Do Speech and Language Disorders affect Children's Self-esteem and Self-Confidence?

Thamer Hassan Alahmed

Assistant Professor at UMM Al-Qura University

Abstract

Scholars and psychologists have proposed a wide range of factors that directly impact on self-esteem and confidence among children. While this paper agrees that self-confidence and self-esteem compose a critical element in the general biological development of child, it also debates the extent to which key socio- emotional factors can also contribute. Although the development of speech typically follows a specific pattern, this may be hampered by a number of factors (Rvachew, 2005a). A number of studies have indicated that symbolic play abilities can be used to demonstrate developmental-specific language impairment and language disorders among children, though no universal consensus has been reached on this argument. For instance, Deiner (2009) supports this theory by stating that "children with communication disorders may not have good skills at joining them." A child who cannot fully integrate with others is unlikely to be in a position to engage in a number of play activities. A child with speech and language disorders will often play alone and, if in a group, is likely to receive orders from peers rather than to give them (Rvachew, 2005b). Language and speech disorders are often caused by psychological, neurological and physical factors, including "hearing loss, mental retardation, brain injury, drug abuse, neurological disorders and physical impairment like cleft lip and vocal misuse" (Raitano, 2004). It is imperative to note that despite the negative effects of these disorders on social activities, their parents or teachers of children with such disorders should not despair. When left unattended, language and speech disorders will likely weaken the confidence and self-esteem of a child, hampering their social development. Even though remedies exist for these problems, appropriate strategies should be matched to particular disorders, otherwise the problem may actually be exacerbated (Rvachew & Nowak, 2003).

Keywords: *Low self-esteem, speech and language disorder, confidence, therapy.*

الملخص

اقترح العلماء وعلماء النفس مجموعة واسعة من العوامل التي تؤثر بشكل مباشر على احترام الذات والثقة بين الأطفال. بينما توافق هذه الورقة على أن الثقة بالنفس واحترام الذات يشكلان عنصرًا حاسمًا في التطور البيولوجي العام للطفل، فإنها تناقش أيضًا مدى مساهمة العوامل الاجتماعية والعاطفية الرئيسية أيضًا. على الرغم من أن تطور الكلام عادة ما يتبع نمطًا محددًا، إلا أنه قد يعوقه عدد من العوامل (Rvachew,2005). أشار عدد من الدراسات إلى أنه يمكن استخدام قدرات اللعب الرمزية لإثبات ضعف اللغة الخاص بالنمو واضطرابات اللغة بين الأطفال، على الرغم من عدم التوصل إلى إجماع عالمي على هذه الحجة. على سبيل المثال، يدعم (2009) Deiner هذه النظرية بالقول إن "الأطفال الذين يعانون من اضطرابات التواصل قد لا يتمتعون بمهارات جيدة في الانضمام إليهم". من غير المحتمل أن يكون الطفل الذي لا يستطيع الاندماج بشكل كامل مع الآخرين في وضع يسمح له بالمشاركة في عدد من أنشطة اللعب. غالبًا ما يلعب الطفل المصاب باضطرابات النطق واللغة بمفرده، وإذا كان في مجموعة، فمن المرجح أن يتلقى أوامر من أقرانه بدلاً من إعطائهم (Rvachew, 2005).غالبًا ما تنجم اضطرابات اللغة والكلام عن عوامل نفسية وعصبية وجسدية، بما في ذلك "فقدان السمع والتخلف العقلي وإصابات الدماغ وتعاطي المخدرات والاضطرابات العصبية والضعف الجسدي مثل الشفة المشقوقة وسوء استخدام الصوت" (Raitano, 2004). من الضروري أن نلاحظ أنه على الرغم من الآثار السلبية لهذه الاضطرابات على الأنشطة الاجتماعية، لا ينبغي أن ييأس والديهم أو معلمي الأطفال الذين يعانون من مثل هذه الاضطرابات. عندما تُترك اضطرابات اللغة والكلام دون علاج، فمن المرجح أن تضعف ثقة الطفل واحترامه لذاته، مما يعيق نموه الاجتماعي. على الرغم من وجود علاجات لهذه المشاكل، يجب أن تتطابق الاستراتيجيات المناسبة مع اضطرابات معينة، وإلا فقد تتفاقم المشكلة بالفعل (Rvachew & Nowak، 2003).

