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**Exploring the language learning in children with Autism Spectrum
Disorder**

The case study of autistic children at Azzoug School-Elkseur-Bejaia.

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for a Master's
degree in linguistics at the University of Bejaia

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Abstract

The present study tries to shed light on how children with autism spectrum disorder learn another language while they face difficulties in acquiring their native language. It also investigates problems associated with language learning process and how teachers can assist them. This work is an exploratory study based on a qualitative research design. The data were gathered through two research instruments, namely: observation of autistic youngsters in their natural environment (classroom) and interviews conducted with their teachers at AZZOUG School Elkseur. Based on the analysis of the recorded data, we conclude that the language learning process of autistic children differs significantly from that of typical children. Moreover, the research revealed that autistic children's learning styles differ from one another. Some autistic children have difficulty in expressing themselves and understanding what others say (expressive language and receptive language). Autistic children may also experience other language difficulties (phonological and morphological disorders) when learning the Arabic language and echolalia is the one learning disorder that all these children share. Language learning takes a long time for children with autism.

Key words: Autism spectrum disorder, Autistic children, language learning, language difficulties.

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List of Abbreviations

1. **APA:** American Psychiatric Association.
2. **ASD:** Autism Spectrum Disorder.
3. **CDC:** Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.
4. **NAA:** National Autism Association.
5. **SFARI:** Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative.
6. **DSM-5:** Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition.
7. **PDD-NOS:** Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified.
8. **NINDS:** National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.
9. **MSA:** Modern Standard Arabic.
10. **SOV:** Subject, Object, Verb.
11. **TEACCH:** Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children.

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General introduction

In a world composed of people from various cultures, beliefs, and lifestyles, it is critical to build a mechanism for them to communicate with each other in order to cover their needs, exchange their ideas and express their feelings. This system is called language; it is a set of symbols developed by human beings that are pronounced and combined by sounds or written in some other to express opinions, ideas, cultures, in other words it is the capacity to provide and comprehend each spoken and written words of how language works (Sapir 1992 p, 3, 22). This system of communication implies that humans are using a common language, which is a collection of words commonly used by people of the same community, country, geographical area, culture or traditions.

Children in their early age begin to learn language in order to interact socially. The first words of an infant are like raptures to a parent's ears. They begin acquiring it at birth with different stages, some children realise these stages in different terms, considering their knowledge and their sense of hearing also sight as they learn how to process the meaning behind the sights and sounds. Those kids do not only acquire or use language with their parents, families and other adults nevertheless with interacting with other children of the same age since language shapes youngsters' social interaction and brings other people to their lives. All ordinary youngsters who use and develop their language in ordinary households surrounded by conversation will make their collection of words, sounds, and speeches easy and interesting. Despite all these aspects of normal children, the question is what if those kids are suffering from a special disorder, which makes them unique and different from normal ones in terms of acquiring, interacting using language. They are characterised as children with autism spectrum disorder.

The American psychiatric association (APA) 2013 maintained that autism is often known as autism spectrum disorder named ASD, which is the neurodevelopmental disorder that has a potential as well as a sensitive affect to the social development additionally to the communicative skill that leads to the destruction of child success. Children with this disorder have trouble in the production of language, the first signs of this latter appear in infancy and early childhood between three and five years of age; its symptoms vary from a child to another.

Being autistic does not imply that a child has an illness nor a disease; rather his brain simply functions differently from others, thus infer that these youngsters were born with an inborn incapability to create the normal biologically furnished emotional contact with people simply as other children come into life with this innate handicaps (Kanner 1943 p, 250). So that learning or even developing

their abilities in language seems to be a challenge for those children as a result their abilities may develop in haphazard manner. In fact, they may struggle with language production, but they may have other talents such as art, music, sports, etc.

According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention(CDC), about 1% of the world's population has autism spectrum disorder; over 75,000,000 people; in addition to the world health organisation, about 1m54 are affected in the United States of America . Moreover the Algeria service press as well as PR Chakali, Sub Director of Mental health promotion at the Algerian Ministry of Health claimed that more than 4,000 children are also affected too in 2018 (world autism day 2/4/2019). (<http://www.aps.dz>)

1. Statement of the problem

Autism spectrum disorder is an intellectual disability that can lead to lack of social, communication, and behavioural problems (Peeters 2014 p, 09). When coming to the learning process all children have their own special language that they use to share their ideas, feelings, and needs. A child acquiring language words come to their mind, be produced unconsciously without making efforts, but when coming to autistic children the use and learn language may seem a challenge for them.

Children with autism do not speak in the same way as other children of the same age (Peeters 2014 p, 84). Communication in children with autism may be nonverbal or use or behave with an unusual approach to language hard method. They may expand the language more slowly, have or have no language at all (Roger 2014 p, 14), or have extensive issues with known how and the use of spoken language. Those children might not use gestures to make up for the issues they have with words.

This category of children who are diagnosed with this developmental disorder suffer from challenges as well as struggle in expressing their needs, getting knowledge from their parents, teachers, friends and even from whole society (Peeters 2014 p, 79,80).

Nowadays many associations, organisations (National Autism Association “NAA”, Simons foundation Autism Research initiative “SFARI...etc.) and schools (Abbey school for exceptional children, Land park academy and Azzoug school...etc.) were raised. This what led to many researches in this field. So that this study aims to explore as well as investigates the autistic language learning mainly basing on the standard modern Arabic since it is the Algerian language programs were taught, in which situation and how using different techniques and procedures.

2. Research questions

Students with autism mainly suffer from lack of communication; if they communicate, their language will be limited to their parents. Therefore, the main goal of this study is to figure out and find how autistic children learn the language in school in their daily life. The current research poses and tries to answer these following research questions:

- 1) How do autistics learn language?
- 2) How does typical children's language vary from autistic children's language?
- 3) How can a teacher help those children to overcome their difficulties in using language?

3. Significance of the study

Few researchers especially in the Algerian context have investigated the problem at hand. As a result, we decided to conduct additional research to evaluate such a study. As it is known, the most challenging aspect of the autism spectrum disorder is a lack of social interaction and communication. They dedicate a substantial amount of effort to learning and mastering a language, yet they face various difficulties in the process of expressing themselves or even their needs.

The significance of this research is that it will provide insights into exploring language learning in children affected by autism. Moreover, the analysis that is presented in this work presents valuable information and clarifications for further research that will investigate the language learning by children with autism spectrum disorder.

4. Structure of the study

This study is divided into a general introduction, two chapters (theoretical and practical parts) and a general conclusion.

The research starts with a general introduction, which has been devoted to the statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study and the structure of the thesis.

Chapter one includes two sections that tackle the theoretical part of the study. Section one presents autism spectrum disorder, that is to say its history, a definition of the concept, types of autism, symptoms, causes and diagnosis for a better understanding of the research problem. Section two examines the language learning process. It outlines a definition of language focusing on Arabic as a field of study in Algerian schools. It also presents an overview of language in children, language

acquisition and language learning. However, it also reviews the language in special cases of children affected with the spectrum disorder, characteristics of their language, language acquisition and language learning with a particular focus on the different difficulties and challenges this category of learners face in the school environment.

Chapter two is divided into two sections. Section one is about the methodological procedures, it includes the research design, which is mainly based exploratory. Moreover, it contains the research setting and participants as well as the tools of collecting data. This section is also concerned with the analysis and the discussion of the collected data.

The present research work ends with a general conclusion, which summarises all the elements handled in this study.

Chapter one: The theoretical Part

Introduction

Autism spectrum disorder is classified as a neurodevelopmental disorder severely affecting the development of a child, generally in the field of communication and behaviour of the person with a prevalence of 2 to 5 cases per 10,000 children, which affects boys four times more than girls. (Brin, et al, 2004, p.32). This section of the first chapter traces an overview of the autism spectrum disorder, presenting the origins of the disorder with its definition. Besides, it also sheds light on the types of autism, symptoms and diagnosis for a better recognizing the problem in hand. The second section deals with the language learning process. It provides the reader with a definition of language with a brief presentation of the standard modern Arabic as the field of study in Algerian schools since the research was conducted in an Algerian school. Furthermore, it discusses language in children, as well as language acquisition and learning. Additionally this section examines the language of children affected by autism, their language characteristics, language acquisition and learning. Finally, it describes the difficulties in acquiring and learning language also the challenges these children face in school.

Section one: Autism spectrum disorder

1. History of autism

The term *Autism* was first brought in 1911 by a Swiss psychiatrist Eugen Bleuler who used this term to describe signs and symptoms of schizophrenia, its most severe case. (Evans 2013, p, 01). It consists of the loss of interaction with reality, of relation with the environment, and leading people with schizophrenia to exclude themselves from all social life by a mechanism of withdrawal. Hence, the term “*autism*” derived from the Greek *autos*, which means “*oneself*”. (Tardif & Gepner 2003 p, 09). In fact, the paternity of autism belongs to the psychiatrist Leo Kanner who described in 1943 eleven children "of normal intelligence" and this for the first time in his article “*Autistic Disturbances of Effective Contact*”. (Yvon et al 2014 p. 82).

In 1930, he headed the first children’s psychiatric service in the United States, five years later he published the first English-language manual on child psychiatry. Thirteen years later, the publication of his article, it has the effect of a thunderbolt in the Anglo-Saxon psychiatric milieu of the time. Although these children exhibit different disorders, Kanner observes in all a withdrawal on himself. This withdrawal is expressed in different "effective" areas: the relationship to others, verbal communication and time. (They need not to be “disturbed” "not to undergo any change"). (Yvon, et al 2014 p. 03).

