

Communication Pattern Between Hearing Parents and Children with Hearing Impairment in Port Harcourt Metropolis

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Abstract

The study investigates the communication pattern between hearing parents and children with hearing impairment in Port Harcourt. A descriptive survey design was used for the study. Three research questions and two hypotheses were used to guide the conduct of the study. The population of the study comprises of hearing parents and hearing impaired children. block sampling techniques was used. A sample of 50 parents and 30 hearing impaired children were used for the study. A self-structured questionnaire titled Communication Pattern of Hearing Parents and their Hearing Impaired Children (CPHPHIC) was used for data collection. Mean score and standard deviation was used in answering the research questions while the null hypotheses, one was tested with one way Anova and two were tested with t-test at 0.05 level of significance. There were no significance differences in the communication pattern between hearing parents and their hearing impaired children based on educational qualification and socio-economic status. Based on the finding, the study recommended that children with impairment should be constantly motivated by their hearing parents using the oral, manual and total communication pattern as this will boost their confidence and improve their verbal and manual ability in the acquisition of language.

Keywords: Communication pattern, Hearing, Impairment and Economic status

INTRODUCTION

Human development is reliant on the mutuality of parent-child interaction and communication and their effects on child development academically, cognitively and psychosocially (Hadadian, & Rose, 1991). A Critical link in this human life chain is language expertise, whether it is spoken language for hearing individuals or sign language for individuals who are hearing imparted.

Communication is a critical link binding children to their parents, the society and the ability to reach their full potentials.

In the first year of life, communication rules are established such as turn taking, mutuality and reciprocal commenting and day to day maturations between parents and children. These set the foundation for language acquisition. The dynamics of this interactive behaviour are significantly attained when a child is born with severe auditory impairment. The ease with which communication is taught and passed on to children is compromised and different rules apply, therefore affecting the child's development (Freeman. et al 2002).

Calderon & Greenberg (1999), cited the stress and challenges of raising a child with a hearing impairment most often are associated with the diagnoses of the hearing loss learning new communication patterns, increasing contact with professionals in a number of disciplines, purchasing and using technological supports (TTY) machines for telephone use, acceptance of their children and then differences and being involved, an educational decision making. Studies have shown that when sign language is occupied by hearing mothers and their hearing impaired children, the communication that occurs is more similar to hearing mother/hearing child.

Educating parents in a type of oral and manual sign language could benefit-children with hearing impairments in many spectrums. Many hearing parents have little formal sign training and find the use of signs impractical in their daily schedule. Further-more, they do not feel comfortable with sign especially in public and only sign directly when communicating with the child, leaving the child ignorant to what is being said around him/her on regular basis. However, vocal speech from other people, television and rad fosters incidental learning in children. Therefore, to foster learning, it is critical for parents to serve as interpreters to their children with hearing impairments in every situation. Some parents are frustrated with communication differences and perceive a negative impact of hearing impairment, because of their inability to sign.

Impairment would not have deteriorated if there were early intervention by service providers and awareness on the part of their hearing parents. It is also disheartening that most of the hearing parents and their hearing impaired children will not be able to use the equipment and facilities even if they are provided except they are trained on the use of them.

Most of these children are therefore left out when some family discussions are made as it requires extra effort to inform them of what is being said; most of the parents engage these children only when they want them to eat, perform specific chores leaving the children isolated most of the time. The problem of this study therefore is to identify communication patterns between hearing impaired children and their hearing parents.

For a child learning Sign language the transition from prelinguistic communication (gestures) to linguistic communication (sign) is observed by the identity of modality between gestures and sign. Woll (1989) gives the example of gestural pointing which appears at around nine months and is used as an accompaniment for speech throughout life for all children, hearing and deaf. She says signing children do not use pointing to refer to object and locations. Pointing

to people returns as a linguistic requirement of personal pronouns at around eighteen months (Woll, 1989). The study of language development clearly demonstrates the importance of first language as the first language for persons with and how it enhances the learning of the second language. However, generally the issue of sign hearing impairment is still a controversial issue. Chimedza et al. (1998) propose that sign Language as a language of a particular speech community and must be given an equal role, like any other indigenous or second language. For an optimal language learning environment, deaf children must participate in communication rather than being merely the target for language stimulation. Deaf children should be encouraged to participate and their attempts at communication, whether by use of gestures, pointing, signs, or speech should be accepted and incorporated into the conversation. McAnally et al. (1994) observed that deaf children, like children with normal hearing, require positive reinforcement to maintain or increase a behaviour.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Research has demonstrated that children with hearing impairments have lower language skills compared to their typically developing peers. Hearing loss can influence a number of developmental outcomes for children, but a great deal of importance is placed on their language development. This domain of development is important because a delay in language skills can lead to a number of other adverse developmental outcomes, such as lower academic achievement, psychosocial difficulties and communications.