الكلمات المفتاحية: تدني احترام الذات ، اضطراب النطق واللغة ، الثقة ، العلاج.

1. Introduction

Language and speech disorders have elicited wide debate among psychologists, teachers and parents. While many argue that these disorders are brought about by genetic combinations, others have suggested that factors like mental illness and social environment. According to Fisher et al. (2003), a significant number of children have unexplained difficulties in the acquisition of normal speech and language skills, despite environmental stimulation or intelligence. Communication disorders include articulation problems, fluency problems, aphasia, delays in speech and voice disorders (Rvachew, 2006). It is estimated that 5% of school- aged children suffer from language and speech disorders; of these, 3% have voice disorders, 1% stutter, and 2-3% have delayed phonological development, however these proportions tend to decrease with age (McLeod, 2003). The correct way of assisting children to overcome their speech or language disorder is crucially important. Diagnosis can come from reading their school file; inviting pathologists into class; or observing the child during their most active moments (Deiner, 2009). Dealing with the identified problem directly can decrease the level of frustration over time, although some argue that letting children express themselves through play is adequate to promote language and speech development (Rvachew et al, 2004). Children who suffer from speech and language disorders often experience low self-esteem and lack confidence, which makes the child unable to freely interact and improve with peers, thereby further inhibiting development (Weston & Bain, 2003).

2. Research Aims and Question

The aim of this study is to analyse the link between confidence and language disorders in order to develop strategies to support children and assist with their growth. This research will draw on the reviewing the pertinent literature, both theoretical and empirical, to provide insights into the way that linguistic difficulties can impact on learning effectiveness. It provides informed guidelines for the education system on the importance of developing curricula that cater to students with

speech and language disorders. The study also seeks to provide guidelines to parents and others on how to relate to such children, thereby boosting their self-confidence.

The research question is:

Do speech and language disorders affect the self- esteem and confidence of children with these disorders, and how can this challenge be addressed by parents and teachers in contact with such children?

3. Research Methodology

This study uses professional databases and library searches to identify studies to be included. Key words included low self-esteem, speech and language disorder, confidence, therapy. The only excluding criteria were literature that was not peer-reviewed or that was dated prior to 1990, and the large majority of studies used were published after the year 2000. In this study, it was decided to only use a literature review rather than a 'field-based' questionnaire and interview approach. There were a number of reasons for this and they connected into the ethical considerations that now form a large part of a researcher's concern. Due to the fact that young children were at the heart of this work there are a number of ethical concerns that arise.

Overall, this study employs a narrative literature review methodology, searching, analysing and synthesising the scholarly literature on the effect of self-esteem and confidence on children with speech and language disorders. Narrative reviews, unlike systematic reviews or meta-analyses, do not identify streamlined criteria prior to searching for studies to be included in the study (Hargrove, Lund, and Griffer, 2005); this creates a disadvantage, in that a wide range of literature, including empirical, theoretical, case study and expository literature, all have the potential to be included in the study.

4. Theoretical Literature Review

4.1 Self-esteem and self-confidence

Self-esteem and confidence are crucial elements in the life of a child because they determine relationships with others and general way of life. Life can be miserable for young people if they lack self-confidence (Foxman, 2004). A child's future is also highly dependent on their personality, as a confident child is likely to make bold decisions in future that may ultimately enrich his or her life (Foxman, 2004).

Barbarin and Hanna (2009) confirm that emotional intelligence and cognitive development occur at the same time, and are highly influenced by self worth, genetics and by socioeconomic conditions. In effect, self confidence among both children and adults is a natural product of self awareness, as well as better understanding of the environment and their learning process (Barbarin & Hanna, 2009). Self confidence starts at an early age as the mind and body develops (Twenge, 2007). Some psychologists like Schmidt and Lee (2005) however, claim that a child's self-esteem and self-confidence are affected more by the control mechanisms that they have developed for dealing with various situations. This argument is based on the premise that individuals with the same biological background and environmental proximity usually end up with different control mechanisms (Schmidt and Lee, 2005). They believe that self-confidence and self- esteem is dependent on the control mechanisms that determine responses to arousal, emotion or attention, as well as his cognitive and adaptive ability, which derive from the self-perception process (Weston & Bain, 2003).