To describe this common state, he borrows from the adult psychiatric clinic the name of a symptom, "*autism*", which refers to the withdrawal into oneself described in schizophrenia, by another psychiatrist Eugen bleuler thirty years before. (Yvon, et al 2014 p. 83).

The use of this symptom of schizophrenia will likely contribute to the long-standing confusion between autism and schizophrenia, not only in the public, but also in psychiatrists: the question of a common entity to early schizophrenia will be definitively abandoned in the 1980s at the international level. (Yvon, et al 2014 p. 83).

The origin of this disorder remains obscure and leads to different interpretations, by doctors, paediatricians or psychiatrists, which diverge according to the two currents of thought of this emerging medical specialty, child psychiatry. At that time, there was opposition between psychoanalysis and biology. (Yvon, et al 2014 p, 83).

2. Definition of autism spectrum disorder

Autism spectrum disorder named ASD is a complicated lifelong developmental incapacity that commonly seems throughout early life, might have an effect on a person's social skills, communication, relationships and self-regulation (American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of mental Disorders (DSM-5) 2013, p, 31). People with autism suffer from a combination of developmental difficulties in three areas: social interaction, communication and their interest and activities. These differences lead to difficulties in adapting to family and social life both in these people and in their entourage. (Yvon, et al 2014 p, 03).

Autism is neither a mental patient nor a psychosis, the study of the relationships between autism and mental illness leads to almost nothing and that it is much more constructive to focus future research on the comparison between autism and other developmental disorders. The difference between mental illness and developmental disorders is not only theoretical. On the contrary, it directly influences intervention. The concept of "mental illness" requires psychiatric treatment; it is only after a sufficient success rate that one can think of a particular form of education. (Peeters 2014 p, 09).

2.1. Types of autism

When thinking about autism, experts have recently talked about different types of autism. Garg Seth and Srivastava (2022) published an article entitled "*Autism spectrum disorder in Children: Types, Causes, Treatment and Prevention*" provided researchers and families with different types such as Asperger syndrome, kanner syndrome, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS), childhood disintegrative disorder, rett syndrome.

2.1.1. Asperger syndrome

Asperger's Syndrome is a developmental disorder in which there are qualitative abnormalities in reciprocal social interactions that resemble those observed in autism. Restricted interests and repetitive, stereotyped activities are also present. On the other hand, cognitive development and language development are of good quality, it is often associated with Motor clumsiness. It has been categorised as level1 of autism disorder by the DSM-5 diagnostic manual. What should be known about the level1 spectrum disorder is that children have a high average intelligence and strong verbal skills. (Gargseth 2022).

2.1.2. Kanner's syndrome

Kanner's syndrome is named according to the psychiatrist Leo Kanner "Kanner's autism". It is also called infantile psychosis. This early form of autism is the best known. It generally reaches three or four boys for every one girl and is observed in all races, in all aspects of life, whatever their intellectual and emotional socio-economic level are. Generally, in the female sex, the attack is much more serious with a massive deficit of the sphere as well as cognitive of the language. Symptoms appear very early in 2/3 of cases. For the rest of the cases, they occur from 2 or 3 years after an apparently normal psychomotor development. (Villard 1984 p, 05).

2.1.3. Pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS)

Pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS) sometimes referred to as "a typical autism" is a mild type of autism that presents a variety of symptoms. The autistic child may experience challenges in developing language, social, walking and other skills. (Baird et al 2001 p, 468).

2.1.4. Childhood disintegrative disorder

It is also called Heller's syndrome, it typically affects infants and pre-schoolers. At this point, the child grows normally until at least the age of two years, then shows a sudden decline in social communication and behavioural skills. This sudden deterioration is a temporary and transitory phase for a youngster. (Garg Seth & Srivastava 2022).

2.1.5. Rett syndrome

A rare genetic disorder primarily occurs in girls in twelve years "Female 1:9000 and male 16 cases". (Zimmerman 2008 p, 84). It is considered as the only diagnosable and medically performed form of autism spectrum disorder. Girls with rett syndrome suffer from communication disorders. The one common symptom of this syndrome is that they have a limited ability to use their hands for regular activity. (Zimmerman 2008 p, 22, 239).

2.2. Autism symptoms

There are important signs that parents should notice in their child to know if he is autistic or not, which should be observed according to the diagnosis of mental health DSM-5.

2.2.1. Developmental milestones

Developmental milestones are signs of child development. Youngsters attain dozens of biological process milestones between birth and adulthood. Early milestones encompass matters most kids can do through a certain age, such as “taking first steps, smiling for the first time and waving bye-bye”; later milestones involve the acquisition of language, social, physical and intellectual abilities. Kids reach it in how they play, learn, speak, act and move. They reach it every day. (Vanover 2016 p, 13).

According to Jo Rudy (2022) if a baby fails to reach this step at two months old, four months old, six months old, nine months old and a year old this can be diagnosed as one of the first early signs of ASD or another developmental disorder. Nevertheless, not all babies reach developmental milestones at the exact same time, it is normal to have some variations in the development. Instead, that statement is huge oversimplification of the reality because:

- Many autistics reach early developmental milestones on time or early, but then lose ground.
- Some autistics reach a number of their biological process milestones very early; however, others reach it late.
- Autistics can appear to gain important skills but in fact, be unable to use those skills in real world situations.
- Many autistics have alleged “Splinter” skills, which might be terribly advanced however, that do not seem to be helpful in daily life.

2.2.2. Social interaction

According to Kanner, the most striking fundamental disorder called "pathognomonic" is the inability of these children to establish relationships in a normal way with people and situations, from the beginning of their life. (Tardif & Gepner 2003 p, 12). The lack of understanding of others' expressions makes it difficult to harmonise with them and to share emotionally. The child is therefore isolated, not seeking contact with others and especially children of his age. He fails to develop social games with other children and does not adapt to group situations. (Rogé 2003 p, 24).

2.2.3. Problems in communication

Language disorders, even the absence of language, were among the first symptoms to draw attention to the real difficulties of the psychotic child. They are really at the heart of the problem since the hearing is good. However, the integration of words does not take place as a signifying element but only as a pure sound with its variations and probably only memory helps these children to reach to a sort of lexicon whose signifying element will only have definition insofar as it is related to reality. In

addition, the acquisition of language is a means and an essential passage to allow certain progress. (Villard 1984 p, 153).

2.2.4. Social mimics

Social mimics are impoverished or exaggerated and may seem poorly adapted to the context. For example, the child laughs without anyone understanding why, or else he smiles while looking at a luminous ray and does not smile when we speak to him or when we try to attract his attention. (Rogé 2003 p, 23).

2.2.5. Lack of eye contact (decrease eye)

This skill is largely absent in autistics. Autistic children are less likely to look directly into a person's eyes, implying that they are less engaged with others or less responsive to people in general; also, autistics are overly focused on one item without moving their eyes. (Rogé 2003 p, 23).

2.2.6. The use of gestures

Gestural expression is impoverished. Gestures (pointing with finger), when they exist, are rarely used for the social purpose of sharing interest or asking for help. The child points in the direction of the coveted object but does not seek the gaze of the adult to make him participate in the situation. (Rogé 2003 p, 24).

Characteristics of autism can be identified by early surveillance (collecting or gathering information) and screening (testing). This surveillance is an active on-going process of watching a child grow and encouraging conversation between parents and providers about children's skills and abilities. (Baird et al 2001 p, 468). Screening, on the other hand, involves completing checklists or questionnaires specifically designed to identify issues that require further evaluation made by parents. (Boehm 2016 p, 15).

2.3. Causes of autism

Autism spectrum disorder has no single known cause; scientists do not know exactly what causes this disorder. Given the complexity of the disorder as well as the fact that symptoms vary from each other resulting in certain causes. (Yvon 2014 p, 05).

2.3.1. Genetic causes

For some children, autism may be associated with genetic conditions; it perhaps related to things such as parental age or prescription medications taken during pregnancy. Some genetic mutations appear to be inherited at the same time others arise spontaneously. (Vanover 2016 p, 34).

2.3.2. Environmental factors

Researchers in this domain are currently exploring whether factors such as viral infections, medications or complications during pregnancy or air pollutants play a role in triggering Autism spectrum disorder. Exposure to adverse situations during childhood can have a profound impact on children's development. Environmental factors that cause stressful situations for young children include living in poverty, poor diet, and an unsafe living environment, exposure to harmful substances such as lead and exposure to drugs and alcohol, abuse and other traumatic relatives. These types of risk factors have a cumulative effect on the child. The more risk factors a child is exposed to, the more likely they are to experience some kind of delay. (Vanover 2016 p, 34) ; (Al-Adwan et al 2019 p, 51).

2.3.3. Antenatal factors

The contamination of the mother by infectious agents. In particular, the rubella virus or the cytomegalovirus, contracted during pregnancy, could increase the risk of onset of autism in her child, either by direct toxic effect on the neurons of the foetus, or by an indirect injury effect. Moreover, it seems that the occurrence of uterine haemorrhages and threatened miscarriages centred on the second trimester of pregnancy are more frequent in mothers of autistic children. The mechanism of attack on the foetus could be of a direct injury nature, but would not exclude. According to some, psycho-organic factors such as stress or maternal depression have repercussions on the foetus. Indeed, a few rare studies, which to our knowledge have not been replicated, have shown that maternal depression during pregnancy and after birth, more than all other types of maternal pathology during pregnancy, could constitute a factor of risk of occurrence of an autistic syndrome in the child. (Tardif & Gepner 2003 p, 62).

