



AUTISTIC KIDS TO ANCHORAGE IN ENGLISH ENUNCIATION: FORMATIVE PROTOCOLS AND THE TEACHING TECHNIQUES

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Due to colonization, English language has been widely acknowledged in many countries and its appraisal has been ascended globally. Hence it acts as a connective language among the countries and provides access to all speculations globally. There is an exigent needfulness to scrutinize the capability to grasp English language among the non-native speakers. As human beings adopt the pattern of languages from their ancestors, it is easy for them to grasp local languages. Conversant families effectuate a facile approach for their children to embrace English language. However, autistic kids find it difficult to grasp languages unless a special emphasis is made in teaching techniques. The capabilities to grasp languages are low in autistic kids hence learning the English language is arduous for them than other kids. As for English, certain incentive strategies should be implemented in schools to engage them with language learning. This paper attempts to find innovative strategies for autistic kids to learn English as a second language. The article draws the attention of human beings to lift up the capabilities of autistic kids in learning languages.

Keywords: *Bilingualism, Formative Protocols, Teaching Techniques, Limitations.*



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1. EXORDIUM

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a childhood disorder which comes under the classification of intellectually disabled. It is a developmental behavioural disorder. Autism is also known as a pervasive developmental disorder and the term includes other forms of autism like asperger syndrome, dyslexia etc. Autism is characterised by impairments like aberrant reciprocal social impairment, communicational impairment, the restricted repertoire of exertions and passions, ardent and behavioural dilemma etc. Social impairment includes aloofness, poor eye contact

and misanthropy. Wherefore, the child also develops complicacy in deciphering both gestures and spoken language. Their devotion towards their own conception makes them idiomatic than others. Some of the autistic kids possess a cornucopia of endowments in specific areas and they are called savants. According to a newly published analysis of the 2016 National Survey of Children's Health, it is surveyed that 1 in 40 American parents report having a child with autism ([autism speaks, 2018](#)). Katesnelson opines that, About 1 in 100 children in India under the age of 10 has autism. The estimate for

neurodevelopmental conditions is about 10 times higher than the 1.3 percent reported in [India's 2011 census \(2018\)](#). The count validated that the number of autistic kids are accumulating year by year. Hence it is high time to concentrate on the development of the lives of autistic kids. Autistic kids express their appetite and anxiousness either by screaming or by throwing tantrums. They rarely use language to express their cognisance. So it is difficult for parents as well as teachers to teach language to the autistic kids. Certain strategies are to be followed to make the autistic kids learn language effortlessly.

2. BILINGUALISM

Family plays a pivotal role in making autistic kids grab English as a second language. Until the recent study on second language acquisition of autistic kids, it is believed that the autistic kids find it difficult to grasp the first language, hence it makes it even more difficult to learn the second language. However, recently in the research on bilingualism, it is found that the autistic kids can more effortlessly learn bilingualism than monolinguals. Learning a second language does not harm their brain and they find it easier to grasp two languages than to grasp a language. [\(Newsroom, 2018\)](#). The exposure to bilingualism makes them adapt to the second language easily. If the parents of autistic kids are bilingual and use two language systems while communicating with autistic kids, they can easily grab the second language. As autistic kids cannot concentrate on specific things for a long time, the dual language system helps them to communicate effectively. It is the duty of parents to introduce bilingualism to their kids because it increases cognitive flexibility in the autistic kids. Once they are introduced, the teachers in schools are able to engage the autistic kids with new teaching techniques. If they are interested in learning, they will attain it easily. But the lack of interest in learning languages slows down the process of acquisition of a new language. Hence it is the duty of parents to introduce bilingualism to autistic kids.

3. FORMATIVE PROTOCOLS OF TEACHERS

The teachers of autistic kids should follow some of the formative protocols to create an ambiance for learning. It is the responsibility of teachers to make sure that the autistic kids are

ready to pursue a new language. They ought to give special emphasis to the autistic kids than normal kids. Hence some of the protocols for the teachers of autistic kids are necessary to make them engaged. One of the special behaviours of autistic kids is that the responses which are rewarded are continued by them and the unrewarded responses are stopped by them immediately. The kids long for special attention and they eagerly wait for rewards or appreciation. Hence the positive behaviours inside the classrooms can be reinforced by providing rewards or special mentions. However it should not encourage the students to fully depend on words of appreciation. As soon as the students are taught about the positive behaviours, the rewarding system should be stopped and the students shall be encouraged to use those behaviours in their routine life. Accordingly, the teachers can impart good behaviours in autistic kids.

