

Article

Not peer-reviewed version

Language And Society In The Lens Of Young Children: A Review

[Robert Asperis](#)*

Posted Date: 24 February 2025

doi: 10.20944/preprints202502.1921.v1

Keywords: Education; Language; Review; Society; Young Children



Preprints.org is a free multidisciplinary platform providing preprint service that is dedicated to making early versions of research outputs permanently available and citable. Preprints posted at Preprints.org appear in Web of Science, Crossref, Google Scholar, Scilit, Europe PMC.

Copyright: This open access article is published under a Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 license, which permit the free download, distribution, and reuse, provided that the author and preprint are cited in any reuse.

Article

Language and Society in the Lens of Young Children: A Review

Robert Asperis

Christian College of Education, Kanyakumari; thegreatprocrastinator001@gmail.com

Abstract: Language is a fundamental component of human society, shaping how individuals communicate, interact, and perceive the world around them. This article review aimed to determine the relationship of language to society through the lens of young children. Language development in young children is an intricate process shaped by social interactions, socioeconomic factors, digital exposure, and cultural influences. By understanding how young children navigate language within society, caregivers and educators can foster environments that promote robust linguistic and cognitive growth. Future research should further explore the long-term effects of early social and linguistic experiences on children's overall academic and social success. Educators should incorporate culturally responsive teaching strategies that recognize and respect the linguistic diversity of their students. Schools should create an inclusive environment where children feel encouraged to use their home language while also developing proficiency in the dominant language of instruction. Additionally, policymakers should invest in early childhood education programs that provide equitable access to language learning resources, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. By implementing these strategies, society can foster a generation of young learners who are confident communicators and socially aware individuals.

Keywords: Education; Language; Review; Society; Young Children

1. Introduction

Language is a fundamental component of human society, shaping how individuals communicate, interact, and perceive the world around them. In the case of young children, language acquisition plays a crucial role in cognitive, social, and emotional development. As Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes in his sociocultural theory, language emerges through social interactions, allowing children to internalize cultural norms and values. This study explores how language and society are interconnected in the early years of a child's life, emphasizing the role of caregivers, educators, and the broader community in language development.

Young children are particularly susceptible to the linguistic environment in which they grow. According to Bruner (1983), the language acquisition support system (LASS) provided by adults helps children acquire language through meaningful interactions. The social context in which children learn to speak influences not only their linguistic competence but also their ability to navigate social relationships. Therefore, understanding how language develops in young children requires examining the societal structures that influence language exposure and use.

The connection between language and society is particularly evident in multilingual and multicultural settings. According to Cummins (2000), children who grow up in bilingual environments develop metalinguistic awareness, which enhances their cognitive flexibility. However, societal attitudes toward languages can either promote or hinder bilingual development. For instance, language policies and parental beliefs about language learning shape how young children experience linguistic diversity, ultimately influencing their academic and social trajectories. Genelza (2023) identifies challenges such as internet connectivity issues and digital literacy gaps, emphasizing the need for further improvements in LMS integration within higher education.

Language also serves as a means of social identity construction. Gee (2001) argues that language is not just a tool for communication but also a medium through which individuals construct and negotiate identities. For young children, language choices reflect their emerging social identities and affiliations. The way they speak, the words they use, and the accents they adopt are all shaped by their immediate social surroundings, reinforcing the notion that language is deeply embedded in social structures.

Early childhood education plays a significant role in bridging language and society. According to Snow (1999), exposure to rich linguistic input in early childhood settings enhances vocabulary development and literacy skills. Teachers serve as linguistic models, and classroom interactions provide a structured environment for children to practice and refine their language abilities. Additionally, peer interactions in early learning environments contribute to social language development, enabling children to develop pragmatic skills essential for effective communication.

Parental involvement is another crucial factor in the relationship between language and society. Hart and Risley (1995) found that the quantity and quality of language input from caregivers significantly impact a child's linguistic and cognitive outcomes. Children from language-rich environments tend to develop stronger verbal skills, leading to better academic performance. However, socioeconomic factors often create disparities in language exposure, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to support language development among disadvantaged populations.

