



COMMUNICATION DISABILITIES AMONG PRIMARY STUDENTS: A CASE IN SOUTH EAST COAST

M.S.M. Rizwan¹; A.W. Hanoofa²

¹Department of English, Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education (SLIATE), Advanced Technological institute, Sammanthurai

²Department of English, Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education, (SLIATE), Advanced Technological Institute, Sammanthurai

¹ msmrizwanjp@gmail.com, ² awhanoo28@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT: Communication disorder is a big challenge for school children. This study aims to identify the students with communication disabilities among primary children (Grades 3-5) at Km/Al-Mina Vidyalaya, Nintavur. Data was collected using, interviews and tests from 35 students and 3 teachers. Data were analyzed with MS Word, 2007, and MS Excel, 2007. This study was based on a mixed-method research design. A research design is considered to be the most appropriate approach for this study since it describes an existing situation. The total primary students participated in observations for communication disorders. All the children were observed using test tools. The results of the study identified that 22.5% of schoolchildren were affected by communication disorders. Among these, 27 students were affected by reading disorders, 35 students were affected by writing disabilities, 10 students were affected by speaking disorders and 8 students were affected by listening skills, and four students were affected by all these problems. Within the disorder group, 21 boys and 14 girls were identified.

Keywords: Communication disabilities, Listening, Primary Children, Reading, Speaking, Writing

1. Introduction

Communication is basic to every individual work, it means exchanging ideas, perceptions, or messages, from one person to another person. Catherine Pulsifer & Theo gold says that Communication is one of the most important skills it leads to a successful life.

Communication disabilities (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are a form of the disorder that changes somebody's skill to communicate with ranges from word sound substitution to inability to understand. According to, (Heba Gad AllahSamar Abd - El raouf, 2012), Communication disorders are an important part of the development delays among children and it is important to identify in the early stage of child's life. This communication





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disorder includes different disorder types. There is comprehension or production of sounds, words, phrases and sentences.

Communication disorders consider two major types. There are speech disorders and language disorders. Language is communication that considers syllables or words and sounds that can be changed and to give phrases and sentences expressed commonly as oral and hearing, reading and writing. Speech disorder types are articulation/phonological disorders (APD), fluency disorders (FD)/speech flow disorders, a voice disorders (VD).

Identification of children with communication disabilities at an early stage is very important. Their teachers and caretakers also play an important role in the early-stage detection of a child's problem. Communication problem is likely to have a major impact on a child's academic and social skills and behavior therefore, the earlier the identification and treatment of a child's communication problems help the child's communication development with reading and writing, in school, and with interpersonal relationships.

Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are the four most important communication skills for students. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (2004), communication is the process of expressing thoughts and opinions from one's point of view. Communication makes possible the interaction between teachers and students. According to Keith Davis, communication is an activity of sending and receiving messages and understanding from one person to another. Louis Allen says that communication is a bridge of meaning, it including systematic and continuous activities of speaking, hearing, and understanding.

The purpose of this study was to identify communication disorders and give the best solution among Km/Al-Mina Vidyalaya Primary schools' (grade 3-5) children, in Nintavur. This study area is located in Nintavur divisional secretariat in Kalmunai, Ampara district of Sri Lanka.

2. Literature Review

Communication is an essential condition for the implementation of social relationships and this in turn expands the child's ideas about the life around him. Communication is the sharing of messages and meaning. The exchange of meaning converts into the talent to create and comprehend the information. According to Winner – 1948, he says that this ability concerns





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the exchange of all kinds of information. This information including to skills, thoughts, opinions, emotions, and needs.

Guffy and Loewy (2015) say that communication is explaining information and sharing ideas of one's thoughts. Reading, writing, and listening are the three most important communication skills for students. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (2004) defines communication as the activity or process of expressing ideas and feelings or of giving people information. Communication makes possible the interaction between the teachers and students. According to Keith Davis, communication is a process of passing messages and understanding from one person to another.

Effective communication is necessary for students in different places in their academic, and nonacademic situations. For a classroom to have the best student activities and participation in communication is a necessary skill that needs to be developed in the child's life.

Effective Communication is leading the students in a better way in their field, which carries on to their best professional life.

3. Significant of the Study

This study aims to provide an overview of the communication disabilities of Km/Al-Mina Vidyalaya primary students (Grades 3-5). This study is of great use to teachers, parents, caregivers, and educators. This is helpful to teachers in identifying the student's communication level, communication disabilities children, reasons for these problems, and symptoms of the problems. This study will benefit students. Using suitable solutions to their problems, which fit students' needs, levels, and ages, improves students' communication.

4. Objective of the study

- The main objective is to identify communication problems among primary students of grades 3- 5 at Km/Al-Mina Vidyalaya.
- Evaluate the student's communication level and identify communication disabilities.
- Give a better solution for the problem.
- Identify the reasons for problems.
- Notify the symptoms of the problems.





5. Methodology

This study was designed by a mixed-method research methodology. This study was to identify the communication disabilities of students at Km/AL- Mina Vidyalaya primary students. The research tools used for analyzing the data which collected from different sources.

5.1. Sample Size

Table 1: Gender distribution with class total and students with disabilities.

	Grade-3		Grade-4		Grade-5	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Class total	26	22	26	20	25	33
Students with disabilities	5	2	6	4	10	8
Percentage	15%		20%		32%	

For this study, a research permit was obtained from Nintavur, Km/ Al –Mina Vidyalaya. There are 152 students in the primary (3-5) classes in that 54 students participated in the test and the students who obtained below 40 marks in 4 test Reading comprehension, speaking test, writing test, and listening test was selected.

