



A STUDY TO INVESTIGATE THE ROLE OF YOUTUBE IN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF TODDLERS

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ABSTRACT

Language development starts even before the birth but the first five years are crucial for language development. Therefore, the process is same in every human being. However, milestone of language development vary among children. That is why; a child's language development cannot be compare with other children but can relate to norms of language development. This paper focuses on the development of language through YouTube. It is investigated that the learning behavior & attitude of children towards YouTube channels. For this, interview of parents is conducted of five toddlers to investigate language development patterns and factors affecting it. This research discusses the milestone of children from age 2-4 and compares it with the analysis of interview conducted. The result shows that children have adverse effects such as change of body language and aggression along with language learning skills, which are also giving them a chance to be exposed to absurd language and inappropriate material.

Keywords: Youtube, language development, toddlers

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INTRODUCTION

Language plays a vital role in person's life. Language development starts from early childhood. However, language development process even starts before birth. Fetus hears sound from mother's body and recognizes it after the birth. Infant cries refers his/her language because of sounds and speech they heard before birth.

First five year of child is crucial for language development; they can learn any language at this young age. Though, the process is same in every human being. However, milestone of language development vary among children. That is why; a child's language development cannot be compare with other children but can relate to norms of language development. Girls are said to be faster in developing a language then boys, boys are tend to be slow at language development.

Language development comes under the arena of cognitive development along with intelligence, memorizing, and information procession. Once a theory was believed that until infants learn a language they are unable to think or create ideas without cognition. Means, to think infants needs a language. It is believed that babies are aware of their surroundings from the time they are born because they listen to sounds and speeches around them and can observe light through womb. Therefore, they actively learn and respond after the birth. Hence, the interaction of genetic and learned factors results in cognitive development.

Cognitive development including language development with other factors enhances with age, understanding, and awareness. That leads infancy to childhood, and then again into adolescence. Cognitive development was first described by Jean Piaget. In his theory, he explains the development of cognition with age and enhances through early recognition of objects during babyhood, to the development of logic and cause-and-effect relationships during childhood, and finally the understanding and the creation of abstract thought during adolescence.

The process of language development starts right after the birth. The crying is a primary way of child's communication at birth. Until three month of age, infants recognize familiar voices mostly of their mother, cry to express needs, they grunt, chuckle, whimper, babble, they begin to coo, repeating the same sound, and make vowel like sounds like 'ooh' and 'ah'. From three to six months, infants can mimic

sounds, make gestures, tone, new sounds like of ‘p’, ‘b’, and ‘m’. A 1-year-old child can call their parents like by using words ‘mama’ and ‘baba’, can shout and scream, use vowels and consonants, and they have one word utterances for identifying objects or to make them clear. During toddlerhood i.e. 2nd- year of life language development proceeds at different rates in different children. New words are added and lost from their dictionary. They have one or sometimes two word utterances, nouns and verbs are mostly used, create different sounds, are able to understand command (stop from doing something), able to answer ‘what’ questions, and also able to repeat. Every child differently responds to the situation and their language developmental process might differ from other children.

Three to five year old children are referring to as ‘Preschooler’. They are in a stage of learning new things through their surroundings. They approximately have vocabulary of 2500 words. They tell stories through stuttering and stammering, their sentence contains three to six words. They prefer short sentences. They can answer questions and can answer general knowledge questions. They easily communicate with other children or elders. At this age, language of preschooler’s is developed as they properly use pronouns and their sentence structure is perfect, it may differ in some cases.

In later a stage that starts from ‘school age’ (5 year old), their language skills can be developed and can be enhanced from environment and sources. They are able to correct their grammar and pronunciation. Their sentences are long and explanatory. Their vocabulary is increased every day.

Along with language development, there is developmental delay in children. In this, language development is delayed due some factors. It might be physical or environmental or both. Some common circumstances like ignoring child, bilingualism, psychosocial deprivation and many more can also result in language delay.

The focus of this research article is to discuss the factors affecting language development of preschoolers. For this, interview of toddler’s parents is conducted to investigate language development patterns and factors affecting it.

In this era, children learn mostly through YouTube by watching poems and later on children videos. The language used in the videos has a great impact on child's mind, as he/she uses that word later on. Preschoolers are able to understand and process the language used in the videos. Same like that story telling and conducting activities helps in language development. Due to different surroundings, children build their interest in different things that develops their language.