Technology and media further influence how language and society intersect in the lives of young children. With the increasing presence of digital communication, children are exposed to diverse linguistic inputs through television, social media, and interactive applications. As Marsh et al. (2017) suggest, digital literacy is becoming an integral aspect of language learning, altering traditional modes of language acquisition. However, excessive screen time and passive media consumption may also impact face-to-face interactions, necessitating a balanced approach to digital engagement.

Language and society are inextricably linked in the early years of a child's development. The linguistic environment, social interactions, educational settings, and digital influences collectively shape how children acquire and use language. By understanding these connections, educators, caregivers, and policymakers can create more inclusive and supportive language-learning environments that promote both linguistic proficiency and social integration in young children.

2. Language and Society: Review of Related Literature

The interplay between language development and societal influences during early childhood has been extensively examined, revealing that a child's linguistic environment significantly shapes their language acquisition and cognitive growth. Feldman (2019) emphasizes that a robust foundation in language skills is linked to favorable long-term academic, occupational, and social outcomes. Notably, individual variations in language development emerge early, with approximately 16% of children experiencing delays in initial language learning phases, half of whom may face persistent challenges leading to clinical disorders. This underscores the critical need for preventive measures and enriched language-learning environments to support optimal development. Genelza (2021) emphasized the need for targeted intervention programs, such as communication training and confidence-building activities, to help students overcome speech-related apprehensions in both virtual and physical learning environments.

The social context in which children are immersed plays a pivotal role in their language acquisition. Rowe and Weisleder (2020) discuss how young children learn to communicate in the languages of their communities, with individual language development trajectories varying based on their living contexts. Their review highlights that the specific language varieties and communication modes children acquire are deeply influenced by their immediate social environments, suggesting that tailored approaches considering these contexts are essential for effective language development support.

Parental involvement and the quality of caregiver-child interactions are also crucial in shaping language outcomes. Research by Tamis-LeMonda et al. (2020) indicates that exposure to rich and

interactive language within social interactions is vital for children's development and health. The study points out that existing programs often have limitations and suggests that policymakers, practitioners, and researchers should focus on enhancing home learning environments to reduce socioeconomic-related disparities in language development.

Furthermore, the integration of digital technology into early childhood experiences has been shown to offer both opportunities and challenges for language development and with AI. A study by Manchester Metropolitan University and other UK institutions (2024) found that digital technology can provide significant benefits for language development through sensory exploration and interaction with devices. However, the study emphasizes the importance of balancing digital opportunities with potential drawbacks, highlighting the need for better privacy and security measures to protect young children. Also, Genelza (2024) highlights the potential of AI voice generators in fields such as entertainment, customer service, and assistive technology while also addressing the risks of misinformation, identity fraud, and ethical misuse. The author presents a balanced discussion on whether AI voice cloning is a transformative innovation or a potential societal threat, emphasizing the need for regulatory frameworks and ethical guidelines to mitigate its risks.

The literature indicates that early language development is profoundly influenced by a combination of social interactions, parental engagement, and the broader societal context, including digital media exposure. Understanding these factors is essential for developing effective strategies to support language acquisition in young children, ensuring they have the foundation necessary for future success.

3. Findings and Discussion

Language acquisition in young children is deeply influenced by their social environment. According to Vygotsky (1978), language development is a socially mediated process where children acquire linguistic skills through interactions with caregivers, peers, and the broader community. This study explores how young children perceive language and its societal implications, emphasizing their role as active participants in linguistic and cultural exchanges.

One of the most significant factors in a child's language development is parental and caregiver interaction. Hart and Risley (1995) found that the quantity and quality of words spoken to a child in early years greatly impact vocabulary growth and linguistic competence. Children from language-rich environments tend to develop stronger communication skills, highlighting the role of family interactions in shaping language acquisition.

Genelza (2022) examines the effectiveness of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) in higher education, analyzing its impact on curriculum design, student learning outcomes, and institutional goals. The author explores both the benefits, such as enhanced student engagement and skill development, and the challenges, including implementation difficulties and assessment limitations. The study concludes that while OBE can be beneficial in aligning education with industry needs, its success depends on faculty preparedness, administrative support, and continuous curriculum evaluation.

