Teaching language through Mnemonics Programme in pre-school Children with Hearing Impairment

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Abstract: Learning is depending upon the intelligence, external / internal motivation and sensory capabilities. Hearing impairment is a hidden disability which adversely affects speech, language, communication and shows poor performance in academic, social and cultural areas. As per psychological theory each child is unique and learns through some specific method, technique, and approaches but due to extrinsic and intrinsic cause the teachers/therapist/parents and caregivers are not able to change desirable behavior of the child. To keep in mind Thompson (1987), has developed 'Mnemonics programme'Mnemonics programme is an adaptive package of methods, techniques and strategies by which a pre-school deaf child can enhance the language skills very easily with the minimum support.

Key words: Hearing impairment, Language and Mnemonic programme.

I. Introduction

Language is a tool that humans use to communicate or share thoughts, ideas, and emotions. Language is the set of rules, shared by the individuals who are communicating, that allows them to exchange those thoughts, ideas, or emotions. Each language includes its own set of rules for phonology (phonemes or speech sounds or, in the case of signed language, hand shapes), morphology (word formation), syntax (sentence formation), semantics (word and sentence meaning), prosody (intonation and rhythm of speech), and pragmatics (effective use of language). “To teach language to deaf children and youths.” I believe that linguistic Competence is not at bottom something that can be taught; rather, it must be learned (Chomsky, 1965).

II. Theoretical Challenges

In attempting to provide an integration of the empirical evidence relevant to language development among children who are deaf, we have to recognize that what might seem to be dichotomies in language development often represent two ends of a continuum. This is sometimes distinct from the mode of expressive or receptive communication that parents or school staff/teachers would prefer for the child. Typically, sign language will be the primary mode for deaf children who have deaf parents, whereas spoken language is more likely to be the primary mode for deaf children of hearing parents independent of each child’s degree of hearing loss. Particular deaf parents and deaf children with some residual hearing also benefit from spoken language while still using sign language in some contexts. Similarly, even when deaf children are educated in spoken language environments, systems of gestural communication may develop between parents and children (e.g. Greenberg, Calderon, & Kusché, 1984).

II. Practical Challenges

children who are deaf are a heterogeneous group in terms of degree of hearing loss and age at which hearing loss occurred. It is also difficult to make comparisons between educational programs emphasizing spoken language and those emphasizing sign language (Everhart & Marschark, 1988).

III. Definition of language

Chomsky (1985), “Language primarily as the mental facility that allows humans to undertake linguistic behavior, to learn languages and produce and understand utterances.”


**Ferdinand de saussure (1990),** “Language as a formal system of symbols governed by grammatical rules combining particular signs with particular meanings. This definition stresses the fact that human languages can be described as closed structural system consisting of rules that relate particular signs to particular meanings”.

### IV. Objective of the study

The objective of the study are as follows:

1. To know the various teaching methods for the language development in children with hearing impairment.
2. To understand the various teaching techniques for the language development in children with hearing impairment.
3. To understand the various teaching approaches for the language development in children with hearing impairment.

### V. Justification of Review

Mnemonic devices supports to enhancing vocabulary as well as speech intelligibility of language (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Hunt, (2008) suggest that a specific combination of processes is necessary for the effectiveness of mnemonic instruction and use. The use of certain devices entails a certain level of language proficiency. Students with different levels of proficiency may need different techniques. High-level students may benefit more from verbal than visual devices. There are, however, a few studies done on mnemonic devices, those focused on mnemonic devices have consistently indicated that the use of mnemonic devices substantially enhances higher levels of retention in immediate and delayed recall of second language vocabulary words in comparison with other learning strategies. Pressly et al (1981) studied on children 3 to 6 years of age learning simple Spanish vocabulary items through keyword method. The results showed that children who used the keyword method remembered more vocabulary than children who were not instructed in keyword method usage. Another study by Roediger (1980) looked at the method of loci along with three other well-known mnemonic methods. Results of the study revealed that all four mnemonic groups recalled the 20-word list better than the control group.

### VI. Meaning of Mnemonics

The word mnemonic is derived from the Greek word Mnemosyne, referring to the ancient Greek goddess of memory. The use of mnemonic dates back to 500B.C (Yates, 1966). The first used mnemonic device was an earlier form of the modern day method of loci and since then, numerous other devices have been developed (Higbee, 1987).

#### Classification of Mnemonics:

Mnemonic programmes have been differently classified by different scholars. Thompson (1987), arranges mnemonic strategies into five classes; linguistics, spatial, visual, physical and verbal methods etc.