YouTube has emerged as one of the biggest source of infotainment in the world. Media industry has witnessed a paradigm shift in people's choice. Easy availability of the user-generated content has changed the viewer's media habits as well as parenting habit. Researchers have tried to explore the role of YouTube based Children channels in parenting. In major finding, most of the Parents consider that YouTube has great influence in learning and development of their Children. Children media have been a prominent, important, and pertinent in terms of affecting the development and growth of a child.

Media always had great influence on the mind of their users. It has direct impact on the mental health, social and cultural development of child. It is a huge responsibility of parents to select the right media content for their kids, knowingly unknowingly; it penetrates the negative feelings of guilt, envy and sometimes crime, superiority or inferiority complexes. As the visuals can only easily penetrates the thoughts of elder one should not think that children would not come under its intense exposure. In old times people used to think that media is a medium of infotainment for children. However, there are many researches on the impact of media, hence arguably media can generate both positive and negative impact, but the increasing numbers of inappropriate content promoting violence, sexuality, offensive language has raised serious concerns among parents.

Now age barrier is introduced on YOUTUBE, which lesser the parents worry about the content. Rhymes have great influence and popularity among kids, rhymes can boost up their self-confidence. Research proves that knowledge of nursery rhyming enhances children phonological awareness. Sound based language plays an important role in language development as per study on Rhymes and alliteration in

poems elicited from young children. YouTube has now become a source of infotainment for parents and their kids.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Child's language development is best described with parental observation, concern and a logopedic assessment. Mothers are usually more concerned about child's speech development than fathers. The parental concern decreases with increasing acceptance of speech (Rydz et al.; Romstein, 2017, 2005). Glascoe, 2003; Romstein, 2017 states that it is more important to pay attention to parents who do not show any or little concern about the child's speech development.

Factors that influence language development are divided into internal and external. Among the internal factors is the influence of sex, birth order and difference between left-handed and right-handed (Rožaj, 2017).

Among the external factors, there is the influence of peers, media, and language games. Almost all educational contents can be taught through the game, as a natural activity characteristic and appropriate for children. Furthermore, through language games children learn how to follow the rules. Language games are also a great part of the socialization process (Aladrović-Slovaček, Zovkić & Ceković 2014). According to Dixon in 2014, Television watching duration in Children of 2 to 11 years has declined and internet video watching duration had increased sharply. The result shows the gradual shift in media internet consumption pattern of children. According to M.M & Neumann,(2014) children under the age of four use smart phones to watch online video clips D.L (2014), Infants began to utilize mobile technology with the mobile phone penetration and the advent of the touch screen interface (Haddon, L.2013).

Children's cognitive development shows the development of children's thinking. Cognitive development is the basis of a child's ability to think. This is appropriate with the opinion of Ahmad Susanto (2011: 48) that cognitive is processes of thinking, namely the ability of individuals to connect, assesses, and consider an event. So, cognitive processes are related to the level of intelligence that marks a person with various interests, especially aimed at learning ideas. Cognitive

development has an important role for success children in learning because some activities in learning are always related to thinking problems. According to Ahmad Susanto (2011: 59-60) factors that can influence cognitive development such as: factors of heredity or descent, environmental, maturity, formation, interest and freedom. Marina Buzzi (2011) in his research paper, "What are your children watching on YouTube" mentioned that the parents must be aware of the nature content their kids are accessing on YouTube.

Piaget in Allen (2010: 29) states that cognitive development is a process of ongoing interaction between children and their perceptual views of an object or event in an environment. Cognitive development theory is developed by Jean Piaget. The theory provides many key concepts in the field developmental psychology and influences the development of the concept intelligence, which for Piaget, means the ability to more accurately represent the world and perform logical operations in concept representations based on reality.

According to Beichler and Snowman (Dwi Yulianti, 2010: 7), early childhood is children between 3-6 years old. Whereas, the nature of early childhood (Augusta, 2012) is a unique individual where he has a pattern growth and development in physical, cognitive, socio-emotional aspects, creativity, language, and special communication that are in accordance with the stages that are being passed by the child.