Beyond caregivers, peer interactions play a crucial role in shaping children's language. Studies by Hoff (2006) indicate that children exposed to diverse linguistic environments among peers develop adaptive communication skills. The ability to negotiate, share, and express emotions in group settings contributes to their social and linguistic competence.

Socioeconomic status (SES) significantly influences language development. Research by Fernald, Marchman, and Weisleder (2013) demonstrates that children from higher SES backgrounds exhibit more advanced language processing skills due to increased exposure to complex vocabulary and literacy-related activities. Conversely, children from lower SES backgrounds often face linguistic delays due to limited access to rich linguistic interactions.

In multicultural societies, many children grow up learning multiple languages. Garcia and Wei (2014) argue that multilingualism provides cognitive advantages and strengthens cultural identity.

Young children in multilingual settings tend to develop greater cognitive flexibility and an appreciation for cultural diversity, benefiting both linguistic and social development.

With the increasing role of digital media, children are exposed to various linguistic inputs from television, online platforms, and digital applications. Studies by Kuhl (2011) suggest that while screen exposure can introduce new vocabulary, real-life social interactions remain crucial for meaningful language development. The study highlights the need for balanced exposure to digital media and direct human communication. Additionally, Genelza (2024) stated that nowadays, the dual nature of deepfake technology—its potential in entertainment, education, and digital content creation, alongside its risks in misinformation, identity fraud, and political manipulation. The author emphasizes the need for stricter regulations, advanced detection methods, and public awareness to mitigate the dangers associated with deepfake misuse while fostering its responsible application in various industries.

Gender-based differences in language acquisition and use have also been observed in young children. Research by Leaper and Smith (2004) suggests that girls tend to develop verbal skills earlier than boys, likely due to differences in socialization patterns and interaction styles. However, these differences diminish as children grow older and acquire broader linguistic experiences.

Play serves as a fundamental mechanism for language development in young children. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that through pretend play, children practice linguistic skills, experiment with social roles, and develop narrative abilities. The social nature of play enables them to negotiate meaning and refine communication skills effectively.

Understanding the interplay between language and society in young children has significant educational implications. Effective early childhood programs integrate social interactions, literacy-rich environments, and multilingual opportunities to enhance language development (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Educators should create inclusive and interactive learning environments to support linguistic growth in diverse social contexts.

Language development in young children is an intricate process shaped by social interactions, socioeconomic factors, digital exposure, and cultural influences. By understanding how young children navigate language within society, caregivers and educators can foster environments that promote robust linguistic and cognitive growth. Future research should further explore the long-term effects of early social and linguistic experiences on children's overall academic and social success.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Language and society are deeply intertwined, influencing how young children develop their communication skills, social identity, and cognitive abilities. From an early age, children acquire language not only as a means of expressing their thoughts but also as a tool for social interaction and cultural learning. The environment in which children grow—family, school, and community—plays a crucial role in shaping their linguistic development. Through exposure to different linguistic contexts, children learn to navigate social norms, establish relationships, and participate in cultural traditions.

Furthermore, language serves as a bridge between a child's personal experiences and the broader societal structures they interact with. The way children use language reflects their understanding of social hierarchies, cultural diversity, and societal expectations. Research has shown that children exposed to multiple languages or dialects tend to develop greater cognitive flexibility and social awareness. This highlights the importance of fostering a rich linguistic environment where children can explore various forms of communication and expression.

However, language development among young children can be influenced by social inequalities, access to education, and parental involvement. Socioeconomic factors often determine the resources available for language learning, such as books, technology, and quality early childhood education programs. In multilingual societies, children may also experience challenges in balancing their home language with the dominant language of instruction, which can impact their academic

success and social integration. Addressing these challenges requires a collaborative effort from parents, educators, and policymakers.