Another protocol for teachers to make autistic kids engaged in the classroom is giving emphasis to each individual. Group teaching demotivates the autistic kids to learn new things. It dissuades the students from engaging in learning activities. As they are fond of affection and love, they expect the teachers to give special attention to all students in their class. Some of them will be overwhelmed by the special attention of teachers and some will be callous on any occasion. It is the duty of teachers to identify the uniqueness of each individual because each kid has different areas of interest and passion. It is easier for the autistic kids to catch up with their area of interest than uninterested areas. Hence if a teacher identifies their positive attitudes, it will be easy for them to make them learn new languages. *Daniel Isn't Talking* is Marti Leimbach's fourth novel and contains some autobiographical facts derived from her actual life experiences as a mother of an autistic kid. In the novel, her second son Daniel is autistic and his mother tries to make him normal by using various methods and finally Daniel speaks with the help of the play therapist Andy. Andy has clearly understood that he can make Daniel write by using his favourites. Hence he uses chocolate pudding as a pen to make Daniel write. Even though he has everything like pen, pencil and crayon, Andy chooses chocolate pudding because Daniel likes it very well. It encourages Daniel to write and then he begins to

draw some emotions like happiness, sadness, anger etc. This again motivates Daniel to focus on writing.

The protocol used by Andy is to use the thing which is relished by Daniel. (2006, p.229). Hence the teachers should focus on the desires of the autistic kids to make them feel enthusiastic. However, it is difficult for them to concentrate on substantial tasks for a long time. Therefore the substantial tasks can be divided into smaller ones and it engages the students to do the task with full concentration. The substantial tasks make autistic kids put lots of effort and consequently make them feel tired of doing new stuff. However, dividing substantial stuff into smaller ones makes them more engaged to get rewards after finishing their tasks. Furthermore, they shall learn correct responses for all actions. This will help them to develop their personality and lead them into an ethical path. It is also the duty of teachers to improve the sanity level of autistic kids along with learning languages. They should teach where, when and how to use language as responses because it helps to uplift the lifestyle of autistic kids. When the autistic kids believe that they can use language to get what they like, it motivates them to learn language. At first the teachers should prepare the autistic students to receive languages because it encourages the students to learn new languages. Then they shall use language teaching techniques to grasp English effectively.

4. TEACHING TECHNIQUES

The techniques used for English language teaching should be based on the skills of autistic kids. Though they are slow in learning and have delayed communicative skills, they can adopt the skills if they are directed in the correct path. There are certain positive attitudes in kids which help them to learn English as a second language effectively. Applied Behavioural Therapy is used by many experts to teach language adoption in autistic kids but some teaching techniques along with applied behavioural therapy help them to learn language easily. Special attention should be given to the autistic students to make them engage in learning language. The severity of autism ranges from mild to severe hence the teachers should be trained to use the techniques based on the severity. The mixing of autistic kids with normal kids in schools will also help them to mimic the normal kids.

Autistic kids are better at understanding visual aids than the normal kids. It is difficult for them to lend their ears to something for a long time. However, their observatory power on visual aids is higher than normal kids. They cannot focus on something if they cannot see. Hence using visual aids is one of the inventive techniques for learning English as a second language. Visual aids have the capacity to engage autistic kids in particular, therefore it helps to understand the language and also create curiosity among them. Vocabulary, phrases, conjunctions, adjectives, numbers, adverbs etc. can be easily taught by using visual aids. However, these visual aids must have some characteristics like colourful and attractive pictures to pull the attention of autistic kids. It must be based on the interests of autistic kids to increase the involvement of them. Mohammad Ghedeir Brahim in his study titled as "Teaching English to Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Challenges and Teaching Strategies" states that, "From the explanation above, it can be inferred that the choice to use visual media as the primary medium for instructions has taken into account the tendency of ASD students to be visual learners. The success and motivation of the ASD student in learning the English language has been seen to be significantly impacted by the use of visual media in individualized instruction". If the government or NGOs frame the visual aids after researching the desires of autistic kids, it will encourage them to learn language effectively. As the autistic kids are afraid of all usual as well as unusual things, the visual aids should not frustrate them. This is the pivotal fact to remember while framing visual aids for them. Normal kids can enjoy all types of visual aids but for autistic kids some visual aids can scar them. *Best Boy* is a novel based on the life of a man affected with autism. It is written by Eli Gottlieb whose brother is autistic therefore he brought up the real characteristics of an autistic man. As the novel is written from the autistic man's perspective, the readers can easily cognize the sensibilities of an autistic man. Gottlieb has also included specific biographical occurrences of his own brother, which make the novel more naturalistic. In that novel, the protagonist Todd Aaron is scared of usual things like dishwashers, pets etc. This is because they imagine something out of them and it makes them very weak. In a restaurant while eating, Aaron thinks, 'Bunny.'

