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## CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE IN SPEECH MULTILINGUALISM COMMUNICATION BY USING DIGITAL MEDIA

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### ABSTRACT

Language skills are vital for children's academic, social, and occupational success. Children are often exposed to more than one language from an early age. Multilingualism, also called bilingualism, refers to a person's ability to communicate in two or more languages. Modern-day digital networks are a complex mesh of interconnected devices for the transmission of data bits using various network standards, technologies, and protocols. This makes the data communication network infrastructure heterogeneous. Speech communication acquires a more technical character in a multilingual digital network. The current rate of technological developments is exceptionally rapid, and trends in children's use of technology are constantly changing. It is therefore extremely difficult for the research field to remain up to date, and there is almost a need to anticipate potential developments before they occur. Being an integral part of communication, data search systems, web browsers, online applications and the infrastructure of the web itself become new parties of communication.

**Keywords:** *children, language, speech, communication, digital, media*

### INTRODUCTION

Technology in the twenty-first century has transformed the world in multiple, exciting and unanticipated ways. Facilitating the rapid flow of information, capital and services across the globe, it has dramatically revolutionized the way we work, communicate and interact with one another. More affordable travel, mobile communication devices, social media and online connectivity have enabled new patterns of movement and forms of social participation. In this digitally connected world, people move fluidly across online and offline spaces, blurring the boundaries of time and space and transforming notions of public and private domains (Gee and Hayes 2011).

The use of more than one language in everyday life is common in many families around the world. Children are often exposed to more than one language from an early age. Multilingualism, also called bilingualism, refers to a person's ability to communicate in two or more languages. Being able to speak more than one language is a valuable asset that opens doors to diverse cultural experiences, as well as provides communication excellence in an increasingly connected global world. However,

there is debate and differing views in the literature regarding the influence of multilingualism on children's language development (MacLeod et al., 2019).

Before the researcher explores how children's language in speech is used in multilingual communication, it is essential to understand how communication works in multilingual contexts, particularly through digital media. The digital divide has two important aspects: firstly, everyone should have access to the Internet, and secondly, access to quality content created not only at the international or regional level but locally and in local languages. The Internet is multilingual and culturally diverse, where every culture and language has its own space. Many languages are not present on the Internet. There is a vast linguistic divide that exists in cyberspace today and this will only exacerbate the digital divide.

Harold Lasswell, a communication theorist, defines 'communication' as "Who (says) What (to) Whom (in) What Channel (with) What Effect" (Lasswell, n.d., WWW). But given that theoretical definitions of the term tend to be slippery, to say the least, perhaps this five-part definition is better left till later in this chapter

when more basic concepts have been addressed to some extent. To start with a 'working definition', the verb 'communicate' may be taken to mean "to pass on by speaking or writing", and the noun 'communication' as "the act of passing on news, information, views, opinions, etc."

Digital network technology has become a prevalent feature of everyday life and an increasingly popular means of communication. By developing a mode of communication where writing approximates speaking, instant messaging (IM) and texting have facilitated the production of new words and styles that bridge the interactive nature of speech and the documental capacity of writing (Warschauer and Matuchniak 2010). The researcher believe that communication technology may be influencing the types of communication skills children use and how these skills develop through childhood and adolescence. The increasing prevalence of technology in society means that any such effects are likely to have farreaching consequences for a vast number of young people.

Speech communication technology is composed of many forms of electronic communication. Those associated with the Internet, now accessible through both computers and mobile phones, include e-mail, instant messaging services, chat rooms, forums, social networking sites, interactive online gaming networks, and Web-logs (blogs). In addition, mobile phones enable their users to make telephone calls and send text messages. Children's increasing use of modern communication technology has implications for multilingualism, especially in educational practice, because it is now a prevalent environmental factor in children's lives.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Speech Communication

Speech communication' refers to the aspects of communication theory as well as the practice of speaking in social contexts with special reference to ESL (English as a Second Language). The 14<sup>th</sup> Century Latin root words of 'communication' are *cum* (meaning "with"), and *munis* (indicating "public work") are significant here even if these elements have been combined later into larger units such as *communis* (to mean 'common'). It is interesting to learn that all these units of meaning underlie the word 'community'.

Thus, as Gronbeck (1997: 6) notes, "Communities are defined into existence by public talk; human conversation creates, sustains, and alters the sense of community one has with each other". It means that every time we speak up (and sometimes even if we don't speak, we shall see later), we indicate our sense of 'togetherness' with and belonging to a special community of speakers. In other words, excluding those occasions when we speak to ourselves ('inner speech' or intrapersonal communication), we always speak publicly to one or more listeners.

And when we do, we 'position' ourselves in some way as a member of a particular speech community whose norms, beliefs and values we share and reproduce in social situations. For example, you may be speaking to your children.