2.3.4. Perinatal factors

Perinatal factors (occurring around birth) According to certain epidemiological studies, states of suffering in the new born, having led to an incubator, seem more frequent in some cases in the history of an autistic child than in the history of an autistic child than in the general population. Similarly, prematurity or post-maturity seem more common. (Tardif & Gepner 2003 p, 63)

2.3.5. Postnatal infections (or neonatal)

Postnatal factors: on the one hand, are postnatal infections by the virus of herpes, measles or mumps seem to be involved in certain cases of autism. On the other hand, it is possible that certain major environmental deficiencies on the educational and affective levels, such as those suffered by children in nursery schools in Romania, are a risk factor for autistic syndromes. (Tardif & Gepner 2003 p, 63).

As autism spectrum disorder symptoms do not appear all in the child, causes of this latter also are not the same in all children (Landrigan 2010, p, 219). According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (*NINDS*), both genetics and environmental factors can determine whether a child develops autism, moreover, several old and new sources have concluded that vaccines do not cause ASD.

2.4. Diagnosis of autism

Diagnosing autism can be difficult because there is no medical test to diagnosis it. Doctors look at the child's developmental history and behaviour to make diagnosis since it can sometimes be detected at 18 months or younger. By the age of two years, diagnosis by an experienced professional can be considered very reliable. However, many children receive final diagnosis until much older some are not diagnosed until they are adolescent or adults. This delay means that children with autism might not get the early help need. (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 2013 p, 32).

So that to meet the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for autism, a child must show permanent deficiencies in each of three areas of social communication and interaction addition to at least three of four types restricted, repetitive behaviour

- Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity, ranging such as from abnormal social approach and fail in communication.
- Deficiencies in development, maintenance and understanding relationships.
- Deficits in non-verbal communication behaviours. (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 2013 p, 32, 33).

Because autism varies widely in symptoms and severity making a diagnosis may be difficult, no one has find a therapeutic environment, method, medicament that have brought to all autistic children who have undergone it. (Tardif & Gepner 2003 p, 14).

Section two: Language learning

1. What is language

Linguists, philosophers and phoneticians such as Bloomfield, Wiredu and Sweet have proposed many definitions for language. The Swiss linguist Saussure (1966 p, 68, 73) stated that language is an arbitrary system of signs provided by signifier and signified; Language is first a system that is not based on any logic or reason, secondly the system covers both objects and expressions used for objects. Thirdly, objects and expressions are arbitrarily linked. Finally, expressions contain sounds and graphemes that humans utilise to generate speech and communicate.”

Additionally, Lyons (1981 p, 2, 4) claims that languages are the main communication systems used by specific groups of people within the specific society they belong to. Lyons in particular points out that language is people's best communication system for certain social groups.

1.1.Verbal communication

Verbal communication is the most pervasive form of communication in human societies; it is any communication tool that involves the use of words to convey ideas. This is true not only for ‘purely verbal’ messages and for processes.(if they exist at all), but also in the vast array of commonly verbal forms of communication and the even greater range of communication phenomena in which language can be shown to play a role either directly or indirectly. Common sense dictates that a topic like verbal communication should be a primary focus of both the scientific study of communication and the scientific study of language. (De Gruyter, et al 2016 p, 03).

1.2.Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication corresponds to the expression of the face and the postures of the body that one adopts: it is the language of the body. (De Lavergne 2010 p, 01). When it comes to communicating feelings or attitudes to others, a person's nonverbal behaviour is more important than his words. When nonverbal behaviour contradicts speech, the total impact of the message is more likely to be determined. As a result, the impact of facial expression is greater than that of tone of voice, and finally that of words. (Mehrabian 1971 p, 43, 45).

A rule named “3V rule” based on work of professor Mehrabian claimed that Just 7% of communication is verbal, 38% is vocal (based on voice), 55% is visual (imitation). Therefore, 93% of communication is nonverbal.

1.3. Systems of language

Language is made up of systems; it is one of Saussure's contributions to linguistics. He states that each element in the system derives its meaning from its relationship to other elements in this system. Understanding how language works and the systems that make it work as an essential to being able to teach it (Molawane & Ramdas 2017 p, 03). These latter comprises five subsystems which are

- a. Lexical system: containing thousands of words whose function is to reflect the entire range things and phenomenon in the ambient world.
- b. Phonetic and phonology systems: they are subfields of linguistics; the first means the study of human sounds whereas the second refers to the classification of sounds within the system of a particular language.
- c. Morphology: is the study of structure of words. it includes words, suffixes, prefixes...etc.
- d. Syntax and grammatical systems: syntax is a set of rules that govern the way that words are organised in a sentence and the way sentences are arranged, on contrary grammar whose function is to arrange words in sentences reflecting thoughts exchanges in speech communication.
- e. Semantics and pragmatics: semantics is about the meaning of words and pragmatics is a broader field, studies the context or the meaning behind the words of a sentence.

1.4. Modern standard Arabic

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), moreover referred to, as Literary or Standard Arabic, is the decent language of an envisioned 320 million humans within the 22 Arab nations represented within the Arab League. Arabic is the fourth most-commonly-spoken language within the world, and it is far one of the six respectable languages of the United Nations.

There are versions of MSA: the written and the spoken. Written MSA is the identical all through the Arab world, even as the spoken language can range primarily based totally on geographical location, usage, context, and nearby dialect. It was noted that spoken MSA has greater grammatical licence than written MSA, as audio gadgets commonly have a tendency to drop grammatical endings in their speech. In our course, you may occasionally listen to the endings and occasionally not. This displays modern usage, which has a tendency to be variable and specific to the speaker and / or situation. While MSA has no local audio system of its own, maximum knowledgeable Arabs can speak, read, and apprehend MSA. (Alosh et al 2012 p, 02).

1.4.1. History of standard Arabic

Arabic has been seen as a member of Semitic languages which consist of some languages within the Middle East and North Africa. It originated from Afro-Asiatic languages, which includes Hebrew, Ethiopian, and different languages. The first emergence of Arabic as an international language is going lower back to the 7th century. The Arabic in pre-Islamic era, the Arabic at the dawn of Islam and thirdly the Arabic Standardization. (Al-Huri 2015 p, 28, 30).

2. Children and language

The languages of the world contain thousands of words that can be combined to convey an infinite number of meanings. Children are born without knowing which of the world languages they are learning. Despite this, most children pick up the basics of the language in the preschool and preschool years with ease, without formal instruction or explicit feedback. By the age of five, they have a vocabulary of thousands of words; form sentences with complex grammatical features; distinguish between literal and nonliteral meanings such as humour or metaphor; observe the social conventions of conversation; and language skills at the service of learning to read. By the age of eight, his inventory of speech sounds had matured. Considerably. Around 16% of children experience delays in the early stages of language learning, and around half of these children experience persistent difficulties. For children aged 3 to 5 years, speech and language impairment is the most common admission criterion for admission to preschool special education institutions is considered an admission criterion for special education; Speech and language disabilities, however, come second. Impairments in language or speech severe enough to interfere with essential everyday functions, including learning, communication, and/or social interactions, meet the criteria for disability. (Feldman 2019 p, 399).

2.1.Children and language acquisition

Language acquisition refers to the process by which children gain fluency in their native language. The ability to learn and understand language is inherited genetically, but the language children speak relies on a genetically programmed organ in the brain, children begin to develop a language as soon as they are born and are exposed to linguistic settings. Children must, however, employ the only instrument they have at their disposal, which is their inborn mental grammar, to accomplish this. (Chomsky 2004 p, 17). Without the assistance of a tutor, children all over the world learn their first language. As a result, language acquisition appears to be distinct from acquiring other skills such as swimming, dancing, or gymnastics. The acquisition of a mother tongue is far less likely to be hampered by intellectual disability than the acquisition of other intellectual skills. Unless raised

in linguistic isolation, every normal human child learns one or more languages and learns the basics of their language at a young age, say six. (Safitri 2020 p, 161).

2.1.1. Stages of language acquisition (Hutauruk 2015 p, 54, 55)

✚ *pre-talking stage (0-6 months)*

The child uses an expressive language when he cries to express what he want as well as uses receptive language where he understands of his family.

✚ *Babbling stage (6-8 months)*

The infants begin to make sounds like “Mama” and “Baba”; at this stage, babblers also are simply beginning to manipulate their facial and tongue muscles.

✚ *Holophrastic/ one word stage (9-18 months)*

IS the first word of children to compose a sentence they use to describe a particular emotional state.

✚ *Two word stage (18-24 months)*

This stage occurs at (18-24 months) of age the child begins to write the two-word sentences to convey a more complex ideas for example Mummy shoes.

✚ *Telegraphic stage (24-30 months)*

Telegraphic (full body) is the simplified form of speech in which only the most important words are used to express thoughts.

✚ *Later multiword/ complex stage (30+months)*

This stage is a high-level language acquisition, usually occurring at the age of three years. This stage of speaking is characterised by continued development of vocabulary acquisition and the addition of grammatical auxiliary words. Consequently, sentences are longer, grammatical elements are less likely to be omitted and children often overgeneralize rules.

2.2.Children and language learning

Krashen (1981 p, 1) defines learning as a process between acquiring and utterance, Language acquisition is very similar to the process children use to acquire first and second languages. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language, a natural communication in which speakers are not concerned with the form of their expressions but with the messages they convey and understand.

Language learning can take the form of learning a second language or learning a foreign language. Learning a language other than one's mother tongue that is spoken in the place where pupils study it is known as second language learning. Foreign language learning, on the other hand, is language learning that does not take place in the environment where students learn the language (Moeller & Catalano, 2015). As a result, Kukulska-hulme (2016) claims that language learning has changed significantly in communities where cellular technology is widely used. Furthermore, the language learning process has changed because of fresh perspectives from learners on the optimal place and time to conduct language-learning activities. Because of these circumstances, new trends in fashion have emerged.

