

**AN ANALYSIS OF EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE DISORDER AND ITS INFLUENCE ON  
SOCIAL INTERACTION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD (1-6 Years): A  
PSYCHOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE**

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**Abstract**

Expressive Language Disorder (ELD) is a condition that affects a child's ability to produce language despite having normal cognitive and comprehension skills. This study explores the characteristics of ELD and its relationship with social interaction in early childhood from a psycholinguistic perspective. By examining how language abilities, such as vocabulary usage, sentence construction, and grammatical accuracy, influence social engagement, the study provides insights into the connection between language development and interaction. Through a qualitative approach, the research focuses on identifying patterns in language use and social behaviors among children with ELD. This paper aims to contribute to a understanding of the psycholinguistic aspects of ELD and its relevance to early childhood development, providing a foundation for further study in this field.

**Keywords:** language disorder, social interaction, early childhood development.

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**INTRODUCTION**

**A. BACKGROUND**

Expressive Language Disorder (ELD) is a developmental condition that specifically affects a child's ability to express thoughts, ideas, and emotions through spoken language, even when comprehension and cognitive abilities are within the normal range. Early childhood (ages 1–6) is a critical period for language development, and delays or disorders during this phase can have significant implications for later stages of development, particularly in social and academic contexts.

Research indicates that language difficulties persisting beyond the preschool years and into school age are more likely to continue into later life (Bishop & Edmundson, 1987; Stothard et al., 1998). These persistent issues may result in broader developmental challenges, particularly when language impairments affect multiple areas, such as vocabulary, sentence construction, and grammar. Children with restricted expressive phonology often show positive prognoses, suggesting that the specific nature of language impairment plays a role in recovery and outcomes (Bishop & Edmundson, 1987). However, when language difficulties extend to pragmatic skills—such as understanding figurative language or engaging in social

interactions—they may significantly hinder a child's ability to form relationships and navigate social settings (Paul et al., 2018; Norbury, 2004).

This study adopts a psycholinguistic perspective to explore how ELD impacts social interactions in early childhood, considering both the linguistic and social dimensions of development. By understanding the patterns of language use and their influence on social engagement, the research seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on diagnosis, intervention, and developmental support for children with ELD.

## **B. Research Problem**

Children with language disorders in early childhood often face challenges in both language acquisition and social interaction, which are crucial for their overall development. However, the specific ways language disorders influence social behaviors during this critical developmental stage are not yet fully understood.

There is a lack of comprehensive research that examines the interplay between language disorders and social interaction in early childhood, limiting the ability to develop effective strategies for intervention and support. This gap hinders efforts to ensure optimal developmental outcomes for children with these challenges.

## **C. Research Objective**

This study aims to examine the relationship between language disorder and social interaction in early childhood development. It focuses on understanding how linguistic challenges influence social engagement during the critical developmental period of ages 1–6.

## **D. Research Significance**

This study is significant in advancing the understanding of how language disorders affect social interaction during early childhood development. By examining the relationship between language disorders and social engagement, it provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by children with these disorders. This research will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the role language plays in shaping social behaviors during the critical developmental years of ages 1–6. The findings from this study have practical implications for improving diagnostic practices and intervention strategies for children with language disorders. By identifying key factors influencing social interaction, the research aims to inform early childhood education and clinical approaches, ultimately helping to promote better developmental outcomes and social inclusion for affected children.

## **PREVIOUS WORK**

### **A. Language Disorder**

Language disorder refers to a condition where a child experiences difficulties with language development, despite having normal cognitive abilities and hearing. This disorder can manifest in various forms, such as delays in speech production, problems with vocabulary, issues with sentence structure, or difficulties with comprehension. Early identification and intervention are crucial as language is foundational for communication, social interaction, and later academic success.

Research by Bishop and Edmundson (1987) highlights that children with expressive language disorders, particularly those experiencing issues with phonology or sentence structure, may show significant delays in developing appropriate social communication skills. According to their study, these difficulties can extend beyond preschool years and have lasting effects on both language and social development if not addressed early on.

## **B. Social Interaction**

Social interaction plays a critical role in early childhood development, contributing to a child's social, emotional, and cognitive growth. Healthy social relationships and interactions provide a foundation for learning and development, as children learn through play, communication, and reciprocal interactions with caregivers and peers. Research has shown that positive, supportive relationships—both within families and in early childhood care and education (ECCE) settings such as preschools and daycare centers—are essential for successful early learning (Bradley, 2019; Burchinal et al., 2002; Cameron, 2012; O'Connor & McCartney, 2007; Pianta et al., 2016). These interactions help children develop key skills such as empathy, problem-solving, and emotional regulation.

