

Strategies for Enhancing Language Development as a Necessary Foundation for Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

This study investigates the strategies for enhancing language development as a factor and a necessary foundation for early childhood education. Survey research design was adopted in carrying out the research and a total of seventy-one teachers were randomly sampled for the study. Three research questions guided this study. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The study revealed that enhanced strategies for language development are crucial for the educational attainments of children in early childhood education. Factors such as inadequate number of specialist language teachers, lack of resources/materials, wrong models, among others constitute a barrier to the processes of enhancing the language development of children in early childhood education. The findings show that teachers have a significant role to play in the development of the linguistic competences of children in early childhood education. Among other things, they should plan a variety of activities in order to catch children's interest and keep them eager to learn. Based on the findings, it was recommended that government should match policies with action in order to address some of the challenges children face in language development at the early childhood level.

Keywords: Language, development, acquisition, foundation, early childhood, education

1. Introduction

Language is an essential tool in the life of every individual. It is the vehicle through which human beings express their feelings, thoughts, ideas and aspirations. Language is a powerful weapon people employ in their everyday lives for communication. People need language to speak with others, listen to others, read and write. It helps people to pass down information from one generation to the next and create a rich cultural heritage (Santrock, 2005). It is language that differentiates man from lower animals and distinguishes man as humans. Macionis and Geber (2005) defined language as a system of symbols that allows members of a society to communicate with one another. Santrock (2005) refers to language as a form of communication, whether spoken or written that is based on a system of symbols. It consists of words used by a community and the rules for varying and combining them.

The importance of language especially for children in early childhood education cannot be over-underscored. This makes devising methods to enhance its development an important task for researchers and teachers. Effective language use gives children the power to have a say in what they want and need. It is crucial to young children's development. Language is an essential key for learning which enables children to make sense of the world around them (Buckley, 2003). Language provides important opportunity for a child to socialize with members of his/her family and other children outside his/her group and to realize himself/herself as a person (Maduewesi, 1999). Essa (2007) states that language help children achieve their goals.

Language is crucial for children's development during the early years of life, that is, early childhood. This stage is a critical and sensitive phase of life when rapid growth and development in mental, physical, emotional and social abilities emerge. Tiwari (2009) states that growth of mental abilities is at an astounding rate and high proportion of learning take place during this period. The early childhood years of life is very important in that events that take place leave indelible marks in the children's life. Similarly, the findings of some recent studies suggest the importance of experiences during the early years of life on subsequent development (Schweinhart and Weikhart, 1996; Frede, 1995; Morrison, 2001; Eze & Onuigbo, 2008). The early years are a special period for early childhood education.

Early childhood education is the care and education given to children age 0 – 5 years prior to commencing primary education (FRN, 2004). Morrison (2004) sees it as care and education given to children from birth to about eight years. Maduewesi (1999) conceptualized it as encompassing the care, development and education of children below six years. This level of education encompasses the crèche, nursery and kindergarten.

The first five years is critical for a child's overall development and later life chances. It is a period of rapid learning (Maduewesi, 2005). All the information a child gains, language skills acquired and habits formed at this early formative years of life frame the personality of an individual (Gandi, 2010). Chomsky cited in Essa (2007) hypothesizes that children are born with a linguistic structure that makes it possible for them to acquire language as quickly as they do during the preschool years. Similarly, Owens, cited in Essa (2007), states that because language is innate, it is linked to biological maturation and follows an internal clock, needing to emerge during

the “critical age” for language acquisition. In essence, language is better and faster learned in the early years of life than later years.

Language development as a factor and a necessary foundation in early childhood education implies that language is crucial to young children’s development, that is, adequate development of language skills in children will enhance their learning processes. It is an essential key for the foundations of life-long learning. Essentially, the early childhood period is the language acquisition period when the child is working at acquiring efficiency in the first language, and trying to use it to express his/her perception of the world. At this stage, the child is trying his/her hand on using language as a new tool. It is the major vehicle for socialization into culture which the child is also just learning (Maduewesi, 1999). Certain aspects of learning can only be acquired effectively during the first seven years of life. For language in particular, the ability to learn it has been found to be important predictor of reading ability. More so, research has shown that before the age of seven, a child has a phenomenal ability to learn language. From the age of eight years, the child’s ability to learn language is equal to that of an adult. It is, therefore, very wise to exploit the wonderful opportunity that is presented only once in every child’s life and only for a short space of time. After this period, an individual may become too old to learn language (Mandela, 2011). Supporting this, Owens cited in Essa (2007), states that children who do not learn language in early childhood have a much more difficult time later, just as learning a second language later in life is not nearly as easy as acquiring it in the early years. In the same vein, Anieke (2009) opines that language is best learnt at the stage of infancy and in interactive situations where children naturally learn to communicate various experiences in the language.