According to Shelov (2004), since self-confidence and self-esteem, are established by levels of personal self-judgment, it is largely affected by past experiences. Self-examination is premised on various issues that have happened to a person's life. These may include treatment by parents, friends, living environment, family background, financial status of the family, and other past experiences. The assessment can be positive, resulting in a high opinion of oneself, or negative, leading to lower

self-esteem. This was supported by a study by National Schools Readiness Indicators Initiative in 2005, which concluded that self-perception and judgement are the tools for measuring self-esteem, and that these seem to be predominantly determined by health and physical development, communications abilities, various advances in the learning process, emotional stability and social competence as well as cognitive and general knowledge abilities. This supports the argument that the environment plays a major role in a child's development. A child's immediate environment is made up of their families, early care and education or schools, health care, communities and the general social system, many of which can be partially controlled to support those children with communicative difficulties.

Children with low self-esteem often have a distorted image of themselves (Shelov, 2004) and do not believe themselves to be capable of succeeding or that others respect them. When this trend is not reversed early, it may profoundly affect their decision making processes in future and deprive them of the ability to make their own decisions, making them dependent on others to come up with decisions that affect them. Those children who grow up with low self-esteem, will value themselves through others, rather than recognising that all people are born with distinctive qualities that make them distinct from others (McLeod, 2003).

Confidence can be described as having the will and strength to accomplish things as required in a particular case (Ursiny, 2005). It is dependent on two interlinked aspects: self-esteem and effectiveness in doing things. Self-esteem relates to ones worth as determined by the self, and the acceptance of the opinions of others contributes to shaping attitudes towards oneself. A child who has high self-worth, perhaps because of good parenting, is correspondingly self-confident, which leads to higher levels of effectiveness. For this reason, low self-esteem tends to result in a child having lower confidence levels, which in turn affects their performance in later ages (Ursiny, 2005). It is therefore argued that self- esteem and effectiveness are two integral elements in building confidence. A lack of confidence drains away energy, courage, determination, motivation, enables negativity, and limits enthusiasm to carry out tasks at hand (Weisz et al 2005).

4.1.1 Causes of self-confidence issues

Self-confidence usually determines the course of action that an individual will take when faced by a task, causing either excitement at a challenge or allowing a person to be discouraged. Like other animals, human beings respond to the environment and are shaped by it. Animals that are brought up under cruel conditions by cruel parents in a cruel kingdom will similarly be cruel (Ascione, 2010). There are many potential causes of limited self-confidence: past failures, abuse and insults, fear of risks, insecurity, personal environment, family background and parenting, lack of exposure to challenge, lack of skills for a particular field, or unrealistic goals (Weisz et al 2005).

Low self-confidence is a mental syndrome that manifests itself in various ways. Severe (2003) claims that it is a trait that is a combination of many factors. As listed above, one of the reasons as to why a person may lose self-confidence is because of past failures. These turn negative pictures and results into invisible threats that take control of the mind of a person, requiring resilience and determination to manage failures and move on (Hill & Buss, 2006). It is normal to feel downcast in a failure but actions taken during this period determine whether a person will be discouraged or try again and succeed. Many successful people who are experts in their fields have obviously ignored the urge to give up. A person like Thomas Edison, founder of luminescent electric bulbs, is a good example the importance of self-confidence. He carried out more than hundred trials before succeeding, which could have easily eroded his self-confidence. However, he stayed objective and created an invention that has profoundly shaped the modern world (McLeod, 2003).

Hill and Buss (2006) state that objectives and mission can act as a compass direction towards a mission, and their lack will automatically affect the confidence of a person. The energy, zeal, enthusiasm with which a person accomplishes a given task affects their confidence levels. This means that direction opens the mind and brings out internal motivations concerning a given issue. The objective towards the particular idea acts as an "eye", meaning that if the "eye" is impaired, then the idea will not

materialize because self-confidence is damaged by fears of failure (Firefox, 2004). The underlines the importance of providing a clear structure and goal for students, to assist in their growth and development.