#### VII. Types of Mnemonics

**A. Linguistics Mnemonics:**

1. **Peg word method:** Through peg word method unrelated items can be remembered easily by relating them to easily memorizable items which act as pegs or hooks. Peg word method has two stages.
   - **At first** students are asked to remember 10 number-rhyme pairs like one is bun, two is shoe, three is tree (in my classes I usually continue it in this way: four is door, five is hive, six is cheeks, seven is heaven, eight is gate, nine is pine, ten is hen).
   - **Second stage** the students are asked to visualize the word and try to link it to rhyming words. The words are, therefore, learned in a composite picture of the given word and the peg (Mirhassani and Eghtesadei, 2007). E, G. Second one is "feature", its peg according to the rhyme pairs can be “shoe” and the students can form a mental picture in which some people are talking about the features of a kind of shoe.
2. **The key word method:** Key word method according to Hulstijn (1997) requires three stages. At first An L1 or L2 word that has acoustic similarity to the target word is given to the learner to act as the key word, second phrase and third sentence.

**B. Spatial Mnemonics:**

1. The loci method: Loci method is actually the oldest mnemonic device. Using this method entails imagining a very familiar place like a room or a house and then associating each new word to a part of it to be remembered (Eysenck, 1994; Mirhassani and Eghtesadei, 2007).
2. Spatial grouping: The idea behind this method is that instead of writing words in a column, students can be asked to form patterns like a triangle with them. Writing words in the form of patterns help them recall the words better (Holden, 1999).
3. Through this method student can be asked to associate each word with a finger. This method is especially useful with children to learn numbers, days of the week and month of the year (Holden, 1999).
4. The finger method: Through this method students can be asked to associate each word with a finger. This method is especially useful with children to learn numbers, days of the week and month of the year (Holden, 1999).
C. Visual Mnemonics:
1. Pictures: New words are usually paired with their definitions or equivalents. They can be, however, better, learned if they are paired with pictures (Thompson, 1987). Gians and Redman (1986) believe that objects and pictures can facilitate recall. Wright (1989) also believes that meaning cannot be derived only from verbal language.
2. Visualize: It is merely a tool for the understanding of spoken language in relation to situations, people and things. Instead of using real pictures, this method allows a word to be visualized. The learner imagines a picture or a scene which is associated with the target word. Abstract words can be learned. Through this method by relating them to a visual picture (Mirhassani and Eghtesadei, 2007).

D. The Verbal Mnemonics:
1. Grouping or semantic organization: As organized materials are easier to store in and retrieve from long-term memory, to organize the words in some fashion will enhance their recall (Anderson, 2000; Thomson, 1987).
2. Story-telling or the narrative chain: In this method the learner links the words together by a story. At first he should associate the target words with a topic or some topics, and then he should connect them by making up a story containing the words (Mirhassani and Eghtesadei, 2007).
3. Play/Drama: According to Piaget, “Play consists of responses for pure pleasure” and similarly the preschool play way method is considered the most fun and effective methodology along with the project method and lesson plans. The attitude towards play is shifted, as scientist studies have shown the importance of play and how play way methods can help child’s development when in kindergarten and preschool in India and around world.

E. Physical Mnemonics:
According to this method the learner should move his body or parts of his body in a certain way that illustrates the meaning of the word. If the target word is tiptoe, for example, the student can get up on his tiptoe and move across the room. It can be imaginary too. It means that he can imagine the action of moving on his tiptoe (Thompson, 1987; Holden, 1999).

F. Sensory Mnemonics:
Sense is a means of expression and of developing the ability to concentrate, observe and think is a language experience. In tactile method Children enjoy feeling materials and matching them. The child is given an opportunity to match the material through touch and sight.

G. Developmental Mnemonics:
The child’s creative effort is part of developmental process of early childhood. The activities provided for through busy hands and colourful media offer many opportunities for expression, and for causal training in lip reading, speech and language development.

H. Synergy mnemonics:
Creative cooperation is needed among the Director, Principal, Teacher, caregiver and parents to achieve the optimum goal of the child. “Parents don’t realize that unless children hear they will not talk. Often doctors don’t inform them about the importance of the first three years in acquiring verbal language skills”.

VIII. Effectiveness of Mnemonics
A lot of studies have focused on the recognition and instruction of language learning strategies in general and vocabulary in particular. Mnemonic devices can be very effective and can make the students motivated and the classroom more interesting (Georger, 1997).

IX. Limitations of Mnemonic
There are, however, some points that interested teachers should consider:
1) Learners themselves should be encouraged to find their mnemonic devices.
2) It is not often possible to use certain mnemonic devices with certain words.
3) The use of certain devices entails a certain level of proficiency.
4) Students should be encouraged to evaluate their own techniques and finally
5) When certain strategies are agreed up on, the teacher should instruct the strategy and its importance and effectiveness (Mirhassani and Eghtesadei, 2007).

X. Conclusion
Research on the effectiveness of mnemonic strategies has consistently proved their usefulness, it, however, recommends language teachers not to present words in isolation, but rather use these devices in contextual vocabulary learning. The choice of strategies, however, depends on the students’ proficiency and learning style (Coady and Huckin, 1997; Thompson, 1987; Holden, 1999; Mirhassani and Eghtesadei, 2007).

REFERENCES