Scholars have argued that the process of language development begins before birth. They claim that towards the end of pregnancy, a foetus begins to learn language from outside the mother’s body. Infants are acutely attuned to the human voice. This process of language development follows a predictable sequence. For instance, from birth up to the age of five, children develop language at a very rapid pace. The stages of development are universal among humans. However, there is a great deal of variation in the age and the pace at which children reach a certain milestone in development. This present study, therefore, does not seek to contribute to the theoretical arguments on language development in young children; rather, it seeks to investigate the contributions teachers could make to enhance the ability of young children to development their language faculties. The strategies for enhancing language development in young children are therefore the main concern of this study.

2. Statement of research problem

Most previous studies on language development are mainly theoretical. Studies such as Bloom (2000, 2001), Baldwin and Meyer (2007), Gathercole and Hoff (2007), etc. have explored the theoretical bases of language acquisition and development in children. These studies have shown that the innate ability of children for language development is enhanced by inputs from their immediate environments. This claim echoes the fact that environmental factors shape the processes of language acquisition and development in children.

Researchers have also asked whether and how the course of acquisition changes as a function of cultural differences or differences in language types (e.g., Slobin, 1985, 1992, 1997). Work in this vein revealed some interesting facts about early language development. For example, child-directed language is not necessary to acquisition (e.g., Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984), and children are sensitive very early on to language-particular features, even those encoding such basic notions as space, time, and manner (e.g., Bowerman, 1996; Bowerman & Choi, 2001). Children acquire a language under many different conditions of exposure; yet regardless of those conditions, they seem to make ordered decisions about the particular language to which they are exposed (Baker, 2005). The task of a developing child is to become an active, knowledgeable participant of a language community. To do so, she uses whatever pre-dispositions and knowledge she has to increase her understanding even as she engages in it. It is in this sense that she would work her way to adult competence as an active, social child (Shatz, 1987, 1994).

However, these studies have not particularly addressed how strategies can be worked out to enhance the development of language as a necessary foundation for childhood education. No doubt, the environment, as studies have shown, plays a facilitating role in language development, but the role of the teacher in enhancing the development of language in children is crucial. Therefore, this study investigates the strategies for enhancing language development as a necessary foundation for early childhood education.

3. Previous studies

In the words of Wolfson (2011), language development refers to how a child understands, organizes, speaks and uses words. According to him, this process can be divided into two categories: receptive language and expressive language. Receptive language according to the author refers to how well a child understands what is said to him/her. It is expected that before a child can verbally answer a question, he/she should be able to show that he/she understands the person by following a simple direction or pointing to a specific object. Expressive

language, on the other hand, refers to a child's ability to express or communicate his thoughts and needs to others. This type of language is used to refer to how well the child uses words, gestures or any other non-verbal forms of communication.

In a comprehensive review of the influences of variable social environments on language development, Hoff (2006) provides considerable evidence for the myriad social factors that affect development, from the amount of time children spend in conversation to the contexts in which they hear talk. Hoff proposes that, regardless of differences in such social circumstances, all environments supportive of language must provide two things: opportunities for communicative interaction and an analysable language model. However, as Hoff notes, no matter how rich an environment is in such opportunities, it cannot by itself be effective as a support for language development if the child does not take advantage of them.

In his devastating critique of Skinner's theory, Chomsky (1959) argues convincingly that internal representations are needed to explain language behaviour. An internalized grammar allows learners to go beyond the particular sentences in the input, permitting generalization. By structuring the problem of language learning around the acquisition of a grammar, Chomsky radically altered the field's conceptualization of what language acquisition entails. This, in turn, suggested a need for more specialized learning mechanisms: "The fact that all normal children acquire essentially comparable grammars of great complexity with remarkable rapidity suggests that human beings are somehow specially designed to do this, with data-handling or 'hypothesis-formulating' ability of unknown character and complexity" (Chomsky, 1959). Subsequent theoretical innovations led to a proposed language acquisition device – innate linguistic knowledge in the form of a universal grammar, tied to dedicated language learning processes (Chomsky, 1965, 1968). Chomsky's early views continue to be extremely influential. In particular, there is no doubt that Skinner's central claims were incorrect; external reinforcement cannot explain child language acquisition (Saffran and Thiessen, 2007).