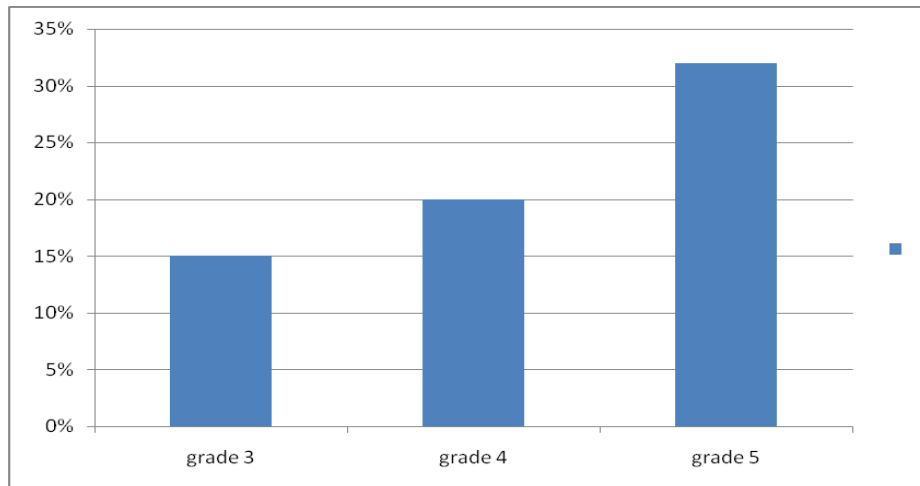
5.2. Data Collection

The interview was conducted among the primary class teachers of Nintavur, Km/ Al- Mina Vidyalaya by meeting the teachers directly at the school. And then the test was conducted among the particular students of Nintavur, Km/Al-Mina Vidyalaya by meeting the students directly at the Nintavur Km/Al-Mina Vidyalaya and after evaluating and analyzing their marks of them.



5.3. Students with communication disabilities

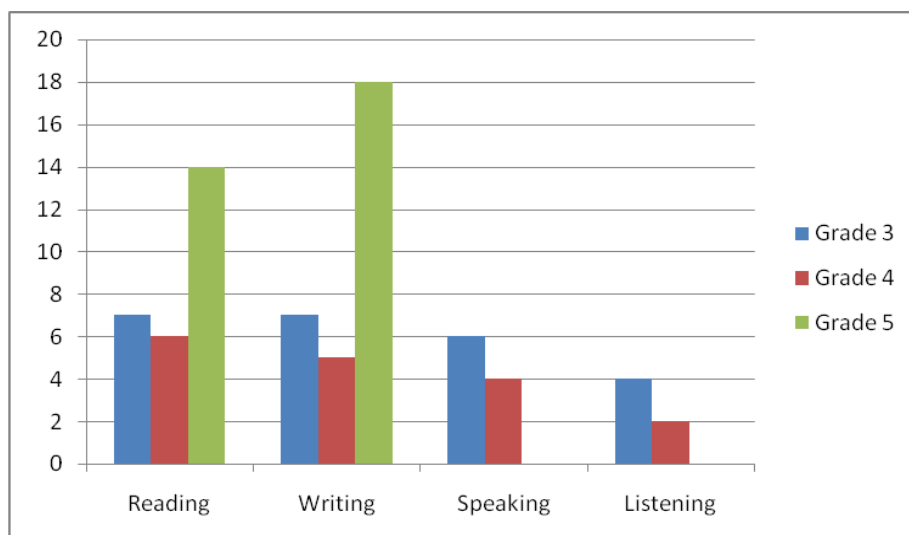
Figure 1: The percentage of students with a communication disorder.



Source: Test, developed by the researcher

5.4. Summary of students with disabilities

Figure 2: Summary of students with disabilities in each grade



Source: Test, developed by the researcher



6. Recommendation

- **The Classroom environment**

The environment is the most important part of classroom learning. Positive environments create positive learners. So, teachers can help support the students learning and participation by creating a secure and positive environment, where they can build friendships with other students, at the same time it is developed their communication skills.

- **The non-formal activities**

The non-formal activities are field trips, sports, competitions and etc. It allows students to practice and communicate with other students inside or outside in the school setting. These experiences provide to develop their communication activities.

- **Following the best teachers' strategies**

The teacher should follow effective teaching strategies for students' communication development. Ex: Allowing extra time to answer the questions, motivating to the speech practice, and using simple words for explanations. Teacher work with the help of the speech therapist, which helps the disorder students.

- **Group works and presentation**

The teacher encourages classmates to accept the student with communication problems, motivate and support the child in activities and discussion, allow extra time for the student's complete activities, and allow for multiple time of discussions and presentations.

- **Teacher's advice to the parents.**

Helps parents by teaching them how to handle the disability of their child. It is very important for their child's future. Teachers can advise them about how to develop their child's communication skills and provide them with handouts and different materials of reading that specifically talk about a disability, and how to deal with it.





7. Conclusion

This study confined the identification of communication disabilities at Km/Al-Mina Vidyalaya among primary students of grades 3-5. The results indicate that 35 (22.5%) students were affected in the total grade from the students of grades 3-5 by communication disabilities. Of 15% of students affected by this communication disorder in grade 3, in grade 4, 20% of students identified with this problem, and in grade 5, 32%.

This study helps teachers identify their students' communication levels. Teachers working with communication disabilities child, they face many challenges. At that time, they need experienced and expert workers. In this situation, the teacher can be supported and follow a suitable special teaching approach method with the help of the child's speech therapist.

The teacher can help the communication disorder children with their communication development life.

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