3. Language and autism

Most parents of autistic child initially begin to worry that there is something wrong with their child's development due to an early delay or decline in language use. The use of functional language during school age has been shown to be associated with better long-term consequences of autism. The expressive language that includes fluency and flexibility, which underline the distinction between high functioning, and low functioning autism at school age or adolescence. In addition to the receptive language that means the ability to understand language rather than produce it, it is more difficult to obtain reliable measures, especially for very young children. For example, school-age boys with autism started out with lower receptive, expressive, and global language skills than normally developing boys. (Gernsbacher et al 2016 p, 880,883).

Historically, some children with autism have not been able to adapt to a conversation or respond to words as neurologists could (Gernsbacher et al 2016 p, 879). In other words, three children do not respond to simple commands (give, hold, come, take), while seven others respond poorly, only five children of a study look properly. Eleven children do not know how to say no to the head, seven children cannot imitate goodbye or bravo or puppets or do not use them wisely. In seven cases also, children repeat one or words without meaning. (De Villard 1984 p, 37).

Autistic children proceed from pre-speech disorders, they may be too wise from birth, or extremely noisy and even their voice modulation during screaming is deferential and babbling. Moreover, a child can build monotonous, totally inexpressive and meaningless sound effects compared to those around him. Nevertheless, there are also problems of access to mental imagery and symbolization: the lack of integration of those who are seen or heard resulting in a lack of smile response or little discriminatory smile but on the other hand, smiling at the angels, smiling by chance that prolong abnormally. (De Villard 1984 p, 50).

Children with autism disorder have difficulty initiating, maintaining, and closing a conversation, respecting the turn of the role, passages from coo to donkey, incongruous comments, tendency to interrupt the interlocutor logorrhoea on one's own centres of interest, failure to take into account other people's signs of impatience or boredom, failure to seek the opinion of the interlocutor. (Contejean & Doyen 2012 p, 59).

3.1. language characteristics in autism

Language disorders are sometimes more difficult to distinguish due to possible overlap of certain signs. These characteristics are. (Rogé 2003 p, 34).

✚ Echolalia

The child echoes words, phrases, or expressions that caught their attention. For example, they may repeat a question asked instead of answering it. The adult asks, "Do you want to drink?" and the child says, "Do you want to drink?" instead of giving an answer. (Rogé 2003 p, 24).

✚ The use of pronouns

Pronoun inversion is the substitution of one pronoun by another. (Contejean & Doyen 2012 p, 57). The pronominal inversion "I, you" does not take place in these children, showing that they do not appropriate the sentence or do not modify it to adapt it to the new situation example: the child says, "you want your dessert" instead of saying "I want my dessert". (Tardif & Gepner 2003 p, 13).

✚ Comprehension of language

The most common feature in autistics is that they understand fewer words, which leads to the incapacity of comprehension in a conversation or in language development. (Gernsbacher et al p, 419).

✚ Focusing on literal meaning

In the case of autism spectrum disorder, focusing on the literal meaning of a word produces understandable responses and selecting keywords or phrases than focusing on their literal meaning. Nevertheless, for normal people this may seem inappropriate in a conversation. (Bazilchuk 2015).

✚ Pragmatic language skill

The pragmatics of language is considered as the use of language in communication, the adaptation of language to the situation and to the interlocutor. It is opposed to the formal aspects of language, which are phonology, lexicon and syntax. Some forms of autism, in particular Asperger's

syndrome, thus mainly affect pragmatic, while the formal aspects are relatively preserved. However, more than 50% of autistic children have a total absence of language. (Contejean & Doyen 2012 p, 58).

Nonverbal communication

Several youngsters who are affected by autism develop little in the way of language skills, relying most of the time on nonverbal communication techniques such as pointing, gesturing, or even crying and use of sounds due to not understanding their feelings, frustration, or being unable to use the right words. (Rogé 2003 p, 23, 24).

Make eye contact and communication

Eye contact is one of the things autistics struggle with, for them avoiding eye contact is helpful to talk clearly, since it takes away all the stimuli that come while pointing to others eyes. In addition, it helps them to focus on communication purely. (Gernsbacher et al 2016 p, 879).

3.2. Autism and language acquisition

Do autistic children and typical children learn to speak in the same way? Research on language acquisition in children with ASD has been primarily product-oriented, revealing specific strengths and weaknesses in their language skills. For example, pragmatic skills are particularly affected in ASD, with children consistently having difficulty answering questions, sharing, requesting information, and producing narratives. The grammatical and semantic components of language appear to be less affected in general. (Swensen et al 2007 p, 542)

Children with autism over a mental age of three can follow subject, verb, and object (SOV) word order when interpreting sentences consistently perform well on standardised vocabulary tests, and exhibit similar superordinate- and basic-level organisation of their lexicons. However, Autistics also use a markedly limited range of morphological and syntactic forms in their spontaneous and their word meanings do not appear to be as detailed and well integrated as typically developing children in all lexical areas. However, although these studies have revealed what the youngsters with autism have acquired by the time they were tested, they have not assessed how they acquired them. (Swensen et al 2007 p, 543).

3.3. Autism and language learning

Language learning is without doubt one of the most fascinating aspects of children's development; it is a procedure that enables people to learn, communicate and fluently understand language from a young age. In fact, language learning serves as a conduit for people to interact with

one another and with the environment in general (Alkhresheh 2020 p, 106). Nevertheless, learning a language can emerge as a completely crucial problem for kids that discover themselves in other language surroundings and want the brand new language to be characteristic at faculty and in different social situations. (Barletta 2018 p, 184)

Whenever it comes to learning in school, this entails learning a new language. For example, in Algerian schools, students learn the Arabic standard language, which is completely different from their mother tongue. Autistic children may be proficient in their first language, but learning a second or foreign language may be difficult and unsuccessful.

In the field of learning a language among children with ASD, very little research has been conducted. These students, who often struggle to learn their first language, were simply told that they should not learn a second language, that they could not, and the process would confuse their first language acquisition, the reasoning is simple: These kids frequently conflict to study language, so they are higher off that specialise in an unmarried one. (Griswold 2016 p, 03).

3.4. Autism and language difficulties

The usage of language is one of the common challenges autistic children face that means there is a delay in language acquisition. About 50% of students with autism never reach the level of verbal expression. In all cases, the kid does not spontaneously use other modes of communication (gestures, facial expressions) that would enable him to compensate for the language problem. Language is not well understood, especially when it is more abstract. (Rogé 2003 p, 24).

On the other hand, verbal expression may include abnormalities of rhythm, intonation and volume. Even when the language is elaborate, it is little used socially: the autistic person initiates few conversations of a purely social nature (for the pleasure of chatting) and finds it difficult to carry on a Conversation that does not directly concern his own interests. Imitation behaviours of a social nature are difficult to set up symbolic games of "pretend" are absent or appear late. When learned from repetition with an adult, they retain a rather repetitive and uncreative aspect. For example, the child has learned to feed the doll and he will not be able to vary his behaviour. He continues to give food when you want him to mimic the behaviour of giving water. (Rogé 2003 p, 25).

Finally, children with the spectrum disorder are marked by difficulties in nonverbal communication, in using the nonverbal accompaniments of language for the purposes of personal expression, communication and social adaptation. (Contejean & Doyen 2012 p, 59).

3.5. Autism and school

A youngster affected by autism spectrum disorder may feel upset as soon as they enter a hectic or a stressful school environment. Schools should use minimum, neutral wall displays and keep facilities clean and neat to reduce sensory input in these places. Some youngsters may require frequent breaks from class to cope with sensory input. (Manikiza 2015 p, 29).

Autistic children require assistance in anticipating and comprehending the structure of the school day. Timetables should be laid out in a vertical line, with the next activity always appearing at the top. When this activity concludes the picture should be removed from the planner so that the child can clearly see what activity is next and what follows after. Therefore, many youngsters with autism will struggle to do many tasks at once; this could be taking notes while listening, replicating gestures while singing, or listening to instructions while doing something else. Considering this, the way in which class tasks are assigned will need to be modified. (Manizika 2015 p, 30, 31, 33).

Conclusion

Finally, this chapter examines language learning in both typical children and children with autism spectrum disorder. This chapter is composed of two sections. The first discusses the definition of autism, its types, symptoms, causes, and diagnosis. The second one is about language learning, and it highlights language learning and acquisition in normal and autistic children, as well as autism children's language difficulties. In other words, this chapter aims to define autism how autistic children learn language and how it influences this process.

Chapter two: Practical Part

Introduction

This study aims to investigate how children with ASD learn language, with a focus on the standard Arabic as a language of Algerian schools at AZZOUG School in Bejaia (Elkseur). As a result, the practical part of this chapter is divided into two sections. On one hand, the first section is about the research design, the research methods, the setting, the participants and the data collection. On the other hand, section two is concerned with the analysis and the discussion of the collected data.

Section one: Research Methodology

1. The Research Design

The current work relies on an exploratory research design, which is appropriate for the study at hand because its goal is to determine how autistic children learn language and the various tools used by these children to learn.

2. The Research Methods

The qualitative method is used in this research in order to analyse the data gathered from our observation of autistic children as well as the interview conducted with their teachers who are "psychologists and speech therapists."

3. The research setting and research participants

The study took place at Doctor *AZZOUG School* at Elkseur-Bejaia from 14 February to 28 march during the academic year (2021/2022). The research was carried out with a total of five children affected with autism spectrum disorder (three (03) were boys and two (02) were girls), ranging in age from six (06) to nine (09) years old. The sample was observed in order to determine how they learn language.