Studies have shown that language development and acquisition are influenced by two main factors namely heredity and environment. The role of heredity is observable in that human beings are innately endowed with the ability to produce language. The environmental aspect has to do with the content of the language which the child acquires from the environment that is made up of parents and other people who act as models for language. Therefore, while the biological factors may be the same for all children, the environmental factors determine the content which may be rich or sparse depending on the environment. Certain theories give explanation for language development in children. The proponents of these theories opine that language and the way children acquire it follow distinct patterns or are influenced by distinct traits (Ugwu, 2010).

The behaviourist view of language development, according to B.F. Skinner (1957), the key proponent of this theory, sees language as primarily influenced by external factors such as modelling and reinforcement of parents and others as well as self-reinforcement by children. The innate view of language development, considers inborn factors to be the most important component. The psycholinguistic views of language development were concerned with the meaning and structure of words and how children come to acquire them. The theorists state that children are destined to talk once they are normal and the particular language is determined by culture. This they can do through the use of a natural mechanism – a language acquisition device (LAD) common to all languages (Maduewesi, 1999; Gleason, 2001 & Owens, 2001 in Essa, 2007).

3.1 Stages of language development

First attempts at language for all children go through the same phases of development. This includes listening stage, speaking stage, reading stage and writing stage.

3.1.1 The listening stage

This is the first and an important stage in language development because the child is born incapable of intelligible speech in any language; what the child does at this stage is active listening. The child listens to the sound he/she hears around him/her and the instructions and messages passed around him/her as his/her needs are being attended to.

3.1.2 The speaking stage

When the child has adequately consolidated on the listening stage or skill, he/she now starts making use of those sounds he/she has been taken in around him. The speaking stage goes through series of levels. These levels are explicated in table 1 below:

3.1.3 The reading stage

Reading is an extension of communication built naturally on the listening and speaking skills already acquired. Most often, few children learn to read before going to school. The teachers use various methods to teach the children how to read. In other words, reading is a language acquisition stage most often acquired within formal school setting.

3.1.4 The writing stage

This is the last stage of language development. This is the stage when children learn to put down their feelings and thoughts through the use of the relevant symbols that are used in the language they are learning. Just like reading, it is a language development/acquisition stage which takes place in formal school setting. It is not

innately natural in the child (Ugwu, 2010).

3.2 Language acquisition skills

The four basic language skills that are necessary for communication are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Although interwoven, they are learnt in that order following a developmental sequence (Ur, 2006; Azikiwe, 2007). Listening is the major means of learning and is seen as the foundation for learning other language skills. It is a vital skill in the language learning processes. It is an activity that is life-long and determines one's competence in the acquisition of the language concerned. If the child develops his listening skill well, his understanding and proficiency in the language learnt will be greater.

Speaking is the accurate production of the sounds of a language. It involves the combination of these sounds in a specific way to form utterances for communication. It is through speech that the child expresses his thoughts, ideas and attitudes clearly, fluently and coherently. Reading is the complex act of thinking stimulated by written symbols that involve a series of mental processes. It is the ability to decode or interpret the written words and gain meaning out of them. Reading implies getting out of a text, as much as possible, what the writer has put into it. Writing is a higher-order skill in language acquisition and development. It is speech put down and forms the expressive form of language with speaking. Writing is not informally learnt but must be taught to the pupils formally in schools (Ugwu, 2010).

The objective of teaching language skills at the pre-primary level is to maximize, as early as possible, the child's growing ability to effectively and efficiently use language. In line with this, Morrison (2004) states that language development is one of the major goals of early childhood education. In line with Nigeria's National Policy on education (FRN, 2004), it is recommended that the mode of language transmission at this age be the mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment for its cognitive, social and emotional advantages. But unfortunately, government has not been able to match policy with actions because both the human and material resources for its implementation are in extreme short supply. Furthermore, most parents in Nigeria feel that the school is not doing anything if their children are not taught in English (Ugwu, 2010). Supporting this position, Anieke (2009) states that at the early stage of language development, many parents are obsessed with the anxiety to make their children expert speakers and writers of English. This leads to a common trend in Nigeria whereby most, if not all literate families address their children strictly in English every time, everywhere. Many parents frown at their young children speaking or greeting people in their native languages. Ironically, a good number of such parents do not, in themselves, have firm grasp of the English Language. In effect, they teach wrong phonology and structures to their children and sometimes resort to the use of Pidgin English in the bid to 'plant' English in their families. But it is better to use the mother tongue or local language since it helps the child learn better as he/she can move readily and connect with things and expressions he is familiar with.

