robeck's five generalizations on language learning:

1) language development occurs in overlapping sequences from verbal understanding to speaking, reading and writing for communication; 2) learning is a result of the organism's attempt to meet its needs; 3) before the age of two, a child begins to make conceptualizations about language and to generalize rules of grammar; 4) in teaching imaginative language, praise is a far greater reward for the learner than correction, the teacher should work on generalizations and self-concept; 5) the teacher should keep in mind that reading and spelling problems stem from negative learning.

In working with young retarded children it is especially important for the teacher to remember that the chronological age does not magically carry with it the mastery of a certain skill. Surprisingly few so-called normal children are ready to read on their sixth birthday. Mental age is a better indicator of a child's language readiness. A retarded child with a mental age of eighteen to thirty months may well be just starting to conceptualize rules of grammar. The teacher will be able to intervene and enrich the child's experiences in this stage. Because the teacher understands that the language

---

acquisition timetable overlaps, he will continue to provide experiences in forming concepts throughout the child's formative years. A word to the wise may sum up the previous paragraphs on learning language. "A child learns to talk only after he has learned to listen and to understand what he hears."\(^1\)

The road to language development is not always smooth. There are many problems which hinder a child's acquisition of usable language. The more prominent physical problems are lack of energy, hearing losses, and speech defects. These should be referred to the proper specialist. Emotional problems, such as aggression and inhibition, can cause a disruption in the development of language. If a child's cultural environment and native language are vastly different from those of the school environment, he may encounter a problem in developing the ability to communicate with the community apart from his home environment.

A child may not talk as a self-defensive mechanism or as a result of the lack of learning. He may be monolinguisitc, speaking only one language, which is a problem only if his language differs from that of the school. He may speak more than one language. Bilingualism is usually more of an asset than a handicap. He may use non-standard language which is unacceptable in the school.

Whatever the cause or the type of problem, the first consideration in dealing with it should be the child. The

\(^1\)Molloy, op. cit., p. 20
teacher should accept him, study him, look into his background and let him experiment. Most important, the teacher should talk and listen to him. A language problem is a problem only as long as it interferes with the basic purpose of language, which is to communicate.\(^1\)

There is always a reason why a child does not talk. An alert teacher or parent searches for that reason. In addition to the physical, emotional, and cultural problems, brain damage may severely delay or prevent speech. Again, it is necessary to stress the importance of mental age. The child may not be mentally old enough to talk.\(^2\)

Although speech development is a sequential process and continues in one way or another throughout the individual's life, there is a timetable in speech development inasmuch as certain skills begin to appear at certain ages. Knowledge of this timetable is important in planning a logical and sequential program for young retarded children. A general outline of the skills that appear between birth and five years of age is:

BIRTH TO SIX WEEKS:
All speech sounds that the human vocal system can produce appear at this time\(^3\) as just that—sounds. The primary purpose of the

\(\text{---}\)

\(^1\)Daisy M. Jones, "All Children Have Language Problems; Which Ones are Special?" Education Digest, XXXVIII (January, 1973), pp. 49-52.

\(^2\)Molloy, op. cit., p. 14.

\(^3\)Lewis, op. cit., pp. 1098-1101.
speech mechanism at this time is breathing and eating. The sounds emitted by the child have no meaning or purpose. The body totally responds to any stimulus. ¹

SIX WEEKS TO THREE MONTHS:

The baby begins to babble. He discovers he can use sounds to show pleasure or discomfort. He thus begins to learn that his sounds have meaning. He begins to put sounds and their origins together consistently, for instance his mother's voice. ²

THREE TO SIX MONTHS:

The child continues to babble. He also continues to experiment with his oral capacity. He gains some control over his muscles and produces most vowel like sounds. ³

SIX TO NINE MONTHS:

At this age sounds become distinguishable as elements. ⁴ Sounds also take on a social meaning—the child knows that running water means he will probably get a bath. ⁵ The child begins to listen to and respond to his own babbling. ⁶ Of most importance


⁴Lewis, op. cit., pp. 1098-1101.

⁵Molloy, op. cit., p. 23.

at this period is the appearance of the lalling stage or the repetition of vocal play. If this stage does not appear there may be a problem such as deafness, retardation, aphasia or emotional disturbance. Also at this age the child begins to coordinate sounds and motor responses. He begins to use sound to fulfill his needs. He responds to speech.¹

NINE TO TWELVE MONTHS:
The child begins to echo and imitate the sounds about him.²
This is the beginning of the single word stage.³

TWELVE TO EIGHTEEN MONTHS:
This is the stage at which first meaningful words appear.⁴ The child begins to use gestures to help him put his meaning across. He begins to develop a vocabulary.⁵

EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY-FOUR MONTHS:
The child of this age should begin to put words together.⁶ He usually begins by combining nouns and verbs.⁷ He acquires new words and frequently supplements his growing vocabulary with his own jargon.⁸

² Hallet, et. al., op. cit., pp. 9-11.
³ Fokes, op. cit., pp. 110-111.
⁴ Hallet, et. al., op. cit., pp. 9-11.
⁵ Fokes, op. cit., pp. 112-114.
⁶ Molloy, op. cit., p. 23.
⁷ Hallet, et. al., op. cit., pp. 9-11.
TWO TO THREE YEARS:
In this period rapid and clear distinctions are made among a large proportion of phonetic sounds. The child begins to use personal pronouns. He now uses speech to communicate and he demands responses.

THREE TO FOUR YEARS:
A child of this age is able to use speech much like an adult to meet his needs and to deal with his surroundings. He can be controlled by language because he understands a great deal.