A survey conducted by the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA) confirms self-esteem is more vulnerable in children than in adults, as children are still in the process of developing their emotions. Psychologists argue that emotional and behavioural complications constitute the biggest proportion of the factors leading to failure in early child education. This is particularly evident with inconsistency in language, and failures by a child to develop basic language skills, which have profound detrimental effects on the further development of a child, thus lowering their self-esteem. The cognitive and other learning competencies in children have a direct relationship with socio-emotional aspects of a child, which are in turn determined by their environment (Gilliam, 2008).

According to Ursiny, (2005), insecurity is another cause of limited self-confidence. A person who is insecure has no belief in themselves because of the self- generated feelings of inability to achieve goals. Insecurity brings fear of the unknown which in turn damages confidence and results in lowered self-esteem, brings apprehension, self-doubt, and vulnerability which adds more poison to the body. Consequently, the self-confidence available leaves and destroys the psychological wellbeing of the affected person. In this way the attitude of a person gets impaired and action becomes an onerous as self-confidence is absent (Ursiny, 2005).

Apart from insecurity, fear of risks can also inhibit self-confidence, especially if one has made mistakes in an undertaking in the past or has experienced unpleasantness. When a person has fears of taking risks, then it is likely that self- confidence is lacking because failure is then perceived as more likely. An illustration of this is the space exploration undertaken by the North America Space Agency (NASA) which requires colossal funds as well as taking very high risks. Investments of this magnitude normally require high levels of confidence by the personnel working in this station because it is fail-or-succeeding way of looking at things while having in

mind, the long term objective. Therefore, risks especially of this level may cause self-confidence to disappear.

In addition, discouragement may wear out self-confidence which can also result from negative words from negative people who either enjoy the failure of others or who lack the empathy to respond appropriately, horrible past experiences that lead to despair, or lack of support from those expected to assist. The discouragement then feeds the mind of the affected individual with fear of failure which in turn wears them down by eroding their confidence. In most cases, this emotional feeling that inhibits an individual from progress, takes its course because of a person yielding in instead of seeing lessons thereof. The instance of the twenty-nine miners who perished in Australia is a classic example of what can result from discouragement. Due to the poisonous gas emissions from the mine field, the rescue team became discouraged and consequently lost confidence, which ultimately resulted in the demise of the miners (Firefox, 2004).

Furthermore, the various studies that have been carried out by social scientists have revealed that the behaviours of children are hugely determined by the background in which they grow up. The parenting approach adopted by their parents plays a big role in the overall wellbeing of the children. Severe (2003) argues that all parent plays a leading role in developing the self-confidence of their children. Normally children are very receptive to what they hear and see, which consequently profoundly impacts on their lives. The words spoken to children by their parents, friends or teachers can bring out the potential in them or lead to a gathering of negative feelings, which in turn result in inability to express positive attitude, leading to loss of confidence. A number of people who have grown to be influential in the society received positive words and encouragement from their elders that brought out the best from them, unlike the ones who grew in a discouraging environment. Apart from the above, socialization process plays a big role in shaping an individual's self-confidence (Shechtman, 2006).

The level of performance produced by an individual is usually based on the information and skills that a person has relating to their particular task (Anthony, 2007). However, lack of skills and other competencies required may ruin ones performance due to absence of self-confidence. For instance ,games such as ice skating require an abundance of high level skills for one to succeed, due not only to the particular muscular strengths but also to the dangers involved because of the terrain in which they take place. This implies that one without the competence and skills needed will, a person may be very likely to lose confidence as a result of the challenging or unforgiving terrain. Parallels of this exist with students who face extreme communicative difficulties: without proper encouragement and support, the enormity of overcoming their difficulties can lead to them being discouraged and never attaining self-esteem or self- confidence.

