

Language Skills of 2-5 Year Old Children with Profound Hearing Loss Undergoing Auditory-Oral Education Compared to Typically-Developing Peers.

C. Waidyasekara¹, N. Rajapaksha¹, K. Herath¹, S. Hettiarachchi¹

¹ *Department of Disability Studies, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya*

Hearing impairment is the most frequent sensory defect that leads to communication difficulties and critical to speech and language development, communication, and learning. The objectives were to compare the language skills of children with profound hearing loss using digital amplification and undergoing intensive Auditory Oral education with typically developing peers and to determine the correlation between the time period of receiving Auditory Oral education and language outcomes. Twenty-two children with profound hearing loss using bilateral Behind- The- Ear hearing devices, were selected from an Auditory Oral pre-school. 44 children whose age, gender and geographical area matched were selected from mainstream pre-schools. All participants were assessed using the informal assessment tool. Median scores of receptive vocabulary skills are higher than scores of expressive vocabulary skills in both groups. The difference was statistically significant between the two groups. Receptive vocabulary, understanding of quality, understanding of spatial concept, understand of sequencing concept, understand of sentence structure (syntax) and integrative thinking revealed significant ($p < 0.05$) for each age range 2;0 – 2;11, 3;0 – 3;11 and 4;0 – 5;0. There is a significant difference in seventeen out of twenty linguistic components between the two groups ($p < 0.05$). Only three categories; initiating ($p = 0.157$), producing syllables ($p = 0.157$) and expressing negations ($p = 0.157$) did not show significance. There is a significant ($p < 0.01$) correlation among the time period of having AO education and language skills. The study concluded that there is a significant difference in language skills compared to the typically developing peers. Increased language skills were observed with the early attendance of Auditory Oral education and with appropriate hearing aid. Hence, the children with hearing loss need effective intervention to enhance their language skills in spoken language.