However, for children with language disorders, the opportunity to engage in these critical social interactions may be limited. Language challenges can hinder a child's ability to communicate effectively, affecting their ability to form relationships and engage in social play. As noted by Paul et al. (2018), children with developmental language disorders (DLD) may struggle with pragmatic skills, making it difficult for them to understand social cues or engage in meaningful conversations. This may lead to isolation and difficulties in forming peer relationships, which can, in turn, affect their social and emotional development.

## **C. Childhood development**

Early childhood is a critical period for cognitive, social, and emotional development. During this stage, children rapidly acquire language skills, build relationships, and develop the foundational abilities that will shape their future learning and social interactions. Research has shown that warm and supportive relationships are central to promoting positive development in early childhood, as they foster an environment where children feel safe and supported to explore, learn, and grow (Bradley, 2019).

For children with language disorders, however, these developmental milestones may be delayed or impaired. Difficulties in language acquisition can affect not only communication but also the development of essential social and emotional skills. Early intervention is vital to addressing these challenges, ensuring that children with language disorders receive the support they need to thrive during this crucial developmental period.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **A. Research Design**

The research design implemented in this study is library research, with a focus on survey techniques. It involves gathering relevant books, articles, research papers, and journals that examine the relationship between language disorders, social interaction, and early childhood development. By systematically reviewing and analyzing this literature, key

themes, patterns, and insights related to the effects of language disorders on social engagement in early childhood are identified and interpreted.

The findings from this review will be synthesized to draw conclusions about how language disorders impact social interaction, and the implications for early childhood development. This research design aims to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by children with language disorders, particularly in terms of their social and emotional development. By examining the existing literature, the study will highlight the current state of knowledge, potential intervention strategies, and directions for future research in this field.

## **B. Research Subjects**

The subject of this research consists of literature on language disorders and social interaction in early childhood. This includes a wide range of scholarly sources such as books, academic articles, research papers, and journals that focus on the impact of language disorders on social engagement and early childhood development. Specifically, the research examines studies related to children aged 1–6 years who experience expressive language disorders, with a particular focus on how these disorders influence their ability to communicate and interact socially with peers and adults.

By reviewing existing research on the integration of language development, social interaction, and early childhood education, the study aims to synthesize key findings and insights to inform a comprehensive understanding of the subject and its implications for early childhood intervention and support.

## **C. Research Object**

The object of this research is the relationship between language disorders and social interaction in early childhood. This includes exploring how expressive language disorders affect children's ability to engage socially, form relationships, and develop essential communication skills during the critical developmental period of ages 1–6. The research focuses on the specific aspects of language disorders, such as vocabulary usage, sentence structure, and pragmatic skills, and their influence on social behaviors and interactions in various settings, including homes, preschools, and daycare centers.

Through the analysis of relevant literature, the study aims to explore the implications of these language difficulties on early childhood development, specifically in the areas of social and emotional growth, as well as the potential impact on academic success later in life.

## **DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **1. Language Disorder**

Language disorder refers to difficulties in language production and comprehension, despite normal cognitive abilities. This condition impacts various aspects of language development, including vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and the pragmatic use of language. In early childhood, language disorders can significantly affect a child's ability to communicate effectively, form relationships, and engage socially. If left

unaddressed, these disorders can lead to long-term academic and social challenges, affecting the child's overall development.

Children with expressive language disorders often experience delays in vocabulary use, grammatical accuracy, and sentence formation. Bishop and Edmundson (1987) found that children with language disorders may use a limited vocabulary and have difficulty constructing grammatically correct or complete sentences. These challenges make it difficult for children to express their thoughts clearly, which can hinder their ability to participate in conversations. The limitations in communication may lead to frustration and social withdrawal, as children struggle to express their needs and ideas, thereby missing out on opportunities to engage with their peers and adults.

Children with language disorders often struggle with pragmatic language skills, which are essential for social interactions. Research by Paul et al. (2018) indicates that these children may find it difficult to use language appropriately in various social contexts, such as taking turns in conversations or understanding social cues. As a result, they may experience difficulty forming friendships and engaging in group activities. These challenges often lead to social isolation, as the child might misinterpret or fail to respond to social signals, hindering their ability to connect with others and participate in typical social interactions.