Human and materials resources appear to be factors which exert a lot of influence on language development in early childhood education. Effective teaching and learning can only take place with adequate supply of professional teachers, text books, child-sized chairs and tables, and various teaching materials. Umaru (2005) and Azikiwe (2007) lament inadequate supply of professional teachers and insufficient material resources. Anieke (2009) states that the solution to such deficiency in human resources has always been a make shift arrangement whereby non-specialists are drafted to teach the subject or, at worst, the learners are left on their own. Lack of motivation, inadequate language stimulation and one-to-one attention as well as lack of supportive/enabling home and, or school environment are constraints to language development of children in early childhood education. Azikiwe (2007) hypothesizes that a child from an educated and enlightened home will have an edge over his counterpart from a poor illiterate home and background in the acquisition of English language for example in Nigeria. The type of school the child attends affects the child's ability to acquire language. Village and rural schools are usually attended by children from the lower class and poor homes. This exerts much negative influence on their language development abilities. Mother tongue interference (in learning a second language), interference from language of the immediate environment and teacher's qualification and training are other factors which appear to cause problem in language development of children in early childhood education. In effect, problems encountered in a child's language development processes may affect the child in subsequent learning areas. From the foregoing, it becomes necessary to look at the place of language as a factor and a necessary foundation in early childhood education. To this end therefore, the purpose of this study in specific terms includes:

1. To find out why language development is crucial for children in early childhood education.
2. To find out the factors that affect language development in early childhood education.
3. To determine ways of enhancing language development in early childhood education.

4. Research questions

The following research questions were posed to guide this study:

1. Why is language development crucial for children in early childhood education?
2. What are the factors that affect language development of children in early childhood education?

3. In what ways can the processes of language development of children in early childhood education be improved?

5. Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. It was conducted in Nsukka Local Government Education Authority, Enugu State. The population of the study is made up of sixty-three (63) respondents drawn from Childhood Education Unit, University of Nigeria Nsukka and primary school teachers. The entire population was used for the study.

A thirty (30) item researcher structured questionnaire titled “Children’s Language Development for Children in Early Childhood Education” (LDCECE) was used to generate information on challenges facing language development in early childhood education and the strategies for enhancing it as a factor and a necessary foundation for early childhood education. The item statements were grouped into three clusters according to the research questions. The first cluster sought information on the importance of language development for children in early childhood education. The second cluster elicited information on the factors that affect language development of children in early childhood education while the third cluster dealt with ways of enhancing language development of children in early childhood education. The instrument is a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D) with numerical values of 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. The instrument was face validated by two experts in Childhood Education and Measurement and Evaluation, respectively. The comments and suggestions made by them were carefully effected in the final draft of the questionnaire. The instrument was trial tested using Crombach Alpha and the internal coefficient consistency of 0.72, 0.77 and 0.81 respectively, were obtained. The data obtained was analysed using means and standard deviations. The decision rule was determined based on an item with a mean that ranges from:

- (a) 0.50 – 2.49 is referred to as Strongly Disagree
- (b) 1.50 – 2.49 is referred to as Disagree
- (c) 2.50 – 3.49 is referred to as Agree
- (d) 3.50 – 4.00 is referred to as Strongly Agree

6. Results

Table 2 below contains the analysis of the inputs of the respondents on the importance of language development for children in early childhood education.

The analysis on table 2 revealed that teachers agreed that all the item statements 1 to 10 are importance of language development for children in early childhood education. Each mean was above the cut-off point of 2.50. The item statements had their standard deviations ranged from 0.27 – 0.92, which indicated that the respondents were not far from the mean and from one another in their opinions. The respondents hold the view that adequate language development for children is an essential key to their success in learning and other endeavours in life. They describe their world and experiences using the vehicle of language. Since language is an essential key for their social survival, it is incumbent on parents, caregivers and teachers to evolve strategies that will help children in building their competencies in its usage.

Table three below captures some of the factors that affect language development of children in early childhood education. The figures shown in the table reveals the views of the respondents on the items contained in it.