4.1.1 The relationship between self-esteem and self-confidence

Anthony (2007) defines self-esteem as a psychological term that denotes the self-evaluation that causes an individual to develop either low or high self-esteem. An individual may assess himself based on various independent factors, including financial status, social class, and family background, among other contributing aspects that can significantly contribute to the behaviour of an individual towards others. A person with high self-esteem has the ability to make sound and realistic decisions from challenging circumstances, due to their inherent confidence and belief in themselves. Self-esteem is one of the core motivating factors that enable a person to relate freely and mingle with others, as well as to be able to form symbiotic relations (Antony, 2007).

Harrison (2003) discovered that children with sharp interactional abilities, language competencies and attractive appearances are having a high self-esteem and are therefore more confident when talking and quick to make decisions. Once these children go through experiences that boost their egos, they become even more confident, which in turn helps them to achieve future goals and creates a positive reinforcement loop. Great orators who have high levels of charisma and enthusiasm

undoubtedly have high self-esteem of themselves. However, best results are achieved by combing self-confidence which is directly related to self- esteem. Though the terms have different meanings, they are closely intertwined: self-confidence is composed of self-esteem and one's efficiency in doing things (McGee, 2010), which is shown by the absence of one element automatically inhibiting the effectiveness of the other. Self-confidence entails having the ability to accomplish tasks or think objectively without fear for making a mistake. Besides, the two elements, self-esteem and confidence contribute to the shaping of the person's image, which in turn determines the effectiveness of the two elements (Shechtman, 2006).

In terms of the personal and academic growth of a child is concerned pertaining to the above elements, any child who has grown up in a harsh environment is more likely to be adversely affected by these experiences, even in adulthood. This may be the case where corrective measures have not been taken to reverse the menace in time. Children who are brought up in an environment of abuses and insults, being called all sorts of names, grow up in fear. This can often result in them having a distorted perception of society or their interaction with others, because of the negative things that have heard others saying about themselves during their early years. This leads to low self-esteem resulting from continuous demeaning behaviours which erode the child's self-image. In consequence, according to Shelov (2004), there shall be drastic change in self-confidence, increased nightmares, unknown fears as well as health complications such as headaches, weight loss, low appetite and stomach aches.

A child with a good balance of self-esteem and self-confidence has the potential to becoming a great person in society and have positive impacts on others. These enable the child to be bold and courageous in whatever he does, helping them to achieve happiness and success. Besides, as the child grows, it becomes easier to make rational decisions due to the fact that as the inner being is strong. There are various issues and influences that can contribute to the child's level of esteem and confidence in him/her self. These may be internal or external, depending on the surrounding environment and can include factors such as: the love shown to a child, a feeling of belonging,

remarks made concerning the child by parents or friends, academic performances and self-assessment (McGee, 2010).

A child who is loved by their parents feels valued and grows up in a healthier manner, with a reduced chance of being affected by diseases that are brought by stress, depression and other reasons. A child that develops self-confidence that makes him do things with confidence. For instance, a child who is shown affection by his parents is more likely to have a sound mind that enables the child understand issues with ease. Furthermore, the child becomes even confident and courageous to relate with others and will act rationally at his level of age; he will not make mistakes that may be the case for the one who experiences rejection (Shechtman, 2006).

In addition, a child experiencing a sense of belonging and identity develops humane traits that are important to society. Apart from this, the child in most cases will be more likely to be happy and jovial and this enables them to have confidence, and improves the way that others interact with them. One of the reasons that erode confidence in a child is a situation where the child is exposed to self-pity and rejection. These eat away the confidence, leading to poor memory development of the child (Urisny,2007).

Moreover, the way a child is treated in cases like academic performances will also determine his/her future performance. For example, a child who has failed in an exam and receives abusive comments is likely to feel depressed and discouraged. In cases where such treatment recurs every time there is poor performance, the child's confidence fades away and no good results are ever likely to appear. Apart from losing self-esteem, the child also loses self-confidence which results in further undesired performances (Twenge, 2007).

At the same time, a child may have a low self-opinion due to self-evaluation emanating from opinions heard from others, including their parents. Negative comments lead to withdrawal effect by the child; he or she may have fear for others and becomes confused. This can result in child losing confidence in themselves,

leading to poor development (Foxman, 2004).