Speech Communication is the study of how people generate shared meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal symbols. Speech Communication majors work to develop confidence and effectiveness in their public speaking, interpersonal, and small group communication skills. The focus is not on preparing students for a specific job, but rather helping students to develop interpersonal, organizational, intercultural, and public presentational skills which will enhance the quality of their lives across a variety of contexts (e.g., within the workplace, family, civic and social situations)

Speech communication is defined as a process by which we assign and convey meaning in an attempt to create shared understanding. This process requires a vast repertoire of skills in intrapersonal and interpersonal processing, listening, observing, speaking, questioning, analyzing, and evaluating (<https://bizcommunicationcoach.com/what-is-speech-communication-characteristics-of-a-good-speech/>). Use of these processes is developmental and transfers to all areas of life: home, school, community, work, and beyond. It is through communication that collaboration and cooperation occur.

In normal speech situations, the message contains a large amount of information comprising both spoken (i.e. linguistic) and 'unspoken' (extra-linguistic and non-linguistic) signals. Much of this information is often already known to the speaker/listener and may

be viewed as 'redundant' information that is intuitively shared between speaker and listener who therefore processes it with minimum attention.

### **Multilingualism**

Multilingual is the ability of someone who understands more than one language. It means someone who uses a lot of language in daily life, according to the context and the object. In this sophisticated and modern era, many people have mastered more than one language. Not only adults but also children. All they can get from studying at school and hanging out in the home environment. Multilingual use in early childhood is also influenced by several factors, namely the environment and parents. In addition to these factors, multilingual use also has an impact on early childhood (van Wonderen et al., 2023).

Multilingualism is the use of more than one language, either by an individual speaker or by a community of speakers (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multilingualism>). It is believed that multilingual speakers outnumber monolingual speakers in the world's population. Multilingualism is the ability of an individual speaker or a community of speakers to communicate effectively in three or more languages. Contrast with *monolingualism*, the ability to use only one language.

For multilinguals, languages are always in contact and mutually influence each other. From this perspective, the separation of languages with different labels is a construct of traditional linguists; it is an ideological act of claiming ownership over certain codes to identify one's community and identity (Pennycook, 2010). Multilingual users treat all the codes in their repertoire as a continuum, and not separated from each other; they draw from all of them for their communication (Garcia, 2009).

Multilinguals do not have separate competences for separately labeled languages (as it is assumed by traditional linguistics), but an integrated competence that is different (not just in degree) from monolingual competence. For multilinguals, languages are not necessarily at war with each other; they complement each other in communication. Therefore, we have to reconsider the dominant understanding that one language negatively interferes with the use of another. The traces of one language on the other

are creative, enabling, and offer possibilities for voice.

### **Digital Network**

Effective networking can provide us all with an abundance of opportunities all enabled through building meaningful relationships with others, from opportunities for personal and professional growth to commercial success (<https://www.digitalroad.io/blog/what-is-digital-networking>). Now, by leveraging the power of our networks through digital technology, we can further discover, build, support and manage the relationships which create these opportunities more flexibly and at greater scale. In short, taking our networking activity online can help create more of these opportunities - more learning, more growth, more success.

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Children's increasing use of modern communication technology has implications for educational practice because it is now a prevalent environmental factor in children's lives. There is a need for professionals working with young people and their families to have a fully informed evidence base as to the possible benefits and drawbacks of communication technology. These professionals can then support families in safeguarding their children's language learning and literacy development and help ensure that the equality of educational provision and resources benefits all

The DCSF (2007) report also found that 87% of 12- to 15-year-olds owned a mobile phone, and nearly three quarters of them used it every day. Similar trends have been reported in the most recent audit of U.K. Children's Media Literacy carried out by Ofcom, which is an independent organization that regulates the United Kingdom's broadcasting, telecommunications, and wireless communications sectors. Ofcom (2008) reported that the "use of some key

media, including the television, games consoles, and the internet, are well established by the age of five.” Communication was found to be a key driver of Internet use, particularly among older girls (Ofcom, 2008), who are significantly more likely than boys to use the Internet for communication. Specifically, 84% of girls compared to 75% of boys used the Internet at least once a week for instant messaging (Ofcom, 2008). Because of the pervasive and complex nature of this communication technology use, there is a clear need to understand its possible implications for children’s language development.

## **METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH**

Researcher use the literature review method by collecting, reviewing, and analyzing data from previous studies, by (literature review) taking the review method can be found in explanations put forward from the results of several experts that are relevant to the discussion that will be raised by researchers. The steps taken using the literature study method begin with obtaining relevant literature. Once obtained, it can be collected regularly and used later for research. The type of literature needed is a source of study material put forward by people and rewritten, such as in journals or textbooks. Data collection was carried out by analyzing journal articles from 2019-2023 that were considered relevant and representative from Google Scholar sources.