Children with hearing impairments have parents with typically hearing abilities and these children are most at risk to experience delays in language development for a variety of reasons, including difficulties with aspects of parent-child communication because of un-matched hearing status or the amount of time these dyads spend in joint attention.

The number of children with hearing impairment is increasing on daily basis in Port Harcourt, due to maternal infection, poor nutritional habit of some mothers, accidents etc. without recourse to the plight of these children and their families. More-over, most of these parents wallowing in poverty and ignorance see the birth of children with hearing impairment as curse on their families; and little or no attention is given to them.

There are no facilities and equipment provided by either government or Non-governmental organization (NGOS) to assist parents of children with hearing impairment to communicate, and this made the communication pattern between these children, parents and community members to be very poor. The condition of most of these children with hearing Impairment would not have deteriorated if there were early intervention by service providers and awareness on the part of their hearing parents. It is also disheartening that most of the hearing parents and their hearing impaired children will not be able to use the equipment and facilities even if they are provided except they are trained on the use of them.

Most of these children are therefore left out when some family discussions are made as it requires extra effort to inform them of what is being said; most of the parents engage these children only when they want them to eat, perform specific chores leaving the children isolated

most of the time. The problem of this study therefore is to identify communication patterns between hearing impaired children and their hearing parents.

Aim and Objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate communication patterns between hearing parents and children with hearing impairments in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State, Nigeria. In specific terms, the study sought to do the following:

1. To determine the communication pattern between hearing parents and their hearing impaired children differ based on educational qualification.
2. To determine the communication pattern between hearing parents and their hearing impaired children differ based on socio-economic status.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the conduct of this study;

1. To what extent does communication patterns between hearing parents and their hearing impaired children differ based on educational qualification?
2. To what extent does communication pattern between hearing parents and their hearing impaired children differ based on socio-economic status?

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis was used to guide the conduct of this study.

H₀₁. There is no significant difference in the communication pattern of hearing parents and their hearing impaired children differ based on educational qualification.

H₀₂. There is no significant difference in the communication pattern of hearing parents and their hearing impaired children differ based on socio- economic status.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter covers the review of relevant literatures to the topic understudy in line with the stated objectives. The literature is reviewed under the following headings:

Conceptual Review: Communication patterns between hearing parents and their hearing impaired children based on Educational qualification of hearing parents and Socio-economic status of hearing parents and their communication patterns with hearing impaired children.

Hearing Impaired Children

Children with hearing impairment may struggle to develop language skills comparable to their typically developed peers and these delays in language development can lead to a variety of challenges in other developmental domains (Anita, 2010). However, when children are identified with hearing impairment early and begins intervention at young ages, language skills are improved (Yoshinaga, 2000).

Nonetheless, even when these children begins intervention at an early age, their language skills are lower on average than those of children with typically hearing (Moeller, 2000, Niparko 2010), and the language gap between children with hearing impairments and those with typically hearing becomes increasing larger as the age beginning intervention increases (Moeller, 2000).The lower language skills of these children even when they begin intervention at very early ages, leads to questions about which specific aspect of early intervention may support their language skills and which aspects may need to be improved. Hearing impaired children can still be seen by their parents, their peer group and other adults as outsiders in a hearing world” (Higgins, 1987).

Most hearing impaired children are born into families where parents are shocked and even traumatized by the diagnosis of hearing impairment often long before these parents have begins to accept the ramification of hearing loss, the child is issued with hearing aids. Although aware of the need for amplification on a logical and theoretical level, many parent finds it very difficult to accept emotionally, the hearing and are very visual reminder that the child is not perfect. It may take many months or even years before some parents are prepared to advertise their child’s problem both to themselves and others. Hodason (1994) unlike spectacles, hearing aids would appear to carry a form of stigma or the wearer. Tate (1994) sees them as external sign of hearing impairment which is often confused with diminished mental capacity because of associated communication problems. Ross (1996) pointed out that it is the aids that prevent hearing impaired children from looking the same as other children in the eyes of the public.

Although hearing impaired people are rarely recognized as a major group who are discriminated against in society, there is still a tendency through ignorance rather than intolerance, one would hope to confuse severe to profound (deafness) hearing impairment with limited intellectual capacity. The visible presence of hearing and should help overcome proclaiming “deaf not daft: but it is still painfully obvious that the degree of success in hearing aid use is closely associated with attitude of others to the aid. Despite the fact that two ears is the physical norm and binaural hearing is regarded as the optimum, two hearing aids even amongst many in the deaf community are regarded as double the hearing impairment disability (Green, 1999). A child with a profound hearing loss may not have large enough ears or strong enough pinna’s to support post annual aids which are powerful enough to reach his thresholds.