4.1.2 Strategies to promote self-esteem and self-confidence for children with speech and language disorders

Deiner states that "Language has a developmental base. What is appropriate for children at one stage is inappropriate and considered dysfunctional at other ages" (2009 p.278). Language cannot develop in isolation and requires cognitive development. According to the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA), language is composed of socially shared rules, the meaning of words, putting words together, making words and getting the best combination of words to produce a result. They argue that problems in receiving and expressing language requires assistance to improve. Speech entails the control of air manipulation of the throat, mouth, cheeks and tongue to pronounce certain words. An individual with difficulty in these is suffering from speech disorder. According to Weston and Bain (2003), children with speech or language disorders experience difficulties in relating to others and are therefore frustrated and isolated, which is something that I refer to in my own learning journal experiences. Building self-esteem and confidence among children is crucial to their development, meaning that if language or speech problems are not addressed in a timely manner, this can result in depression, self-denial and self-segregation (Weisz et al, 2005). Alternatively, it may affect their academic performance, perhaps resulting in ostracisation from their peers, and a failure to reach their true potential, as well as low self-esteem.

Education experts and parents have sought better ways of improving the learning process of children with language and speech disorders. Educational intervention develops skills and instils positive attitudes. Children benefit from short, simple explanations; and relate to visionary explanations like pictures better than theory. There is evidence to suggest that correcting speech and language is a basic step in educational success, as well as in building confidence in children. Strategies like showing love, giving proper feedback and encouraging such a child have also been shown to be as important as classroom strategies (Rvachew, 2006).

According to Mruk (2006), music is another means of addressing a variety of societal problems. Child participation in musical activities elicits verbal responses to reduce the speech or language problems (Schooling, 2003). However, the selection of the music to be used also matters; loud and violent music can be detrimental to their development. The music selected should help in increasing verbalization and production of vowels, sounds and consonants. Singing of white noise and rhythmic stimulation can also be helpful in improving stuttering; while melodies and phrases that synchronise with natural rhythms promote proper pronunciation and production of sounds. Singing is typically done as a group activity and does not focus unduly on one individual, allowing the child to freely express himself without feeling shy or scared. Melodic intonation therapy has also been shown to work well with children suffering from speech and language disorders, and has been widely used by health clinics to boost the speech levels and self-esteem of their patients (Glouberman, 2003).

Activities should be selected that are likely to increase the confidence of children, with an observant teacher selecting those activities that a given child particularly enjoys. Having the right ratio of teacher to children assists in the identification and addressing of the strengths and weaknesses of a particular child (Shechtman, 2006). The manner in which feedback is given to a child can also impact on his self-esteem. A child suffering from speech and language disorder is likely to be hyper-sensitive about what he is told, instructed or treated. Dweck (2004) recommends that praise should focus on the specific task accomplished rather than a person oriented praise. For example, phrases such as "I am proud of you, you have worked really hard" or "Wow" should be replaced by phrases such as "you selected the best strategy", "I have realized that you avoided any spelling errors" "that is the best way to pronounce the word" (Dweck, 2004). This strategy is known as particular goal orientation, and not only addresses the child"s self-esteem but will also provide motivation for the attainment of academic goals.

Research by ASHA suggests that children with speech or language disorders should be trained in how to deal with disappointment, learning to accept themselves and have a positive self-image despite comments or reactions of others. While children have the tendency to compare themselves to others in terms of performance and possessions, a child suffering from language and speech therapy should be encouraged to avoid such comparisons (Hannell, 2005). Rvachew, Chiang and Evans (2007) stress the importance of reminding these children that everyone is unique, helping them to recognise their own worth. Knowing oneself brings more happiness and a more fulfilled life (Penn, 2009), which is something I also came to realise through my learning journal.

Self-esteem and confidence affect activities both inside and outside the classroom, highlighting the importance of parents and teachers regularly accentuating the positive. Children with low self-esteem have a tendency to doubt themselves or put themselves down, which is compounded by a feeling of isolation that results from being different or unable to express oneself. Teachers and parents should pay more attention to any work by the child and continually make support available (Rvachew et al, 2007). Children suffering from speech and language disorders should not be criticized when they fail to communicate effectively, and instead be praised for their successes.