4. The research tools

4.1.Observation

This tool was adapted in order to observe autistic children language learning in a classroom environment.

4.2. Interview

This instrument is used with *AZZOUG School* teachers for a purpose of supporting the data collected from the observation and to provide broader information about the research problem.

Section two: Data Analyses and Discussion

1. Analysis of the results

1.1.Observation

During the observation phase, it was noticed that each autistic child has his own way of learning language that makes him unique from one to another. For this difference, we divided the sample into two categories, which are verbal and nonverbal autistic children.

1. Verbal autistic children

Verbal children's name: Lyna and Mahdi

Age: Nine (09) years old/ Seven (07) years old.

School year: Fourth year primary/ Third year primary.

Description of children:

Lyna from Timezrit is a multilingual girl (speaks Kabyle, Arabic, French, English) diagnosed with Asperger syndrome. With the arrival of the pandemic **Lyna** was obliged to stay at home with no connection with other people, just her family, so that she built an aggressive behaviour with delays in communication and social interaction. Nevertheless, now she is verbal with fluent speech using multiword, communicate regularly and spontaneously. She also builds an adaptive behaviour that is to say a self-depending like dressing by herself, making herself happy and others by singing and dancing. **Lyna** has a dream of becoming a doctor in order to help others.

Mahdi from Elkseur is a hyperactive child, he cannot make the class comfortable, and in fact, he is the one who has above average intelligence. **Mahdi** is fluent in Arabic language more than his mother tongue; he speaks all time in Arabic more than any other language.

Mahdi has an adaptive behaviour, which implies on him independency that is to say dressing by himself, eating and other things. He develops unique and unusual communication skills such as biting himself, tantrums or crying to escape from a subject.

Joint attention is largely present in **Mahdi**, he has the ability to share attention on an object with another person, also he is pointing to direct attention which is absent in autistic children.

Language characteristics in both **Lyna** and **Mahdi** are largely close and cited below

Verbal language

Lyna and **Mahdi** give a lot of importance to the verbal language more than the nonverbal one so that their language is significant. That means that they have a correct vocabulary and a meaningful rich advanced grammar as well as a knowledge of the language they are learning.

Expressive language

It is found that autistic children may convey what they want verbally that means autistic children do not have difficulty expressing themselves. Besides, autistic children may express themselves but they do not talk even though sometimes they understand what others are saying. They prefer to keep the conversation as short as they can.

Morphology

The study finds that both children form and combine words using different components, which build on them the ability to form from words the correct sentences, and from sounds the right pronunciation.

Phonology

The phonological problems are not totally present in **Madi** and **Lyna**, they usually have such problems when they are exposed to new sounds, and nevertheless, they have no difficulties in reading nor spelling.

Pragmatics

It is a little bit difficult to assume that these children have pragmatic deficits, since autistic children's statements are extremely limited and rarely engage in long conversations. Sometimes if they do not want to respond or do not understand what others say they keep quiet and look for other things to change the topic.

The use of pronouns

It is viewed that autistic children cannot distinguish between the pronoun “I” and “you”, they refer to themselves with the pronoun “You” (for example you eat instead of I eat); while to others with “I” (I go instead of you go). However, **Lyna** can distinguish plural from singular. She also speaks to herself when no one talks to her, **Lyna** orders and requests things from herself.

Telling a story

They can tell a story, which happens to them such as going on a picnic, or a story already taught. However, not imaginary stories because imagination is largely absent with them they are very logical.

✚ **Performing a play**

Lyna can never perform a play even if she is watching it and is exposed to yet **Mahdi** can perform any play he has already seen.

✚ **Lack of focus**

Autistic children cannot keep focus on one thing nor keeping one subject of a conversation, they change overly the topic even if it was a course.

✚ **Receptive language**

The receptive language is present in both **Mahdi** and **Lyna**; they understand what others say to them and respond. It is true that sometimes they do not respond to orders and commands but it does not mean that they do not understand but they just refuse to apply them.

✚ **Echolalia/ Imitations**

Children with ASD tend to repeat words already heard on TV or imitate the members of their family. **Lyna** and **Mahdi** use this concept to understand what their teacher says to them, self-talk as a means to memorize or for self-stimulating called as *stemming*.

✚ **Literal meaning of words**

Autistic children do not understand figures of speech since they understand the literal meaning of words. For example, their teacher gave to **Lyna** and **Mahdi** an example of “*you are like a lion*” they have been scared and cried thinking that a lion is in classroom.

✚ **Appropriate questions**

Both **Lyna** and **Mahdi** ask appropriate questions, they ask questions to comprehend what they did not understand as well as the ask questions about several things like objects animals in order to enrich their knowledge. Additionally, they understand the questions asked by anyone.

✚ **Relevant answers**

When they are questioned, they provide relevant answers to the question, **Lyna** answers in all the languages she knows (French, Arabic, Kabyle). Nevertheless, when she does not know the answer she starts crying. Moreover, she puts her hand on her mouth or her head when she is lost in an answer. However, **Lyna** cannot be concentrated for a long time; she loses her concentration. While **Mahdi** answers only when he wants if he does not want he rejects responding and changes the topic.

+ Nonverbal language

ASD children do not show attention to the nonverbal language. Therefore, they do not compensate their verbal spaces with gestures. Moreover, they react to visual aids used in the classroom to teach them language.

+ Using eye contact to communicate

Even if they understand what a teacher communicates through eyes, they prefer avoiding eye contact when they communicate.

+ Using gestures to express language

Autistic children use some gestures such as waving with their hands to say by-by, pulling or manipulating others hands and pointing to express language.

+ Social relationship

Lyna and **Mahdi** like building social relations and making friends, they are so sociable, and like joining a conversation in the classroom or even outside the classroom. They participate in all activities that take place in the classroom. Yet they usually ignore responding to their teacher.

+ Activities and materials used to learn language.

As it is known, one of the materials autistic youngsters use to learn is echolalia.

Children with autism while learning language use activities and materials used by their teachers in order to improve their skills. These activities are represented in **(figure 01)**.



(a)



(b)



(c)

(d)

Figure (01): Some activities followed by teachers of AZZOUG School with autistic students. (a) Shows how to combine cards to form an animal than name it. (b) Is an activity of visual perception. (d) Is about teaching ASD learners how to express their feelings.

2. Nonverbal autistic children

Nonverbal child name: Adam.

Age: Six (06) years old.

School year: First year primary.

Description of the child:

Adam is from Elkseur. He was diagnosed with Autism years ago. He is 70% nonverbal; he just can say some words and some phrases such as *mama daddy*. **Adam** is too quiet in classroom with no disruptive behaviour; he likes to show his feelings and emotions through kisses and hugs. It is what he always expects from his teacher in the classroom. **Adam** despite his disorder is a self-dependent child, that is to say, he is doing his personal issues by himself, but this self-dependency is not found in his classroom education. As a student, he cannot write by himself, he needs support from his teacher by holding his hand.

Language characteristics in Adam differs from that of verbal children

Verbal language

Adam is neither completely nonverbal nor completely verbal; his verbal language is limited to some sentences, such as *"my name is Adam,"* but even if he tries to form other sentences, his limited grammar and vocabulary render this insignificant. This deficiency can be observed not only in learning another language but also in his native language.

Expressive language

Adam has difficulty in expressing himself verbally. According to observations, whenever a teacher asks him a question, such as what he wants to be in the future, he has difficulty answering or starting a conversation. He appears confused and seems to be thinking of something because he faces difficulties in combining or finding words to convey his needs. Even if **Adam** recognizes the question, he is unable to answer.

Morphology

The ability of autistic children to establish morphological systems goes far behind that of verbal or normal children. According to our observation of **Adam**, we noticed that he faces difficulties, particularly in the form of integrating multiple words to form a correct and meaningful sentence.

Phonology

As a nonverbal autistic child, **Adam's** articulation varies; he cannot articulate new words heard only after some repetitions, but he can articulate some in a good and even perfect manner. Nonetheless, he finds troubles with the phonological process.

Pragmatics

As already described, it is difficult to assume that these children have pragmatic deficits, since autistic children's statements are extremely limited and they rarely engage in long conversations. Sometimes if they do not want to respond or do not understand what others say to them they keep quiet and try to skip the topic.

The use of pronouns

The most common problem that exists in autistic children whether he is verbal or not is the distinction between the pronoun "I" and "you". They refer to themselves with the pronoun "You" (for example you eat instead of I eat); while to others with "I" (I go instead of you go).

Telling a story

Adam can never tell a story even he is exposed to.

Performing a play

Adam struggles in performing a play; he does not even show interest in it.

Lack of focus

Adam is not able to maintain his concentration even when he is completing his own activities in learning language; he constantly loses his attention.

Receptive language

Adam has no problem with receptive language; he understands and responds to what people say to him. He consistently follows the commands and demands of the teacher.

Echolalia/ Imitations

Children with ASD tend to repeat words heard on TV or copy family members without understanding, and they may master the language of others rather than their own. **Adam** employs this notion to comprehend what his teacher says to them, as well as self-talk as a means of memorising or self-stimulating, which is referred to as stemming. Syntactic disorder, on the other hand, is frequently observed when he utters a sentence with the incorrect structure and parts.

Literal meaning of words

Autistic children do not understand figures of speech since they understand the literal meaning of words. For example, their teacher gave him an example of “*you are like a lion*”. They have been scared and cried thinking that a lion is in the classroom.