An Inquisitive toddler may spend much of his time taking out his post annual, dismantling the parts and hiding them so a body worn aid may be none appropriate at least until, he begins to appreciate the benefits of amplification (Depsey, 1994). Insisted that it is not difficult to fix hearing aids to infants after all children are completely under the control of adults” he is aware of the need to address the psychosocial need of children as much as adults.

Bess. et al (1986) maintained that acceptability of any amplification by children should be an educational goal to the audiologist and that it was essential to include the cosmetic attributes of the system in hearing aid assessment. Maddel (1990) went further when she suggested that when a child does not receive demonstrate auditing assistance from hearing aid, or if there appears to be little difference between one type of aid and another, that the major factor in the child’s aid will be the work of the instrument. This statement presupposes that he has some

say in the choice of the aid. Hodason, (1994) stresses the importance of listening to the child's concern and improving the cosmetic appearance of the aids where possible. Attitude of hearing peers begins to have an effect in the teenage years. It is at this age when peer pressure to conform can be at its greatest. Porter, (1984) indicated that children react negatively to peers that the larger the aid the more negative the reaction.

Educational Qualification of Communication Pattern of Hearing Parents and their Hearing Impaired Children

An inclusive system of education covers a social model of impairment that encompasses the rights of all children to be educated and is supported both ethnically and morally the global increase toward inclusive education has been one of the most important paradigm shifts to occur in (Forlin, 2010). Harison, (2015) demonstrates that educational interventions would also be expected to offer protection, and this question was examined in school-age children with hearing impairment Burton, (2001) asserts that early, specialized auditory/oral education reserved by children with hearing impairment allowed them to acquire necessary and sufficient experience to develop effective perceptual strategies for learning their native language. Vohr (2008) found that entry to early intervention prior to 3 months of age was associated with better short- and long-term outcomes for children with hearing impairment. These models predicted three influences of interventions moderating the relationship between hearing impairment and experience. Contributing to the quality and quantity of experience by encouraging consistent use of hearing aids and coaching families to optimize language impact and, contributing to the relationship between language experience and outcomes. Morller and Walker both pointed out that educational interventions are also expected to influence the effectiveness of efforts to optimize audibility promote consistent hearing aid use and encourage language-rich exposure. Powers, (2003) stated that in addition to student family characteristics, special education support-services can contribute to the educational success of children with hearing impairment. Ryes, (1995) demonstrated that class room factors promoting success for students with hearing impairment include amount of class room time devoted to the academic curriculum teacher attitude forwards inclusion, teacher support of peer relationship between general educators and special education assistance that is not disruptive and takes into account the culture and practices of the general education classroom, and clarity and flexibility of teacher and professional roles and responsibilities. Anti-Defamation League (2018) gave specific support service that are likely to enhance the communication pattern of children with hearing impairment include degree and the type of support provided by teachers for them to asses to class room communication.

One of the foundational best practices of early intervention for children who have delays or disabilities, including those who have hearing loss, is that the services are family-centred (Moeller et al, 2013; Trivette, & Hamby, (2007). A family-centred approach to early intervention for these families includes, but is not limited to recognizing the family's strengths and goals for their children, supporting parents' involvement in the program, and encouraging positive interactions between parents and their children (Moeller et al, 2013; Spencer)

Socio-Economic Status of Communication Pattern of Hearing Parents and their Children with Hearing Impairment

This is one of the important factors that influence aspects of parent's communication and children language abilities since this may lead to parents naturally adjusting to their language input. It is well established that family's socio-economic status, including income and parental education is shown to be important predictor of parent's language use and subsequently children's development including their language skills (Hart et al, 2002). These same pattern is true for children with hearing impairment, those who are from higher social-economic status families tends to have better language outcomes. Niparko 2010, Szagun & Stumper, 2012) found that socio-economic status influenced parents the type of word used and children's expressive and receptive language however, it did not influence parents higher-or lower-level language techniques. This indicates that all families, regardless of socio-economic status, may use specific language techniques, but also that all, Marschark, 2010) previous research indicates that when early intervention includes family-centred practices, this is shown to positively influence children's outcomes. (Dunst, et al, (2007). In addition, when these services encourage family involvement with their child in a way that helps the child achieved their goals when the family has set for him/her these practices also influence parents' self-efficacy, satisfaction with service, and behaviours, such as their general parenting competence (Dunst, 2007). Families may benefit from receiving the importance of increasing their use of high-level language techniques.

The words of Holf, (2003); Conger, and Martin, (2013) indicated two aspects of parents' communication that are known to greatly influence the language development of children, the quantities and qualities of their language are greatly influenced by their socio-economic status. Children in higher socio-economic status families are exposed to a greater quantity of parental language and more supportive qualities, such as fewer prohibitions; the quantities and qualities of language used. Karchermer & Mitchelk (2003) identified low family socio-economic status as negatively affecting academic achievement of children with hearing impairment (Desjardin, 2006; Desjardin Eisenberg, 2007). Demonstrates that parents of children with hearing impairment may naturally adopt their language based on what may be most appropriate for their children current skills and facilitative of children's language growth Ozcebe and colleagues suggested that poor socio-economic circumstances and a low level of knowledge in a family contribute to late identification of hearing loss and intervention.