The severity of a language disorder plays a crucial role in determining the long-term social and academic outcomes for children. Stothard et al. (1998) found that children who continue to experience language difficulties beyond the preschool years are more likely to face persistent challenges throughout their childhood. These children often struggle with literacy skills and social integration, which can have lasting effects on their academic performance and social relationships. Without early intervention, the difficulties caused by language disorders can persist, making it harder for children to succeed in school and build meaningful social connections.

## **2. Social Interaction**

Social interaction is essential for early childhood development, influencing cognitive, emotional, and social learning. Interactions with family members, peers, and educators play a fundamental role in shaping a child's ability to communicate, empathize, and solve problems. These interactions serve as a foundation for academic success and social competence, as they expose children to diverse ideas, viewpoints, and experiences. Research has consistently shown that warm, supportive relationships in early childhood settings contribute significantly to positive developmental outcomes.

Bradley (2019), Burchinal et al. (2002), and Cameron (2012) all emphasize the impact of supportive social relationships on early childhood learning. They found that children in nurturing, interactive environments, such as preschools and daycare centers, tend to demonstrate better cognitive development and emotional well-being. These positive interactions frequently occur through play, which allows children to practice sharing, negotiation, and empathy. Through cooperative play and socialization, children learn important social skills that lay the groundwork for their future relationships and academic success. However, research by Trawick-Smith (2012) and Johnson & Wu (2019) indicates

that opportunities for this type of social interaction are often reduced in certain early childhood care settings due to more structured programs or limited resources, which can impact the social development of children.

In their research, O'Connor and McCartney (2007) suggest that effective social relationships are crucial for a child's overall development. Their studies demonstrate that positive social interactions, whether at home or in early childhood education settings, foster emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and collaboration. These skills not only support social integration but are also vital for academic success. When children are provided with rich, supportive social environments, they are more likely to thrive in both learning and social contexts. However, they also note that access to these opportunities can vary based on factors such as socioeconomic status and the quality of care and education provided, which means that not all children benefit equally from these interactions.

Children with communication difficulties, particularly those with language disorders, may find it harder to engage in meaningful social interactions. For instance, children with language disorders may struggle to understand and use language appropriately in different social contexts, which can make it difficult for them to participate in group activities or build friendships. According to research by Paul et al. (2018), these children may exhibit immature social skills, such as difficulty with figurative language or understanding non-verbal cues, which can complicate their social interactions. This can result in social isolation and hinder the development of peer relationships.

Despite the challenges, positive social interactions remain key to a child's success in early childhood. The research highlights the importance of providing inclusive and supportive environments that encourage children to interact with peers and adults, even for those who may face communication difficulties. By fostering these interactions, early childhood education systems can help children develop not only cognitive and academic skills but also vital social skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

### **3. Early Childhood Development**

Early childhood development refers to the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth that occurs from birth to around eight years of age. This period is crucial because it lays the foundation for lifelong learning and well-being. During these years, children undergo rapid brain development, and their experiences significantly shape their future development. Key aspects of early childhood development include language acquisition, motor skills, socialization, and emotional regulation, all of which contribute to a child's overall functioning and success in later life.

Early childhood is a critical period for language development, as children begin to acquire the skills necessary for communication, expression, and understanding. As such, a child's interactions with caregivers and peers during this time play a significant role in their language development. According to Pianta et al. (2016), warm and supportive relationships with caregivers help promote cognitive and emotional development, as well as social learning. These relationships provide a secure base from which children can

explore their environment and develop essential life skills. In early childhood education settings, structured and unstructured activities support the development of both academic and social competencies.

Moreover, the quality of early childhood education (ECE) plays a significant role in shaping developmental outcomes. Research by Burchinal et al. (2002) highlights the positive effects of high-quality ECE programs on children's cognitive and social development. Children who attend supportive and stimulating early education programs demonstrate stronger language skills, better problem-solving abilities, and greater emotional regulation. On the other hand, children who experience neglectful or low-quality care may face developmental delays that impact their cognitive, social, and emotional growth.

In line with the importance of early childhood development, research by Johnson & Wu (2019) and Trawick-Smith (2012) has found that play is a vital part of learning during early childhood. Play allows children to develop a wide range of skills, including creativity, motor skills, and social abilities. Through play, children learn to share, cooperate, resolve conflicts, and engage in imaginative thinking. These experiences form the building blocks for later academic success and the ability to form strong relationships with others. However, not all children have equal access to rich play opportunities due to varying educational environments and family dynamics, which can influence the outcomes of early childhood development.