This disturbed me because it made me think of the way animals like dogs and cats and rabbits are actually people crushed into four- legged bodies which is partly why they frighten me so much (Gottlieb, 2015, p.192). The weird thinking of autistic kids makes them tense if they do not attain clarity. Hence the visual aids should not encourage the autistic kids to have weird images in their cognisance and the teachers should be very careful in analysing the behaviours of autistic kids before framing visual aids.

Another technique used to treat autism is play therapy. This therapy engages the autistic kids by playing with their toys. The therapy is mainly based on engrossing the kids thoroughly in playing. This play therapy can also be used in language teaching by teaching while playing with toys. It creates a friendly relationship with the autistic kids. The connection between the teacher and the autistic kid develops through this technique and it creates confidence among the kids. Hence it helps the teachers to understand the kids and vice versa. If play therapy technique is used in schools, it is easier for the teachers to mingle with the students. To increase the effect of this therapy, the teachers should think from the perspective of the students. Vocabulary and sentence structures can be learned through this technique. For instance, teachers shall use English language while playing with the autistic kids. This creates enthusiasm in the kids and after creating great enthusiasm, the teacher shall use the word 'go' for moving from one place to another. The kid will automatically understand that the word 'go' is used for moving from one place to another and they move by copying the act of the teacher. Thereby the kid learns vocabulary. After learning some vocabulary, if a teacher uses it in a sentence in an admiring tone, it will also help them to learn language. The intonation with gestures influences the autistic kids to learn the language. So the teachers shall use musical intonation in English language to make it more admiring. Similarly, the vocabulary and sentence making can be taught through this technique. From that novel *Daniel Isn't Talking*, it is crystal clear that play therapy helps autistic kids to learn language. Andy always uses Daniel's favourite toy train while teaching. It engages the kid to learn through playing.

Another fruitful technique which can be used for teaching autistic kids is music therapy. The autistic kids genetically have interest in

listening to music and learning music. Generally, the interest in music makes them engage in learning language through music therapy. Language can also be taught through music. The teacher can exchange information with musical intonations. It helps to learn the formation of sentence structures and to understand sentence meanings. If the kids are at beginner level, English rhymes are taught through music. Rhymes along with music and visual effects help the kids to learn language easily. The autistic kids usually do not use gestures while talking. Hence using gestures while teaching language makes the kids excited to learn language. When the musical songs with lengthy sentences are taught, automatically, the sentence structure registers in their mind. It helps the kids to frame sentences after learning vocabularies. Hence music therapy also encourages the autistic kids to learn the English language.

Another technique, video therapy, is also useful for autistic kids to learn the English language. If a video is played in English, it will help them to learn English. The attractive colours and musical intonations of language motivate the kids to observe the videos. Videos gain the attention of the kids and encourage them to focus on the language used in videos unknowingly. Andy from the novel *Daniel Isn't Talking* used to play videos specially made for autistic kids to seek their attention and to teach language. One of the videos from his collection shows how to make robotic puppets. When Andy learns that Daniel can easily grasp everything that he watches on television he makes videos like this to seek his attention. He uses attractive colours and the same things that are visible in Daniel's home for the play video. Hence it connects Daniels with his home and he begins to respond. Suddenly, he begins to do everything that he watches on the television. Daniel's mother exclaims as, The play video works a treat. Daniel watches it, mesmerised by the creation of the puppet, then turns to discover that the exact same materials that are in the video are now here, on our table at home (Leimbach, 2006, p.243). After that Andy makes him speak by questioning the requirements for making a robotic puppet. Thus Andy makes Daniel learn language using play video. Therefore play videos can be used to teach language to autistic kids.

5. LIMITATIONS

The formative protocols and the teaching techniques are highly useful for autistic kids to learn new languages. A special emphasis is needed for the kids to adopt the ambiance to learn new language systems. However, the autistic kids are unique and their uniqueness differs for every kid hence it is difficult to understand the feats of all autistic kids. If family and the teachers work single handedly, these protocols and techniques are highly useful to develop the learning skills of the autistic kids. Nevertheless, these general techniques and protocols can be applicable to all autistic kids based on their requirements.

6. DEDUCTION

Certain language games will also be helpful for the autistic kids to learn the English language. The games create curiosity among the kids and fascinate them to learn English. Nowadays, there is computer assisted language learning, which includes lots of software to teach English in interesting ways. These techniques will also help them to learn language effectively. Nothing is impossible in this globalised world. As the English language is emphasised, most of the kids are forced to learn it. If the above said inventive strategies are used in teaching English language to autistic kids, teaching language would become easy.

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