According to Soemiarti and Patmonodewo (2003: 20), cognitive development is influenced by the growth of brain cells and the development of relationships between brain cells. The health and nutrition conditions of the child although still in the mother's womb will affect the growth and development of the child. General Learning Model by Buckley and Anderson, 2006 The GLM proposes main dimensions involved in the study of influence of different media on behavior, as well as different routes by which this influence seems to occur. Media products have both immediate short and long-term effects due to repeated exposure to the same or similar stimuli.

Chomsky (2002: pp. 48) stated that „*the internal language has the means to construct the mental objects that we use to express our thoughts*“. According to

Noam Chomsky, if the child is exposed to mother tongue, he or she will adapt the main structure of the language because children are born with an inherited ability to learn any human language (Šego, 2009). Children acquire language in similar stages across the world and they can learn any human language (Chomsky, 2002). Infants are born with the ability to focus on the sounds that are important for later development of language. According to Adam Szczegielniak there are four stages of language acquisition. All children go through these stages and it means that they are biologically predisposed to go through (Chomsky, 2002).

The relationship of hereditary factors which are in a combination with learning are important for language development. It is often thought that the environment has a great impact on a child, but if a child is not mature enough, he or she will not talk regardless of what they are exposed to (Lenneberg, 1978; Stančić, Ljubešić, 1994). The impact of the environment may delay the appearance of some form of the speech, whereas according to maturation, even though the child was ready for it, it does not mean that a favorable and positive environment will accelerate the process of maturation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The nature of this research is qualitative research. Online interview is conducted from parents of toddlers to analyze the language development milestones and to analyze the factors helped in language development. Data for this research will be collected through both primary and secondary sources. The Primary source will be the online interviews/questionnaires while Secondary will be for the literature review. The sample for this research is parents of preschoolers that lie between the ages of 2-4. The sample size will be 6. Population for this research is six toddler's parents.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Along with the interview questions of five parents whose children watch YouTube content we will analyze the milestone of toddlers i.e. 2-4 year of age. There is a lot to observe in a baby's language development from the time of first word till making a complete sentence. A child psychologist, Dr. Rahil Briggs says that the development of every child is different but the best way to develop baby's language

skills is to talk with them. Parent's communication with their children from the early age is the best way to boost their language skills that include reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Milestones include the typical language characteristics that identify the child's language development. If the child does not fulfill the milestone, it means that he/she has language disorder. If a child by the age of 2 do not speaks then he/she is considered as a problematic child, then pediatrician is advised.

This article firstly discusses the milestone and then relates it with the interview answers of parents whose children watch YouTube content.

A **2 years old child** is able to name a number of objects in his/her surroundings and at least uses two prepositions. They create short sentences like 1.2 words, which mostly consist of noun-verb combinations. They have approximately 150-300 words vocabulary but they are poor at rhyming and fluency. Volume and pitch of the voice is not well controlled. In case of pronouns they correctly use I, me, and you. They are able to identify their close relatives and can also identify their body parts and do understand the basic commands like pick this, give me, go etc.

Moving towards a **3 year old child** (36 months) whose language is slightly more advanced. That child is able to use pronouns correctly, with the addition of singular/plural and present/past tenses. They had three word utterances. They are more likely to ask questions regarding surroundings, activities, experiences etc. The child is able to give his name, age and other small details. However, he/she may not be able to answer all questions but they understand and sometimes create their own answer or small story.

Leading towards the **4 years of age** i.e. the last stage of toddlers. That child is able to make small and clear sentences. They can create and repeat easily. They have a vast vocabulary and are active in responding. They had a good memory and usually recalled everything.

These are the typical language development characteristics, which are generally present in every child but as it is discussed above that development in every child are different, so sometimes a child is going great then his/her age and sometimes a child is weak and is not able to meet the general demands. It can be due to any external or internal factors; maybe the child has dyslexia or speech disorder.

A child is **dyslexic** when he/she mixes up letters or word sequences and therefore has interference in his/her learning as the brain has a problem processing language. However, the point to be clear is that the normal child also replaces or mixes the syllables or sound of a word that makes a different and new word but that is corrected by the time. Language disorders are known as **aphasias**. These language disorders are presumed to have their cause some from damage to some specific site in the hemisphere of the brain where language is located. The damage causes characteristic problems in spontaneous speech, as well as in the understanding of speech and writing.

The interview we conducted consists of 5 questions and all the questions were related to language development through YouTube. The answers we get from five parents were generally analyzed and it was observed that how their child's language development differs from other children.