Appropriate questions

In contrast to **Lyna** and **Mahdi**, **Adam** is unable to ask proper inquiries; however, he can usually understand any question asked.

Relevant answers

As a result of **Adam**'s comprehension of questions, he is able to respond effectively but with limited words and sentences or by using nonverbal communication such as pictures, colours, balls...

Nonverbal language

Adam is nonverbal, which means he sets a high value on sign language. **Adam** employs gestures as pointing to objects he wants or visuals to explain situations like wearing shoes (with pictures) in order to reply and express what he wishes and needs.

Using eye contact to communicate

Adam chooses not to look into the speaker's eyes, so he lowers his eyes. Yet he understands when his educator looks him in the eyes.

Using gestures to express language

Adam uses some gestures to convey messages and to communicate. He waves with his index finger to say no, nodding his hand to say yes or shrugging his shoulders, moving his hands to say by-by, pulling or manipulating others hands.

Social relationship

Adam establishes social relationships and makes friends; he also shares his learning gadgets and materials. He joins his classmates in classroom activities, gives them hugs, and kisses.

Activities and materials used to learn language.

As it is known one of the materials autistic youngsters use to learn is echolalia.(**Figure01**)

Nonverbal children's name: Fatiha and Massine

Age: Six (06) years old/ seven (07) years old.

Description of the children

Fatiha is an autistic girl from Elkseur; she is in preschool year, which means that she prepares for entering public school. She is totally a nonverbal student except when her teacher forces her to repeat things over and she may pronounce it but incorrectly.

Fatiha is aggressive with disruptive behaviour and she hits her classmates. When she is angry, she breaks things, shouts and cries as a means of discharging her anger, yet when her teacher tries to calm her she becomes more aggressive and pushes her teacher who tries to calm her.

Massine is a nonverbal child from Elkseur. According to his teacher and parents, Massine was a verbal child who met all of his developmental milestones, but he immediately lost his language and became speechless at a certain age, and words like "mama, daddy" are now impossible for him to say.

Massine is friendly; he always laughs as a way of expressing himself, or he expresses his feelings by hugging and kissing.

Both **Fatiha** and **Massine** are self-dependent, they may cover their personal needs. Apart from that, their teacher's assistance is always required during their learning process.

Language characteristics in Fatiha and Massine are

Verbal language

Fatiha and **Massine** are nonverbal, which means they have no language at all. They try to communicate but fail due to their inadequate language skills, which is why they are frequently demotivated. Furthermore, they express language through sounds that are not understood.

Expressive language

The two autistic youngsters face difficulties with expressive language issues. They are unable to establish communication and are characterised by an inability to convey their feelings or views. Moreover, they convey their emotions through noises or gesture language.

Morphology

The morphological process challenges both **Fatiha** and **Massine**. In other words, the process of combining words to transmit a message is very difficult because of their limited vocabulary, and their difficulty with word production.

Phonology

Autistic children have difficulties when forming words; they frequently use a distinctive tone with no comprehension.

Pragmatics

Because autistic children's remarks are relatively restricted and seldom participate in extensive dialogues, it is impossible to presume that these children have pragmatic impairments. If they do not want to answer or do not understand, they may remain silent and seek other distractions.

The receptive language

Massine and **Fatiha** regularly struggle with receptive language; they sometimes understand their teacher's words, but not always.

Semantic

Fatiha and **Massine** have difficulty understanding what they say or what others say to them. They understand only the terms they are already familiar with, but when these words are replaced with their synonyms, they cannot understand.

Echolalia

Children with autism are most impacted by echolalia; however, this is not the case with **Fatiha** and **Massine**. They have no idea of echolalia since they are speechless.

Literal meaning of words

As all autistic children, **Fatiha** and **Massine** understand the literal language not the pragmatic language.

Appropriate questions

They are not able to ask appropriate questions, but often may understand the questions asked by the teacher.

Relevant answers

These youngsters cannot respond to questions using language hence when their teacher asks them to come to the board and do some exercises they can do it.

Nonverbal language

They value nonverbal communication and utilise it as a means of communication since they are nonverbal children.

Using gestures as a mean of communication

Both of them use gestures to communicate, for example if **Fatiha** wants to eat, she takes the teacher to her bag or she cries. Additionally they may point to things or wave with their hands bye-bye.

Social relationships

Massine is friendly he built with his classmates a strong relation in contrast to **Fatiha** who is too much aggressive and she hits her classmates so that she cannot build with them a good relationship.

Activities and materials used to learn language

The most frequent activity they enjoy is the emotion cards, painting cards, singing and dancing using microphones as well as visual aids such as videos and images. **(Figure 01)**

1.2. Interview

The interview was conducted with five (05) teachers, all of whom had prior experience teaching children with autism spectrum condition. The interview's analyses are provided in four (04) different sections, which are listed below.

I. Specialist teachers

1. Personal information

The first two teachers interviewed were Madam AZZOUG, S and ZEGGAGH, M; both of them are psychologists and expert teachers. They have respectively two and three years of experience in teaching autistic children. They explained that the reason, which motivated them to work with autistics, was that these children are neglected in the Algerian community. Furthermore, they share a passion in helping children with difficulties.

2. Teacher beliefs and practices

In this part, teachers are questioned about their ideas and practices, with an emphasis on autistic students' capacities, learning styles, and behaviour in the classroom, as well as the difference between public and private institutions. They stated that a public school could not help autistic children because they are treated as normal children, which is not good for them. Furthermore, parents of typical children do not accept them to study with their children because they believe their disorder is contagious, besides, teachers do not always accept them. Private schools, on the other hand, can be beneficial since they provide these children with excellent support from speech therapists and psychologists. Additionally, they noted that children with autism have good memory (visual memory and sensory memory) and intelligence; however, these aspects are sometimes ignored. They added that these children's behaviour varies from one child to another, with some having disruptive behaviour, others having injurious behaviour, and others having stereotypes (to mistakenly assume that all individuals or things with a specific trait are the same). Therefore, in order to cope with such behaviours, they must reprimand or ignore them, while others should feel comfortable to keep them quiet. Moreover, the two expert teachers indicated that the way each child learns differs from one child to another, with certain situations requiring continuous repetition to recall things. They also argued

that children must first learn real-world life skills such as their name, address, and parents' names through various activities (that require focus) (Figure 02). They must also be able to express themselves and live with their troubles without becoming an impediment in the future.



Figure (02): Activities on teaching real world life skills.

Furthermore, they said that, while these autistics are brilliant, they have language delays or no language at all. Lack of attention, disruptive behaviour, aggressiveness, and understanding may all have an impact on their language learning and success at school. These teachers discussed echolalia and stated that it is not present in all youngsters, but those that utilise it do so to cover up their misunderstandings or to improve their memory.

The two interviewed reported that while educating autistic children, they use a specific programme (Figure 03) and method (TEACH) (Figure 04) to ensure that they are learning flawlessly.

They also stated that the methods they employ are beneficial to them. They added that if the youngster is nonverbal, they try to teach him sign language rather than educate him and oblige him to generate words. (See Figure 02(a)).

Finally, they said that in order to measure autistic learners' learning, they strive to introduce new topics and create a positive environment for them by entertaining them before beginning a session with video and songs. Lastly, they asserted that these youngsters require encouragement to learn by cheering and clapping or praising them, which develops their capacity to absorb and comprehend, as seen by their performance and application of teachings. They also stated that initially, they did not understand the language of these autistic youngsters, but with time, it became a routine and they understood it perfectly.

المادة	الموضوع
تربية إسلامية	- الحمدلة و البسملة
	- تحية الإسلام
	- دعاء الصباح
	- سورة الفاتحة
	- النظافة
	- الاستئذان
	- سورة الإخلاص
	- سورة الناس
	- أيام الأسبوع
	- التعرف على الحروف
اللغة العربية	- التخطيط (الخط : المنحني-المنكسر-الأفقي-العمودي-المائل)
	- الربط بين الأشياء المتشابهة.
	- التعرف على الأدوات المدرسية.
	- التعرف على أعضاء الوجه + الجسم.
	- التعرف على الألوان.
	- التعرف على الأدوات المنزلية (المطبخ- الحمام- غرف النوم- غرفة المعيشة)
	- المجموعات الضمنية(الحضر- الفواكه- الحيوانات - وسائل النقل- الملابس...)
	- التمييز بين المذكر و المؤنث.
	- التمييز بين المفرد و الجمع.
	- الأضداد :- فوق- تحت
	- داخل - خارج
	- أمام - وراء
	- واقف - جالس
	- قليل - كثير
	- التعبير على الصور بجملة وكلمة (تسلسل الأحداث الأفعال)
- الأشكال الهندسية :الدائرة- المربع- المثلث- المستطيل- نجمة- هلال-	
رياضيات	- التعرف على الأعداد من 1 إلى 10
	- إدراك العدد و قيمته.

Programme de la semaine Du dimanche au jeudi	
Jours/ heurs	
8h30 9h00	Autonomie (enlever les chaussures- laver les mains- mettre la blouse- s'asseoir seul dans la classe
9h00 10h00	Activité pédagogique
10h00 10h30	Récréations :-utiliser la toilette- laver les mais- le gouter.
10h30 11h30	Activité préscolaire éducative
11h30 11h45	Loisir :(une chanson, des exercices psychomoteur, des contes pour enfants.
11h45 12h00	Autonomie et sortie

Figure 03: Program followed by teachers in teaching autistic students.



(a)



(b)

Figure 04: The TEACCH method. (a) Is how should a student seat. (b) Is an activity to teach real world life skills.