The foundation laid in early childhood development has profound implications for later life. Children who receive nurturing and developmentally appropriate care during these years are better prepared for academic success and social integration. Those who experience developmental challenges, whether due to socio-economic factors, learning difficulties, or limited access to quality education, may require additional support to ensure they can reach their full potential. As highlighted by Bradley (2019), the early years are critical for establishing the cognitive, social, and emotional skills that children need to thrive in the later stages of life.

## **B. FINDINGS**

The findings of this research highlight the strong connection between language disorders, social interaction, and early childhood development. Children with language disorders, especially expressive language difficulties, face significant challenges in both language production and comprehension, which hinder their ability to engage in effective social interactions. As noted by Bishop and Edmundson (1987) and Paul et al. (2018), these children struggle with vocabulary, sentence formation, and understanding pragmatic language, such as non-verbal cues, making it difficult for them to participate in conversations and form meaningful peer relationships. As a result, they may experience social isolation, which can negatively affect their emotional and cognitive development.

Social interaction, on the other hand, plays a crucial role in early childhood development. Research by Bradley (2019), Burchinal et al. (2002), and Cameron (2012) highlights the importance of supportive relationships in families and early education settings in fostering cognitive, social, and emotional growth. Play-based interactions are particularly

beneficial, helping children develop essential social skills like cooperation and empathy, which contribute to their overall development. However, not all children have equal access to such opportunities, as some may attend educational settings where interactions are limited due to a lack of resources or structured environments, as observed by Trawick-Smith (2012) and Johnson & Wu (2019). Despite these challenges, providing nurturing and supportive social interactions remains vital for a child's development.

High-quality early childhood education programs are also crucial in shaping positive developmental outcomes. These programs offer enriching environments that promote language development, problem-solving abilities, and emotional regulation. Burchinal et al. (2002) found that children in high-quality programs demonstrated stronger cognitive and social abilities compared to those in lower-quality settings. However, access to quality education is not always equitable, and children from disadvantaged backgrounds may face barriers to high-quality learning environments. Pianta et al. (2016) emphasize that supportive relationships in both home and educational settings are critical for promoting optimal development. The research findings show that language disorders, social interaction, and early childhood education are closely interconnected, and providing targeted interventions and access to supportive learning environments is essential for fostering the development of children, especially those with language disorders.

## C. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the significant impact that language disorders have on social interaction and early childhood development. Children with expressive language difficulties often struggle with communication, which affects their ability to engage in meaningful social exchanges with peers. As seen in the research by Bishop and Edmundson (1987) and Paul et al. (2018), children with language disorders tend to have trouble understanding social cues and forming sentences, which can lead to social isolation. This isolation not only hinders their ability to develop crucial social skills like empathy and conflict resolution but also negatively impacts their emotional and cognitive development. These challenges underline the importance of early intervention to address language difficulties and foster social engagement, which is vital for a child's overall development.

Social interaction plays a critical role in shaping early childhood development. Studies by Bradley (2019), Burchinal et al. (2002), and Cameron (2012) emphasize the importance of supportive relationships and play-based interactions in promoting cognitive, emotional, and social growth. However, not all children have equal access to high-quality social interactions due to disparities in educational settings. Children in lower-quality environments may miss out on the opportunities for rich social engagement that are essential for their development. This highlights the need for equitable access to quality early childhood education programs, as these programs provide the structured environments that nurture language development and social skills. Addressing these gaps can help ensure that all children, regardless of background, have the opportunity to thrive socially and emotionally.



## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### A. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study underscores the significant role of language disorders in early childhood development and the challenges they pose to social interaction. Children with expressive language difficulties face barriers in both communication and forming meaningful relationships, which affects their social integration and emotional well-being. As highlighted in previous research, difficulties in language production can lead to social isolation and hinder cognitive development, emphasizing the need for early intervention. Social interactions, which are essential for developing cognitive and emotional skills, are crucial for children's overall development. Ensuring that children with language disorders have access to supportive and high-quality educational environments is critical to improving their social and emotional outcomes. Early childhood education programs that promote engaging interactions are fundamental in addressing these challenges and fostering holistic child development.

### B. SUGGESTIONS

To address the challenges associated with language disorders in early childhood, it is essential to implement targeted interventions and support strategies. Educators should focus on creating inclusive learning environments that cater to the needs of children with language difficulties, ensuring they have equal opportunities for social interaction and development. It is also crucial to integrate speech and language therapy within early childhood education programs to address language disorders as early as possible. Furthermore, fostering positive social interactions through structured play and collaborative activities can enhance communication skills and emotional well-being. Early identification and support for children with language disorders can help mitigate the long-term impact on their social, emotional, and cognitive development.

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