Almost all participants agreed that their child watches YouTube on regular content, though the content they watch differs. Children were more inclined towards poems because of its attracting nature due to tone, rhythm, music and more importantly the animation. Cartoons were also seemed to be an interest of children. The reason behind the attraction of children towards it is that the content maker is aware of the fact that what this age group child will prefer to watch. Out of all the content toddlers, find something exciting. The poems and cartoons consist of different sounds, music color, creativity, and activities.

To observe whether YouTube is enhancing children language skills or not, parents are aware of their child's developing skills. Participants agreed that maybe not all language skills but some are improved because of watching YouTube content. Speaking and listening skills are mostly highlighted then reading and writing. This is because their role is to only watch and listen; they are not getting a habit of reading or writing from an early age, which can rise to a big issue for those children in future. The vocabulary, pronunciation, and accent of these children are an example of language skills being enhanced.

Out of all the participants, only one of them stated to see no language development in their child, while others agreed. YouTube has previously helped

children learn language faster by watching their favorite character repeatedly. It showed how they have not only learned another language, such as English but also adopted their accent. This aspect of learning accent is a positive outcome as for a global language. Children are seen to use English language mostly while others have also learned Spanish and Japanese poems without the sense of meaning. This shows how most of the observing mothers have noticed changes in their language after YouTube use, where both negative and positive vocabulary could be a part of it.

4 of the parents claimed to witness ‘excitement’ in their child’s behavior due to watching videos. They clap their hands, laugh, and make noises while watching them, which is their way to express happiness. While a respondent claimed to witness ‘Violence’ in the child as well. It is clear that all of them are common and viral children's YouTube channels and thousands of others must have been influenced the same way by it, taking it to even the stage of excitement that is aggression and violence. Although the factor of violence is seen common in boys though the consumption of manly fighting scenarios in cartoons. So the chance of their feelings towards their favorite show is definitely seen to influence daily life. Children usually expect an Indian wedding custom due to the immense popularity of the Indian TV channel ‘Star Plus’ while YouTube plays the equal role in making the believe a number of norms and traditions that are socially and religiously wrong for a lot of people, due to that tender age, they get affected by all of it quite quickly.

The findings have shown how parents are not in favor of YouTube consumption. They take it as a ‘time pass’ and engagement for young children rather than a learning medium specifically. They said how 70% of the content is inappropriate and it is easy to click on such videos. Parents agree that YouTube can easily influence the child negatively. One of the respondents has seen the change of body language in the daughter, which also comes as alarming for a parent. There is a ton of inappropriate content that can get your child’s eye. It is important to keep them to the content that should be seen which comes as a parent’s duty. There is a lot of explicit cartoon content that has been present without any ban all over the world and only ends adding up rather than removal. Therefore, either boys or girls, anyone can get a negative influence out of it in the shape of it

CONCLUSION

YouTube, without a doubt, is a major part of children's daily life where there is a lot to worry about within the animations themselves. The pre-existing idea of YouTube affecting the toddler's cognition in a negative way along with language development is made visible by this research. Parents have shared the concern of how there is more harm than good in this area where they have to be kept under the eye. The content for boys is mostly violent where girls adapt body languages. There is a lot of inappropriate content available for the children to disrupt their childhood and affect their mentality from this stage. Unfortunately, this harm from the platform is one of the leading content of YouTube with millions of views that is never banned or kept under consideration for modification. Hence, the observations and concerns of parents is valid where children not only become mentally different from what they are taught in real life but also cause major language issues. Serious action should be taken immediately in this regard to eliminate any custom, religious specific or inappropriate content from YouTube for children for a safer upbringing and language.

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APPENDIX

	simple commands
24 Months 2 year <i>Telegraphic stage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ <u>Child can name</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ a number of objects common to his surroundings◆ <u>Child is-able to use at least</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">two prepositions, usually chosen from the following: in, on, under◆ Combines words into<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ a short sentence-largely noun-verb combinations (mean)◆ length of sentences is given as<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 1.2 words◆ Vocabulary of approximately<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 150-300 words- ◆ <u>Rhythm and fluency often poor</u>✓ ◆ <u>Volume and pitch of voice</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">not yet well-controlled◆ Can use two pronouns correctly: I, me, you, although