Understanding children with speech or language disorder is the best way to boost their confidence. When such children see that they are being treated fairly and understood, they gain the courage to further improve language skills (Guisti Braislin & Cascella, 2005). Particularly for young children, a teacher or parent has the greatest capability to break or build this self-esteem. Expectations measure individual success, therefore should be set carefully, and strategies like differentiated instructions be considered to outline tasks appropriate to their potential (Hill & Buss, 2006). Mistakes should be used to illustrate opportunities to learn, although:

"Frequent criticism damages children's self-esteem and self-confidence. Children who are repeatedly criticized will hesitate to take risks, fear, failure and have

difficulty succeeding academically or socially" (Foxman, p.2004 p.87).

This strategy can also assist the child to focus more on the positive and less on the negative. It is argued that children who spend more time with their parents and refer to their parents are their role models tend to have higher self-esteem. Parents should spend adequate time with their children, especially when they suffer from language or speech disorders (Malbin, 2004). Children normally learn language faster from their mothers, as illustrated by the common use of the word „mother tongue". Parents should also show love and regularly assure their child of their love. A child who knows that he is loved is better prepared to take on challenges without fear or doubt (Crocker & Park, (2004).

Parents and teachers should give children opportunities to offer their own opinions in regard to those issues that affect them. Encouraging self-assessment allows a child to evaluate his own mistakes and come up with solutions. Children are good learners; mimicking whatever they see being done by their parents or other people. It is important for parents to cultivate a culture of liberty in their children because exposure to independence in decision making processes tend to have better self-esteem or confidence (Rvachew, 2006). Freedom to express their potential fosters self-esteem and confidence that assist with better communication, making this a positive loop with language impaired children, and encourages personal growth. In addition, giving a child an opportunity to judge himself, allows the child to develop psychologically and deal more effectively with disorders such as speech and language (Schmidt et al, 2005). Self-esteem, as a psychological and behavioural element is a critical component of thinking, and constitutes a key part of an individual's decision making processes (Campbell, 2007).

Reflecting on successes can rejuvenate the body and inhibit the negative thoughts that often accompany inability to express, such as these children experience. Foxman states that "angry feelings are not dangerous but out of control behaviour associated with anger can be destructive or inappropriate" (2004.pg 87). Feeding the mind by interacting with inspirational books can also be helpful in assisting children with

speech and language problems, or encouraging their participation in activities such as painting or nature walks. The result is improved self-esteem and the emergence of strengths because of the reconciliatory effect of being inspired (Rvachew et al, 2003).

Rewarding good behaviour plays a major role in self-confidence. The recognition of a reward encourages children to try harder, while also reinforcing that their attempts to communicate have been successful, assisting in future attempts. When an appropriate reward is given at the relevant time, it will cement a long term effect that impacts positively on the child's personality (Broomfield & Dodd, 2004).

6. Conclusion

Self-esteem is a vital component in academic performance, physical activities and social skills (Rvachew et al, 2004). Positive relationships with teachers, parents and peers cultivate self-esteem and increase confidence, putting a child in a better position to cope with disappointment and mistakes, execute learning activities and embark on more challenging endeavours. When a child feels good about themselves, this results in higher probability of achieving in class and in life than those children with low self-esteem. Teachers and parents should constantly praise a child through positive feedback, thereby establishing a strong foundation for a child to reap great rewards in future (Bernhardt et al, 2005).

The most anticipated moment for most parents is their child's first words, however when these are delayed, jumbled or never come, parents can worry and seek for proper guidance and knowledge on how to proceed (Pollock & Berni, 2003). Language and speech disorders are common throughout the world, requiring children to be supported in a timely fashion, to avert further damage and begin the process of confidence development that will impact on all aspects of their lives (Bernhardt, 2004).

As indicated in this paper, self-esteem and confidence work together to play a key role in ensuring the success of a child. Parents and teachers dealing with those

children with speech and language disorders should use appropriate and rewarding remedies to rectify the problem. Understanding the behaviour of a child, exercising love and patience, positive feedback and medicinal therapies can also be considered to help their linguistic development and the growth of self-confidence (Bernhardt & Major, 2005).

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