Research Design

The design for this study is descriptive survey. Descriptive survey is a survey which aims at collecting data on, and describing, in a systematic manner, the characteristics features or facts about a given population (Nworgu. 2006). Objects such as books, journals, Newspapers, magazines, and internet punts, having related and relevant information on hearing parents and their hearing impaired children were used for the study. Research instrument was administered

on respondents and their views used for data analysis. Hence, both primary and secondary data will be used for the study.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises of hearing parents and hearing impaired children between ages 5-11 year in Port Harcourt Rivers State.

Sampling Technique

The study will adopt block sampling techniques due to the size of the population. This means that the population of the study will also constitute its sample.

Sampling

The sample for this study consist of 50 parents and 30 hearing impaired children of ages 5-11 years, who have hearing impairments in Port Harcourt Rivers State.

Instruments for Data Collection

The instrument that will be used for the study is a self-structured questionnaire for Communication Pattern of Hearing Parents and their Hearing Impaired Children (CPHPHIC). The questionnaire will used to elicit information from respondents. It is a four scale research tools, comprising of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD), for respondents to express their decisions.

The sub-questions in the questionnaire are based on the variables in the study/research questions, namely; communication pattern of hearing parents, gender of parents, educational qualification of parents, socio-economic status of parents, and family types of parents, early intervention and service provided by professionals to parents.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed with descriptive statistics. Mean score and Standard Deviation were used in analysing research question one and two while the null hypotheses were tested with one way Anova and the two were tested with t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Finding and Discussion

Research Question 1: What are the communication pattern between hearing parents and children with hearing impairment based on educational qualification?

A corresponding null hypothesis was formulated to analyse and test this research questions using one way Anova at 0.05 level of significance thus:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the communication pattern of hearing parents and their hearing impaired children based on educational qualification.

Table 4.1: Mean, Standard Deviation and One Way Anova on the Difference in the Communication Pattern of Hearing Parents and their Hearing Impaired Children Based on Educational Qualification

	N	Mean	SD	Sum of Squares	df	F-cal	F-cri	Decision
SSCE	50	68.08	7.58	248.13	2			
NCE/ND	14	71.07	5.21	3651.51	68	2.28	3.15	Retained
BSC/HND	6	73.96	9.86	3899.64				

Table 4.1 shows that, one way ANOVA on the difference in the communication pattern of hearing impaired children based on educational qualification. The result of the one way ANOVA shows that there is no significant difference in the communication pattern of hearing parents and their hearing impaired children based on educational qualification (df=68, F-cal=2.28, F-cri=3.15). The null hypothesis two was retained at 0.05 alpha level since the F-critical is greater than the F-calculated

Research Question 2: What are the communication patterns hearing parents and children with hearing impairment based on socio-economic status?

H02: There is no significant difference in communication pattern of hearing parents and their hearing impaired children based on socio-economic status.

Table 4.2: Mean, standard deviation and independent sample t-test on the difference in the communication pattern of hearing parents and their hearing impaired children based on socio-economic status

SES	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
High	27	70.37	7.75				
				68	1.05	1.99	Retained
Low	43	68.43	7.36				

Table 4.2 shows that, the independent sample t-test on the difference in the communication pattern of hearing parents and their hearing impaired children based on socio-economic status. The result of the independent sample of t-test shows that there is no significant difference in the communication pattern of hearing parents and hearing impaired children based on socio-economic status (df=68, t-cri=1.99, t-cal=1.05). The null hypothesis three was retained at 0.05 alpha level since the t-critical is greater than the t-calculated

CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of the study it was established that, the communication pattern, Educational qualification and socio-economic status respectively does not have any effect on the communication pattern and their hearing parents and their hearing impaired children. The implication of the finding is that there is no special technique or method used for any persons that has hearing impairment. Based on the findings, the pattern of communication parents used is oral, manual and total communication which is known as English sign language.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding of this study, the discussion that follows and various implications highlighted the following recommendation has been made:

1. Hearing parents should ensure that their hearing impaired children should have a cordial or effective communication pattern to take place.
2. Government should assist and encourage hearing parents and their hearing impaired children, to create a centre and facilities that will enable them learn sign language for communication to be easier because of the socio-economic status of some parent of children with hearing impairment.
3. Government should provide parents and their hearing impaired children a training centre for sign language interpreter who will teach both parents and their hearing impaired children to communicate with sign language. However, oral, manual and total communication should be taught irrespective of the educational qualification of parents.

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