Research methodology on multilingualism allows for a wide range of approaches. While a great diversity of traditional methods of psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic research continues to be intensively employed by scholars, a significant change is taking place as new methods are developed or borrowed from neighboring disciplines, and also from seemingly distant ones (Aronin & Jessner, 2015)

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

A common theme running through much of the research on communication technology is that computer use is redefining what we mean by language. It would seem from the published research literature that modern communication technology may have an impact on a person’s language in the speech community. However, the extent to which these effects are detrimental,

beneficial, or even specific is still relatively unclear. “Heavy” usage has been associated with negative outcomes such as attention problems that may impact literacy development; however, it remains unclear at which point usage is regarded as heavy, and these negative outcomes outweigh the more general benefits to language skills. There is a great deal of speculation in the popular media containing anecdotal evidence of the negative impact that modern communication technology has on the communication skills of children and young people. Relatively little research evidence, however, appears to support these concerns.

According to Pikó (2018), time spent in the digital community has an impact on a child’s social life. While some social activities are already taking place in the digital space, the focus is more on the proportion of social time spent online or in person. By the age of 13 or 14, a significant proportion of time spent with peers moves to the digital space. Communication with classmates in this age group also shifts towards online communication and less face-to-face activity. In addition to conversations, it is important to mention video sharing sites, picture viewing and interactive use of sites. Sharing one’s content is a serious editing process, but only for those who are adept at using the program. According to Pikó (2018), for young people, the internet is an endless companion of videos, movies, pictures and other content. The exposure to this content can be so interesting for the child that it can also neglect traditional values, family life, social life and real communication of the intellect.

Then manipulate peripheral devices such as the computer mouse and keyboard accordingly (Johnson, 2006). Evaluating the impact of communication technology on language in the traditional sense is perhaps not the best approach. If computer use has redefined and expanded what we understand as literacy skills, then this is a positive effect of that technology. It is important, however, for the research field to reassess the skills that are being considered when assessing the impact of technology, and to move away from using the traditional definition of literacy to encompass this wider skill set.

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likely than boys to use the Internet for communication. Specifically, 84% of girls compared to 75% of boys used the Internet at least once a week for instant messaging (Ofcom, 2008). Therefore, given the pervasive and complex nature of this communication technology use, there is a clear need to understand its possible implications for children's language development. Simon (2015) also points out that digitalization has transformed the traditional notion of 'image', as well as the use of different communication channels. We need to gain a better understanding of the processes of digital image-making and reception, as the knowledge and use of visual language is also essential for equal opportunities.

The text of many Web pages is considerably shorter than printed text, using short sentences and paragraphs for ease of reading due to the constraints of screen size (Crystal, 2006). Punctuation is often used in net speak to convey meanings that cannot be provided by nonverbal cues, as would be used in face-to-face discourse (e.g., the use of "emoticons" such as :o) to indicate smiling). There has also been concern that this may transfer to children's written English and encourage grammatical and syntactic rules to be overlooked (Crystal, 2006).

Despite the apparent validity of these concerns, there is no evidence as yet to support them, and no research exists that has linked net speak with poor language and literacy skills in these areas. A negative impact on language skills, particularly on social communication skills in those by children who spend less time interacting face-to-face with their family and peers. The lack of face-to-face interaction means that many contextual and nonverbal language cues may be lost, and it is questionable whether conversational maxims such as turn-taking, response, appropriateness, relevance, formality level, and continuation are still adhered to in electronic communication.

Perhaps the most valid concern is with regard to children's ability to access such a wide range of language content that may not be developmentally appropriate. The media has speculated about the implications of inappropriate and unregulated content available to children and young people through communication technology ("Children Work," 2009), and the rising incidents of phenomena such as cyber-

bullying that have been linked to cases of teenage suicide, depression, and self-harming behavior. There is mounting concern among the popular media regarding the impact of communication technology on children's social and emotional health and well-being—an area that has been beyond the remit of this review but is a priority for future research.

Several large-scale research studies have highlighted the positive effects of computer use on literacy learning in general, and in particular for young children from disadvantaged backgrounds (McCarrick & Xiaoming, 2007). Computers have been shown to have positive effects on learning by improving self-esteem and motivation, as well as encouraging more effective thinking and problem-solving skills (McCarrick & Xiaoming 2007.)

## CONCLUSION

The current rate of technological developments is exceptionally rapid, and trends in children's use of technology are constantly changing. It is therefore extremely difficult for the research field to remain up to date, and there is almost a need to anticipate potential developments before they occur. The fact remains, however, that this type of technology is becoming an integral part of everyday life and it is therefore hugely important to keep track of its potential implications for developing children.

Today's children communicate in a very different way from previous generations, because they are growing up in a very different environment from the previous generation. These differences are partly due to digitalization and partly to the way of life and accelerated lifestyles, which of course also have an impact on communication and rhetoric.

Thus, speech communication acquires a more technical character in a multilingual digital network. This way, the ability to use the interface on a level exceeding the needs of a regular participant in web communication creates the opportunity to get information made for a limited audience. Being an integral part of communication, data search systems, web browsers, online applications and the infrastructure of the web itself become new parties of communication.

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