Table three below indicates that teachers agree that all the item statements 1 to 10 are factors that affect language development of children in early childhood education. The mean scores for each item ranges from 3.29 – 3.56. Their standard deviations ranged from 0.56 to 0.76, this indicates that the teachers were not far from the mean and not far from one another in opinion.

Table four below captures the strategies for enhancing language development in children in early childhood education and the decisions of the respondents on the items in the questionnaire. It shows that teachers strongly agree that item statement numbers 1 to 10 are ways of enhancing language development of children in early childhood education with mean scores ranging from 3.42 to 3.76. However, the teachers disagree with item 10 as a way of improving language development of children in early childhood education as is seen in the mean 2.00 that is below 2.50. The item statements had their standard deviations ranged from 0.42 – 0.66 which showed that the teachers were not far from the mean but were close to one another’s opinion. However, the standard deviation for item 10 vary from the others, it is 0.93.

7. Discussion

The data on Table 1 revealed the importance of language development for children in early childhood education. These include; language is the essential key for learning, effective language use gives children power to have a say in what they want and need, among others. This finding is in consonance with Buckley (2003) that language enables children make sense of the world around them. Maduwesi’s (1999) arguments support the findings of this work that language provides opportunity for a child to socialize with members of his family and other

children outside his/her group. In this same vein, Essa (2007) opines that language enables children achieve their goals. The findings as captured in table 1 of this study show that language development is a worthy course to pursue in order to aid the learning processes of children. If language development for children at the early stage of education is given the needed attention, especially from teachers, it will serve as an important stimulant learning and general development.

Based on the items captured in table 2 on the factors that affect language development, the respondents perceived all the item statements as factors that affect language development in early childhood education. Some of these factors include inadequate number of language specialist teachers, wrong models, and lack of material resources; among others. This corroborates Azikiwe's (2007) submission that inadequate supply of professional human resources and materials exert negative influence on language development of children in early childhood education. Similarly, Anieke (2009) states that in a bid to remedy the problem of acute shortage of experts in early childhood education, the solution has always been a make-shift arrangement whereby a non-specialist is drafted to teach the subject or, at worst, the learners are left on their own. This leaves the children with a language deficiency that battle with for the rest of their lives.

Results from Table 3 revealed that the respondents perceived all the ways suggested for enhancing language development of children in early childhood education as effective strategies for enhancing the linguistic abilities of children in early childhood. This finding is in consonance with Maduewesi's (1999) and Azikiwe's (2007) positions that teachers should be a model for the child's speech, speaking clearly and correctly. Hilderbrand (1976), giving further support to the findings of this work, states that the teacher should establish a comfortable/enabling environment that stimulates children to talk freely with everyone. Also, Essa (2007) opines that all the children should be encouraged to talk and be included in language in activities that will stimulate their interest in language development.

So far, the picture that is painted of the optimally successful language learner is one of an active, sociable child equipped with early attention in language development, possessing probabilistic inferencing skills, and engaged in frequent communicative interactions rich in linguistic information. Can a child so equipped traverse the linguistic landscape efficiently enough to learn the substance of any of the thousands of human languages by school age? Proficiency in language for any child is an important key to their overall development in life. This foregrounds the need for teachers and caregivers to effective support them to build enduring foundations in this regard.

8. Recommendations and conclusion

Early Childhood period has been widely recognized as a significant period for rapid growth and development as well as a stepping stone to subsequent development in other areas of learning. Therefore, there is the need to give adequate attention to the development of the linguistic competencies of children at this stage. Adequate attention at this stage will enhance their abilities to deploy linguistic resources for their overall development. Owing to the bilingual/multilingual nature of many nations, it is recommended that children should be started early with the home/native language. This is to be followed immediately with the official language and other languages within the linguistic community of the child. Studies have shown that the development of a child's native language does not interfere with the ability to learn a second language, since knowing more than one language is a cognitive asset. For the earlier the child is exposed to the languages that he/she needs the better for the acquisition of proficiency. In addition, it is crucial that government should endeavour to match policy with actions by providing adequate human (specialist) and material resources for the implementation of language policies, especially in Africa where instability is the bane of developmental efforts. In addition, the following should be put in place:

- ❖ Effective monitoring units should be put in place by government to ensure that children are started with mother tongue/ native language first, and then followed immediately with other languages as early as possible.
- ❖ Government should ensure adequate supply of professional language teachers in native and other languages.
- ❖ Government should ensure that relevant facilities are made available especially instructional materials for children's language development.
- ❖ Teachers, on their own part, should be a model for the child's speech, speaking clearly and correctly, using words, gestures and examples to help the children understand the processes of communication better.