3. Teacher's challenges

Madam AZZOUG and ZEGGAGH asserted that they face difficulties while teaching them, they struggle with comprehension in expressing their needs, furthermore the most frequent challenge is how to assess their learning.

4. Teachers suggestions

They proposed that public schools should create specific classrooms for these children, but not separate from typical students. They maintained that a speech therapist plays an important role in autistics' language learning because he offers them specialised activities that encourage them to produce language. Moreover, they indicated that before beginning work with these autistics, teachers or researchers should be well versed with the idea and the difficulties associated with it. At the end of the interview, they expressed their hope that the Algerian society would take a step for these youngsters and develop classrooms for them at school because some parents cannot afford the study costs of private institutions. Efforts should be made so as to promote awareness of this disorder in order to avoid treating them in a bad way.

II. Psychologist teachers

1. Personal information

Madam IDIR, L and HAMAOU, N, both specialist psychologists were also interviewed. They have been working in this field for 6 and 11 years, respectively. They claimed that they chose to work with autistic children due to a lack of assistance for autistic children, as well as a desire to help them succeed in life.

2. Teachers beliefs and practices

In this section, teachers are questioned about their perspectives and methods, with a focus on autistic students' skills, learning methods, and classroom behaviour. The first thing these teachers noticed was the contrast between public and private schools. They confirmed that a state school might not help autistic children because it does not value these youngsters and treat them as normal children, which they should not do because their brains do not function as normal kids. Moreover, private schools may help them because they provide special care through doctors, psychologists, and speech therapists, which are not available in public schools. They also determined that children with autism have strong memory and creativity, as well as the ability to adapt to change. They also reported that they are good at mathematics and are extremely structured in their lives. They added that these children's behaviour might be disruptive in the classroom or aggressive and injurious, which does not make the class comfortable, to deal with such behaviour, they punish them or not giving them what they want, while others require some love to calm them. Furthermore, the two teachers said that while each child's learning style changes, the most essential thing that should be known about an autistic child is that learning a second or foreign language is easier than acquiring their own tongue. They also emphasised that schools should educate them and develop first real-world life skills so that they may learn how to deal with their needs (**Figure 02**). They must also teach nonverbal children sign language so that they may communicate more easily, and the most important thing is to raise their awareness that their disability is not a handicap to be ashamed of.

Moreover, they indicated that, despite the fact that these autistics are clever, they face difficulties in their daily lives, particularly in communication. They claimed that they communicate, but they have difficulty in articulating correctly, and they cannot comprehend humour because they have a restricted imagination, which reflects negatively on them because they cannot tell even a basic narrative or perform a play. They also stated that these youngsters cannot understand spontaneously and that they develop an over-repetition from the beginning. They also struggle with nonverbal communication, as they may not always apply or interpret it. Likewise, they indicated that these youngsters experience difficulties with social contact during their initial days of school, as well as

stereotyped behaviour. All of these delays may have a negative influence on their language skills and academic progress. These teachers discussed echolalia and said that it is not present in all children, but those that use it do so to conceal their misconceptions or to compensate for language limitations.

The two psychologist teachers said that they utilise a specific programme and approach (TEACH) (Figure 04) to verify that autistic youngsters are learning correctly. They employ visual aids, drawings, vocalisations, clarifying topics, and role-playing games with them. They consider that the strategies they use are advantageous. They also argued that if a child is nonverbal, they try to teach him sign language then teach him how to produce language.

Finally, they mentioned that in order to assess the learning of autistic students, they suggest introducing new subjects and creating a pleasant environment for them by engaging them with songs and games. Last, they said that these children need to be encouraged to learn by applauding, clapping, or rewarding them, which increases their capacity to absorb and understand as seen by their performance and application of learning. They also indicated that they sometimes have difficulties in understanding the language they use.

1. Teacher's challenges

The psychologists asserted that they face challenges while working with these children. They declared that autistic youngsters have difficulties understanding what their teachers say. This state of fact may affect their teachers who believe that the problem is due to the fact that they are not equipped with the appropriate teaching strategies that are needed in order to teach these categories of learners.

2. Teachers suggestions

They first affirmed, "*Children with autism have neither a problem of language nor a problem of communication, they have language but they do not know how to use it.*"

They advocated that public schools set aside classrooms for these children, but not isolate them from other kids. They believed that a speech therapist is vital in the language learning of autistics because he provides them with specialised tasks that stimulate them to develop language. Furthermore, they stated that before starting teaching with autistic students, teachers or researchers should be aware of the obstacles that they may encounter. To conclude the interview, they expressed their wish that Algerian society will take measures to help these children by creating classrooms for them in schools because some parents cannot pay for studies in private schools. They also insisted on the necessity to raise awareness about these learners to avoid mistreating them.

III. speech therapist teacher

1. Personal information

Madam Wafa is a speech therapy instructor with three years of experience. She stated that she chose this job to assist children develop their language so that they may convey their requirements in life and express themselves freely.

2. Teacher's beliefs and practices

Wafa is questioned about her beliefs and methods for working with these students, with a focus on autistic learners' talents, learning styles, and behaviour. She stated that public schools should enable the presence of a family member to guide them (AVS). Moreover, private schools may help these learners not only in their studies but also in their lives, but it is expensive, and some parents cannot afford it. She also declared that children with autism have adequate language but they do not know how to express themselves. She also stated that they are clever with a considerable developed memory, particularly visual memory. She stated that the behaviour of autistic students varies from one child to another; there are children who are hyperactive, some who are injurious, and others who are calm. She added that because the behaviour of autistic children remains consistent during the session, she prefers to offer them more attention and affection to maintain the course stable throughout a session. Furthermore, the speech therapist said that she begins teaching autistics the fundamentals of life (**Figure 02**). She also attempts to educate them, first and foremost, how to blend words to communicate their thoughts. She confirmed that teaching nonverbal kids' gestural language would not help them develop their language; nonetheless, she emphasises the significance of driving them to express their language since they have language via exercises and massages.

This speech therapist stated that she does not use one specific method to teach them, she prefers adapting different methods to help them in learning; the most important things she uses are visual aids, imitation and gestures for nonverbal students. She believes that the method she uses is beneficial since it is seen on their application. Besides, she indicated that children with ASD face difficulties with learning language, and the most typical issue being delays in language, difficulties in communicating even with their relatives and family members, and a lack of attention. These communication issues have an impact on their language learning process. This teacher observed that autistic children utilise echolalia to comprehend things, but it disappears after they understand.

Finally, she stated that these youngsters should be encouraged to learn by praising, clapping, or thanking them, since this boosts their understanding ability. She also stated that they sometimes have difficulties in comprehending the language, but that with time, they become able to grasp it.

1. Teacher's challenges

Speech therapists encounter several challenges when working with autistic children since they must know how to interact with them because each one is unique, and they must be able to distinguish their requirements. Besides, she has to know if they have any other problems and what they need to learn.

2. Teacher's suggestions

This teacher suggested that the Algerian society should raise awareness about these learners as well to create either special centres which are free for autistics or to open centres in state school but not separating them from typical children. She also pointed out that parents should know that watching TV is not a cause of autism but that their children are born with. She added that autistic's parents and family members must help them in developing their language and in their learning process.

2. Results and Discussion

2.1. Results

After analysing the data collected, through two research instruments: observation of autism children from 14 February to 28 March at azzoug school and conducting an interview with their teachers (specialists, psychologists, speech therapists) on April, 10th 2022 at the same location we have recorded the following results:

The findings were categorised into three categories (**figure 5**). These three major areas include autistics' methods for learning language, problems related with their learning process and the strategies teachers use to overcome these obstacles.



Figure (05): The study's main results

2.1.1. Learning methods

Children with autism spectrum disorder vary in their interests, conditions, or cognitive capacities. These differences imply distinct learning objectives and different learning methods. Each autistic child has his or her own set of learning materials, which are discussed more below.

2.1.1.1. Visual learning

Children with autism prefer to learn language visually, that is, through pictures and visuals, because they do not have the concept image that typical children have (*Signified and Signifier*). It is difficult for children to grasp what they learn when it is not accompanied with visual aids

According to their educators, autistic students learn better with visual aids such as videos (cartoon scenes or educational videos) and graphics. Their professors feel that this strategy is the most effective way for them to learn since it allows imitation.

2.1.1.2. Auditory learning

Because autistic children cannot understand the notion of a picture, they must learn via hearing. As a result, some youngsters prefer avoiding contact or look at the board in class, although they may be interested in auditory lessons. Furthermore, it appears that kids do not pay attention to the teacher's explanations, but instead they rely on their hearing capacity, as observed through their responses to their teachers' questions.

2.1.1.3. Repetitive learning

Repetition is how students with autism condition learn. Based on observations and interviews with autistic students, teachers must perform the same tasks and activities numerous times with the same materials before moving to another course.

2.1.1.4. Concrete language learning

Youngsters with autism prefer that their teachers use literal language rather than metaphorical language; figure of speech is difficult for these children to grasp. As a result, individuals prefer to translate this language into practical and understandable concepts.

2.1.2. Language learning problems

Autism affects much the learning process of children; it causes various problems some of them are:

2.1.2.1. Delays or having no language

Based on the observation it can be assumed that most children affected with the autism spectrum disorder experience a kind of language delay, having difficulty in comprehending or utilising a spoken language. These youngsters do not use language or they do not show interest in sharing a conversation with others. They can produce little words, which are insufficient to make a simple proper intelligible

statement. Some youngsters can learn concepts or gestures to communicate, whilst others cannot be able to speak or use gestural language.