His favorite language tools are: "Why?" and "What's this?"

FOUR TO FIVE YEARS:
By this age the child has internalized a structural knowledge of grammar. He begins to add adjectives, adverbs and conjunctions to his vocabulary

The above is a sequence of language development gleaned from several authorities. The ages are chronological. When applying the sequence to retarded children their mental age should be kept in mind.

---

1 Lewis, op. cit., pp. 1098-1101.
2 Hallet, et. al., op. cit., pp. 9-11.
4 Fokes, op. cit., p. 120.
6 Hallet, et. al., op. cit., pp. 9-11.
We have seen how language develops. Now, how does the teacher facilitate language development? When teaching language skills to young children ("normal" or retarded), the teacher makes maximal use of the child's potential for language learning during the pre-school years. In a school program for children of pre-school age, all of the activities in the day can be language experiences. The teacher should capitalize upon the child's desire to learn. If the child is hesitant or does not seem to want to talk, he can be enticed by the example of the other children. If they are enjoying themselves and getting attention for attempting to talk while he isn't, he'll soon attempt to talk. He should receive immediate attention for his efforts so he will be eager to try again.

The teacher should focus the emphasis of the program on the aspects of language most easily learned and most useful to the children, looking for the sounds they can make, the sounds they substitute and the sounds they leave out. The teacher constantly reassesses the needs of the children and the ability of the program being used to meet their needs.

There are many excellent programs for language development on the market today. To review them in this paper would be of little value because the literature produced by the

---

1 Robeck, op. cit., pp. 32-43.

publishers is so complete. The teacher must know the needs of the class and choose the program which best meets these needs. The best commercially prepared program is a guideline and must be supplemented and individualized to fit the class. The most important point to remember in choosing a program is fit the program to the child—not the child to the program.

The key to any successful language development program with retarded children is individualization. This requires a great deal of teacher preparation. One may be able to use the materials and some of the lessons from a prepared program but the majority of the lessons must be geared to the needs of the children by the teacher.

It is important that children have an opportunity to express themselves in a setting other than that of the structured language lessons. Young retarded children are not notorious conversationalists. They are most likely to speak freely when their hands are busy. Finger painting is an excellent activity for stimulating spontaneous speech. Play-doh or any other soft clay also keeps fingers so busy that the children just have to talk. Free time or play is a sure way to encourage free conversation. Once the children learn that talking is pleasurable and brings many rewards, the battle is won!

The goal of any good language program is good, usable speech. A retarded child with good usable speech should be able to:

1. Say his name.
2. Make his wants known.
3. Communicate his ideas and listen courteously when others talk.
4. Say "please", "thank you", "you're welcome", "excuse me", and "good-bye".
5. Participate in conversation.
6. Accept and give a compliment.
7. Take leave of a party hostess.
8. Greet and say "good-bye" to guests.
9. Make a phone call:
    to the doctor
    to the fire department
    to the police department
    to a friend and get to the point
10. To accept and deliver a message.
11. To listen to stories and short poems and respond with context.
12. To whisper.
13. To take part in some dramatic play especially with puppets.
14. To give directions gently and clearly.¹

To accomplish these goals, the teacher always starts a lesson with something she is sure the children can do. He/she keeps the lessons relaxed and happy. A good example is her most important tool in attaining good usable speech.

¹Molloy, op. cit., pp. 10-11.
CHAPTER IV

The purposes of this paper were:

1. To review recent research on the effects of early intervention in language development.

2. To review the sequence of language development of children.

3. To apply the sequence for use in the language development of retarded children.

In the review of research it was found that intervention in language development takes many forms. It was further discovered that all of the programs produced positive results. Children who have language problems can achieve academic success if they receive stimulation, encouragement, and success in language at an early age.

All of the programs reviewed have a common element, an adult participant. Many labels are attached to this adult--experimenter, clinician, developmentalist, and teacher. Whatever the person is called, each program has an adult who communicates with the children. This communication involves listening as well as speaking. To learn to communicate effectively, children must feel that they have something to say that someone wishes to hear.
One can conclude from these programs that language development occurs in a positive and relaxed atmosphere. If this atmosphere is not provided by the home environment, it may be language stimulated in an early educational program.

The adult conducting the language program understands that language develops in a sequence. This sequence is gradual and the steps in it often overlap. The sequence of learning language begins at birth with a cry and a gurgle and continues through the life of the individual. At a very young age the human vocal system is capable of all the sounds it needs for speech. As it grows and matures these sounds become syllables which in turn become words. With proper guidance the mind and the senses combine with the vocal system to put meaning to the words and thus the individual acquires speech.

A retarded child also develops his speech potential according to the normal sequence. He develops at a slower rate than the "normal" child and may still be in the first stages that precede actual speech when he enters school. There is one characteristic he shares with the "normal" child, he needs an accepting and encouraging environment. It is the teacher's task to encourage him to use sounds. The teacher must help him to develop the sounds into syllables and the syllables into words. The teacher must help the retarded child gather the meaning of the words he must use as well as providing a suitable model for the speech of the retarded child. The child must feel at ease and accepted before he will venture into the world of
speech. He must feel he has something worth communicating to another human being. So the teacher must be willing to listen.

The purpose of language is to communicate. The learning of language is a long process. Success depends upon the environment in which language is learned. This quote from the verse "Children Are What They Live" pertains to life and also to language:

If a child lives with approval,
he learns to like himself.
If a child lives with acceptance
and friendship,
he learns to find love in the world. ¹

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Articles and Periodicals