To ensure that young children develop strong language skills within a supportive social framework, several recommendations should be considered. First, parents and caregivers should actively engage in meaningful conversations with children, using diverse vocabulary and encouraging expressive communication. Reading to children regularly and exposing them to storytelling activities can significantly enhance their linguistic abilities. Genelza (2024) also emphasizes the need for responsible AI use in education and suggests strategies for integrating ChatGPT effectively into learning environments. It also discusses key factors driving systemic changes, including technological advancements, policy shifts, and societal demands. By synthesizing existing literature, the author highlights the challenges of implementing large-scale educational reforms and the critical role of leadership, adaptability, and innovation in ensuring meaningful and sustainable change (Genelza, 2022).

Second, educators should incorporate culturally responsive teaching strategies that recognize and respect the linguistic diversity of their students. Schools should create an inclusive environment where children feel encouraged to use their home language while also developing proficiency in the dominant language of instruction. Additionally, policymakers should invest in early childhood education programs that provide equitable access to language learning resources, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. By implementing these strategies, society can foster a generation of young learners who are confident communicators and socially aware individuals.

References

1. Bruner, J. (1983). *Child's Talk: Learning to Use Language*. Oxford University Press.
2. Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire*. Multilingual Matters.
3. Gee, J.P. (2001). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*. Routledge.
4. Genelza, G.G. (2022). Higher education's outcomes-based education: Bane or boon?. *West African Journal of Educational Sciences and Practice*, 1(1), 34-41.
5. Genelza, G.G. (2021). Speech apprehension of first year engineering students in the pandemic era: basis for an intervention program. *ACADEMICIA: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 11(12), 353-371.
6. Genelza, G.G. (2024). A systematic literature review on AI voice cloning generator: A game-changer or a threat?. *Journal of Emerging Technologies*, 4(2), 54-61.
7. Hart, B., & Risley, T.R. (1995). *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing.
8. Marsh, J., Hannon, P., Lewis, M., & Ritchie, L. (2017). *Young Children's Literacy Practices in a Digital World: Exploring Diversity and Complexity*. Routledge.
9. Snow, C.E. (1999). *Language and Literacy Acquisition in Early Childhood*. Blackwell Publishers.
10. Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press.
11. Hart, B., & Risley, T.R. (1995). *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing.
12. Hoff, E. (2006). How social contexts support and shape language development. *Developmental Review*, 26(1), 55-88.
13. Kuhl, P.K. (2011). Early language learning and literacy: Neuroscience implications for education. *Mind, Brain, and Education*, 5(3), 128-142.
14. Leaper, C., & Smith, T.E. (2004). A meta-analytic review of gender variations in children's language use. *Developmental Psychology*, 40(6), 993-1027.
15. Snow, C.E., Burns, M.S., & Griffin, P. (1998). *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. National Academies Press.
16. Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press.
17. Genelza, G.G. (2023). Quipper utilization and its effectiveness as a learning management system and academic performance among BSED English students in the new normal. *Journal of Emerging Technologies*, 3(2), 75-82.
18. Genelza, G.G. (2024). Unlocking the opportunities and challenges of using ChatGPT tools for educational services: A narrative literature review. *Journal of Emerging Technologies*, 4(1), 1-8.

19. Genelza, G.G. (2022). TRANSFORMATION—more about revolution than evolution: A brief review of literature about educational reform. *Jozac Academic Voice*, 12-14.
20. Feldman, H.M. (2019). The Importance of Language-Learning Environments to Child Language Outcomes. *Pediatrics*, 144(4), e20192157.
21. Rowe, M.L., & Weisleder, A. (2020). Language Development in Context. *SSRN Electronic Journal*.
22. Tamis-LeMonda, C.S., Kuchirko, Y., & Song, L. (2020). Parental Language and Learning Directed to the Young Child. *The Future of Children*, 30(2), 135-158.
23. Manchester Metropolitan University et al. (2024). Digital tech can offer rich opportunities for child development, study says. *The Guardian*
24. Fernald, A., Marchman, V.A., & Weisleder, A. (2013). SES differences in language processing skill and vocabulary are evident at 18 months. *Developmental Science*, 16(2), 234-248.
25. Garcia, O., & Wei, L. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*. Palgrave Macmillan.
26. Genelza, G.G. (2024). Deepfake digital face manipulation: A rapid literature review. *Jozac Academic Voice*, 4(1), 7-11.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.