Early childhood stage is a critical and sensitive period when children undergo rapid mental growth and development and learn faster. Events that take place this time exert tremendous influence on subsequent development. Therefore, language specialist teachers should teach the children to lay a life-long foundation for them. Parents and guardians should support teachers in this noble task for children's proper language acquisition and development. The steps for good foundation should start now.

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Tables

Table 1: Stages of language acquisition in children

Stage	Typical age	Description
Babbling	6 – 8 months	Repetitive CV patterns
One-word stage (better one-morpheme or one-unit) or holophrastic stage	9 – 18 months	Single open-class words or word stems
Two-word stage	18 – 24 months	“mini-sentences” with simple semantic relations
Telegraphic stage or early multiword stage (better multi-morpheme)	24 – 30 months	“Telegraphic” sentence structures of lexical rather than functional or grammatical morphemes
Later multiword stage	30 + months	Grammatical or functional structures emerge

Source: Child Language Data Exchange System (CHILDES)

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of the scores of the responses of teachers on the importance of language development for children in early childhood education.

S/N	Item Statement	X	SD	Decision
1	Language development is an essential key for learning	3.92	0.27	SA
2	Effective language use gives children power to have a say in what they want and need.	3.83	0.38	„
3	Language is used for communicating and building relationships with others, hence, the need for its proper development, especially at the early stage of learning.	3.76	0.43	„
4	Language enables children to make sense of the world around them.	3.63	0.49	„
5	Language differentiates children (man) from lower animals and distinguishes children (man) as humans.	3.67	0.60	„
6	Since it the medium for transmission of culture, there is the need to enhance its development in children.	3.65	0.65	„
7	Language is the tool for thinking reasoning, planning and remembering.	3.38	0.92	„
8	It provides important opportunity for a child to socialize with members of his family and other children outside his/her group.	3.85	0.39	„
9	It enhances development of intellectual skills	3.60	0.58	„
10	It determines the success or failure in life-long learning.	3.21	0.86	A

Table 3: Mean and standard deviations of the scores of the responses of teachers on the factors that inhibit language development of children in early childhood education.

S/N	Item Statement	X	SD	Decision
1	Inadequate number of language specialist teachers.	3.33	0.76	A
2	Wrong models (some parents and teachers) do not have a firm grasp of (English) language.	3.59	0.53	SA
3	Lack of the materials needed for language development	3.37	0.66	A
4	Lack of supportive or enabling home and, or school environment.	3.41	0.73	A
5	Inadequate language stimulation and one-on-one attention.	3.29	0.75	A
6	Lack of motivation.	3.40	0.71	A
7	Mother-tongue interference (in learning a second language).	3.54	0.67	A
8	Interference from language of immediate environment in second language situations.	3.56	0.56	SA
9	Teachers' qualification and training.	3.44	0.71	A
10	Lack of suitable method(s) that will help children learn language.	3.46	0.76	A

Table 4: Mean and standard deviations of the scores of the responses of teachers on ways of enhancing language development of children in early childhood education.

S/N	Item Statement	X	SD	Decision
1	The teacher should establish a comfortable supportive/enabling environment that stimulates children to talk freely with everyone.	3.65	0.57	SA
2	The teacher should capitalize on every opportunity to expand a child's vocabulary and increase his/her ability to construct sentences as well as to describe an event in sequential manner.	3.54	0.50	SA
3	Children should be encouraged to exchange ideas, share information and ask questions.	3.68	0.56	SA
4	The teacher should consider or regard each child as important and create time to allow each child talk to him/her.	3.74	0.47	SA
5	Teacher should be a model for the child's speech, speaking clearly and correctly, using words, gestures and examples to help the child understand.	3.76	0.42	SA
6	Children who are 'alone' or 'withdrawn' should be identified and encouraged to feel at ease when talking with the teacher and others.	3.59	0.66	SA
7	Incorrect pronunciation and errors in grammar should be checked and corrected, by first and foremost, allowing the child to finish his statement.	3.73	0.48	SA
8	Teacher should plan a variety of activities in order to catch children's interest and keep them eager to learn.	3.61	0.55	SA
9	Teacher should read favourite books repeatedly, allowing the child to join in with familiar words.	3.42	0.59	A
10	Teacher should encourage the child to read.	2.00	0.93	D