2.1.2.2. Repetitive language

Repetitive language, also known as echolalia, is the most prevalent difficulty shared by nearly all children with autism. They keep repeating words that can indeed be meaningless, and this can also be an automatic habit. Some children repeat words in an effort to communicate. Some youngsters replicate what they hear on television or what members of their family say. These children may also repeat words or questions to demonstrate that they did not understand. For example, if a teacher asks a kid, "What is your name?" he may repeat the question "What is your name?" instead of saying his name.

2.1.2.3. Problems in expressive language

Another issue that autistic children have is difficulties expressing language. According to observation, autistic children have difficulty in word processing and communicating what they feel or need, yet if they want sometimes, they cry or shout. Additionally, these children are unable to make a complete sentence. For example, when their teacher asks him what he wants to do, he appears to be thinking about something, in fact they have difficulty in finding appropriate words to answer.

2.1.2.4. Problems in receptive language

Another trouble that autistic children may have in comprehending the language of others. For example, if a teacher asks an autistic child who made his hair this morning, he will not comprehend. However, if the teacher conveys the same question by gestures, he would understand and may reply.

2.1.2.5. Problems in metaphorical language

Because autistics are known for their literal interpretation of words, comprehending figurative language is difficult for them. Because they have a restricted imagination, children with the disorder may not grasp a simple figure of speech. Neither their cognitive abilities nor their imagination can provide them with an imaginative explanation, but only a universal explanation. This reinforces their inability to create imaginative stories or engage in imaginative play.

2.1.2.6. Phonological problems

Some children are fluent in spoken language, but this does not imply that they can articulate the words correctly, which is one of the difficulties in learning another language for autistic children. That occurs when an autistic child's utterances have phonological mistakes, which means they do not

recognise the sound exits of some words such as “تعالي instead of تعال,” this makes it difficult for their teachers to understand what they need or want.

2.1.2.7. Reverse of pronouns

An autistic youngster refers to himself with the pronoun “You,” and refers to others with the pronoun “I.” It is commonly assumed that autistics do not know how to use other pronouns easily; it needs repetition and a lot of effort.

1.1.1. Teacher’s strategies to overcome language learning difficulties

The data recorded through the interview with teachers of autistic students revealed that to overcome language learning difficulties. They utilise a variety of therapies such as speech therapy to overcome language delays and encourage them to use verbal language, visual therapy to help them in learning by using visual aids, develop real life skills therapy, and behavioural therapy.

2.1.3.1. Speech therapy

Speech therapy activities are designed to assist youngsters overcome language delays and express themselves through spoken language rather than sign language. They train kids to learn via music then encourage them to sing with a microphone, with the aim of developing their vocabulary by imitating the words of the song.

2.1.3.2. Visual therapy

Teachers use visual therapy to teach autistic students, particularly nonverbal students, how to communicate effectively using graphics and pictures. Video learning may also be employed in the language classroom. This treatment can help autistic people improve their communication skills and abilities.

2.1.3.3. Behavioural therapy

Teachers in such therapy strive to teach kids how to use their listening capacity to learn language by drawing their attention to an audible tale. Furthermore, they try to teach them how to make eye contact with the teacher or any other person when having a conversation by fixing their eyes on specific things.

2.1.3.4. Develop real life skills

Teachers attempt to educate students how to use their hands to write or eat. They also educate children how to dress and take care of themselves without relying on others.

2.2. Discussion

This exploratory research is based on observation of students affected by autism spectrum disorder ASD and an interview conducted with their teachers. It aims to investigate how an autistic child learns language, the different difficulties associated with this disorder. In addition, how can a teacher overcome them during the learning process. The findings show that the process of language learning of a second or foreign language in typical children differs from that of autistic children. It has been proven that autistic children do not exhibit the same language impairments and that each child is unique and has their own set of learning characteristics, which researchers should not generalise when dealing with language learning problems. (Divan, et al 2021).

Furthermore, findings from the present study indicate that autistics employ visual learning, visual aids to assist them learn more efficiently, and auditory learning to reinforce their learning ability. In contrast to normally growing youngsters, they tend to repeat phrases, statements, and that they want to follow a distinct pattern without changes, and if this occurs, their learning process will be affected. Furthermore, autistic children prefer that their teacher repeat the lesson in concrete language so that they can understand it better.

According to our results, we observed that autistic children struggle with language learning. Their language delays and difficulties with expressive language render them unable to communicate with people or explain their needs to their parents or teachers. Their utterances are very limited, and they prefer to remain calm and silent when someone attempts to converse with them; they also cannot deliver a clear meaningful phrase due to phonological and morphological difficulties. Based on these findings, it may be inferred that children with autism have difficulty with language comprehension (receptive language), thus they feel confused since they cannot understand spoken language

It has also been found that teachers play an important role in children's language learning processes, as they help them overcome their language deficits by providing them with special therapy. Moreover, they teach them how to progress in their lives without allowing their troubles to obstruct them.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter includes the practical part that looks into how children with autism learn language. It is divided into two sections: the first is about research methodology, which includes the research design, methods, setting, participants, and data collection. The second is about analysing and discussing the collected data. This chapter seeks to find out how children with autism learn

language in the classroom. The latter's findings suggest that autistic children have difficulty learning language.

General conclusion

Researchers define autism spectrum disorder (ASD) as a collection of neurodevelopmental diseases characterised by basic abnormalities in three domains: social interaction, communication, and repetitive or stereotypic behaviour. Individuals with ASD have varying degrees of disability, but the impact on affected individuals and their families is uniformly life changing. (Newschaffer et al 2006).

This research looks into how autistic children learn language. This work started with a question about how autistic students learn the Arabic standard language, what challenges they experience, and how they differ from ordinary children, as well as how teachers overcome the learning barriers faced by autistic students.

The study provides answers to our research questions. It has been shown that autistic children struggle while learning a language that is different from their native one. The most prevalent issues uncovered are expressive language, which affects the expression of youngsters using a language, and receptive language, which influences interpretation of one's messages. This language disorder is accompanied with phonological difficulties, in which kids do not pronounce words correctly, making them meaningless. The most common problem in virtually all autistic children is echolalia, which these students employ to overcome their lack of comprehension or as a means of memorization.

The study also reveals that children with autism are different from other children because of their impairment, which prevents them from continuing their growth and language development. Autistic youngsters are unable to maintain a conversation because they employ brief, short phrases due to a limited vocabulary and a weak grammatical structure. They cannot always utilise intonation correctly and can't always grasp the meaning of some expressions.

This analysis also establishes that teachers provide significant assistance to parents in the development of their children's language skills. They provide them with directions and particular therapy to help them learn language and go forward in their life.

This study provides insight into the issues associated with children with autism, which might be used in future studies. However, further studies are required in order to first assist autistic children in learning language without difficulty, and then to inform other people about the differences between autistic and typical learners.

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Appendix 01: Observation grid

RESEARCH ISSUES: <i>What should be observed in autistic children</i>				
/	Observation questions.	Yes	No	Comments
1	Do autistic children react to the verbal language?			
2	Do they react to speech or repeat words?			
3	Do they have significant language?			
4	Do they have knowledge about language learned?			
5	Do they combine words to form correct sentences?			
6	Do they use correct vocabulary?			
7	Do they use the right pronunciation?			
8	What is the tone of their speech?			
9	Do they ask questions appropriately?			
11	Do they answer relevant to the topic?			
12	Do they tell a story?			
13	Do they perform a play?			
14	Do they have a good listening comprehension?			
<i>Non verbal language</i>				
1	Do autistics give attention to nonverbal language?			
2	Do autistics understand eye contact?			
3	Do they react to visual aids used in classroom in language learning?			
4	Do they use gestures as a mean to express language?			
<i>Social relationship</i>				
23	Do autistic children join a conversation in classroom?			
24	Do they participate in classroom activities?			
25	Do they respond to their teacher?			
26	Do they build relation with their classmates?			
What are the activities, materials and instructions used by these children to learn and use a language?				

Appendix 02: Teachers interview

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study and giving us your valuable time to be interviewed today. This work aims to investigate the autistic way of learning language, as well as to find out the problems associated with this process and how a teacher can help students overcome their language deficits. This interview will last approximately 30 minutes, and we will ask you a series of questions about autistic children's learning styles, difficulties, and problems you face with them.

I. Personal Information

1. How did you get into teaching children with autism?
2. What motivates you to work with such children?
3. How many years have you been teaching autistic children?

II. Teacher beliefs and practices

4. In your opinion, can schools support autistic children to perform better in their life?
5. May you describe autistic children's ability?
6. May you describe autistic children's behaviour in the classroom?
7. How do you deal with disruptive and self-injurious behaviour?
8. May you describe autistic children's way of learning?
9. What are the learning needs of these children?
10. Does autism affect their way of learning and performance at school?
11. What are the challenges or disabilities an autistic child possesses?
12. What is your opinion about echolalia, imitations and stemming in these children?
13. What is the method you use with these children?
14. If a child is nonverbal, which method you have to use with them in order to communicate?
15. How helpful is the method you use for them?
16. How do you establish procedures and rules to maintain a good classroom environment for them?
17. What are the strategies you use to help them assess learning?
18. How do you encourage autistic students to explore learning opportunities?
19. How can you determine that this child is learning?
20. When teaching these students do you understand the language they use?

III. Teacher's challenges

21. Do you face any challenges while teaching this population? If yes. What are the most common problems you face in trying to teach them?

22. How do you deal with these problems?

IV. Teacher's suggestions

23. Are there any specific things you suggest schools can do to help autistic youngsters?

24. How can a speech therapist help a child in learning language?

25. Is there anything a teacher or a researcher should know about autistic children?

26. If you have a comment please share it with us?

Thank You