



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**RESPONSES OF A CHILD WITH DYSLEXIA IN INTERACTING WITH
ADULTS THROUGH PLAY**

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**Bachelor of Education (Honours)
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ADULTS THROUGH PLAY**

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This final project is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
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ABSTRACT

Responses of a Child with Dyslexia in Interacting with Adults through Play

Andy bin Haman

The objectives of this study are to identify the responses, the ability of a child with dyslexia in learning using the selected learning resources and to find out the spelling pattern of a child with dyslexia. A child with dyslexia was chosen from Dyslexia Association of Sarawak. This study was conducted using participant observation using video recording as medium of collecting data and was transcribed using content analysis approach. The result of this study indicated that a child with dyslexia used more non-verbal responses in communicating with the adult. In using the selected learning material, the child with dyslexia produces more mistakes if the material required him to follow a set of specific rules. Moreover, in the spelling activity, it showed the pattern of spelling done by the child with dyslexia. Last but not least, some issues are discussed and suggestions for future research are also indicated.

ABSTRAK

Respon Kanak-Kanak Disleksia didalam Berinteraksi dengan Seorang Dewasa melalui Pendekatan Bermain

Andy bin Haman

Objektif kajian ini ialah bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti respon, kemampuan kanak-kanak disleksia untuk belajar dengan menggunakan bahan-bahan yang telah dipilih dan mengenalpasti bentuk-bentuk ejaan kanak-kanak yang menghadapi disleksia. Seorang kanak-kanak disleksia telah dipilih dari Persatuan Disleksia Sarawak. Kajian ini telah dijalankan dengan menggunakan keadah pemerhatian dengan menggunakan teknik rakaman video sebagai medium mengumpul data. Data-data yang telah dikumpul akan dianalisis dengan menggunakan pendekatan analisa kandungan. Keputusan yang diperolehi daripada kajian ini telah menunjukkan kanak-kanak disleksia tersebut lebih banyak menggunakan komunikasi non-verbal. Selain daripada itu, didalam penggunaan bahan-bahan pembelajaran yang terpilih, kanak-kanak disleksia tersebut lebih banyak membuat kesilapan didalam aktiviti-aktiviti bahan-bahan yang melibatkan beliau untuk mengikuti arahan-arahan yang spesifik. Selepas itu, didalam aktiviti ejaan, keputusan yang diperolehi daripada kajian ini telah menunjukkan bentuk-bentuk ejaan yang telah dibuat oleh kanak-kanak disleksia tersebut. Akhir sekali, beberapa isu-isu dan cadangan-cadangan telah dibincang untuk kajian masa depan.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents an overview, the background study on dyslexia, statement of problem, research objectives, significance of study, definitions of key terms and limitations of the study on the case study entitle responses of a child with dyslexia in interacting with adults through play which will be conducted at Dyslexia Association of Sarawak.

1.1 Background of the Study

Dyslexia is a type of disability that affects person's performances in learning. According to Pollock and Waller (1994), the word dyslexia is derived from a Greek word "Dys" which means difficulty with and "lexis" which mean words and in which a person with dyslexia is confronted, difficulty with words read, words spelt, words pronounced, words written, and association of meaning with words. In addition, Riddick, Wallace and Lumsdon (2002, p. 2) stated that, dyslexia can affect a wide range of seemingly disparate tasks such as copying from the board, tying up shoe-laces and remembering multiplication tables, as well as the more obvious literacy task. An individual with dyslexia will face a lot of problem in learning as they were unable to learn normally if compared to normal person.

According to World Federation of Neurology (1968) dyslexia is, "a disorder in children who, despite conventional classroom experience, fail to attain the

language skills of reading, writing and spelling commensurate with their intellectual abilities (as cited in Ott, 1997, p.16). According to a research done by Naidoo (1979), there is no single pattern or a symptom that enables us to identify children with dyslexia. Most of the children show jaggedness and unpredictability in their performances in which it causes the hardness for the expert to identify children with dyslexia and to give intervention programme to them.

According to British Dyslexia Association in Peer (1994):

A combination of abilities and difficulties which affect the learning process in one or more of reading, spelling and writing. Accompanying weaknesses maybe identified in areas of speed processing, short term memory, sequencing, auditory and/or visual perception, spoken language and motor skills. It is particularly related to mastering written language, which may include alphabetic, numeric and musical notation.

(cited in Riddick, Wallace & Lumsdon, 2002, p.3)

Based on the definition, children with dyslexia cannot perform as normal children in their study because of their disabilities in processing what they have learnt normally and due to this; they were constantly left behind in the learning processes and give a negative impact on their emotion and self-perception. A combination of dyslexia and low self esteem in the child with dyslexia make their achievement in learning activity become worse and at some point, they will rebel in order to gain attention from their teachers, parent and society.

1.2 Statement of problem

Dyslexia is one of the problems that obstruct children's capability in their learning in school. This problem not only hampers their learning but it also lower their self-esteem as they cannot perform at the same level with children the same age. Furthermore, children with dyslexia constantly become a victim of labeling by their teachers, parent and friends as stupid and lazy in study.

All this condition occurred as claimed by Baumer (1996, p.3) “lack of coordination between sight and sound” and Webster (n.d) claimed that “a disturbance of the ability to read” (cited in Baumer, 1996, p.6) These two statement show that a child with dyslexia is unable to learn normally as they are powerless to make sense of what they read and sometimes they might confuse with some letter that nearly form the same shape, and use the letters in reversing manner such as b and d and d or b as claimed by Baumer (1996).

Moreover, a child with dyslexia which according to Kerr (1897) “congenital word blindness” (cited in Ott, 1997, p.6), confronted a lot of problem in learning as they cannot make sense of their own writing and reading.

The statement shows that children with dyslexia also face problems in learning to read as they have serious problem in sound making, thus these affect on how they say-out certain words that may have slightly the same arrangement of letters and confused them in terms of phonological because their brains is unable to perceive correctly.

Moreover, besides phonological problem, children with dyslexia also face problem with visual in which was mentioned in the visual theory:

The visual theory reflects another long-standing tradition in the study of dyslexia, that of considering it as a visual impairment giving rise to difficulties with the processing of letters and words on a page of text. This may take the form of unstable binocular fixations, poor vergence or increased visual crowding. The visual theory does not exclude a phonological deficit, but emphasizes a visual contribution to reading problems, at least in some dyslexic individuals.

(Ramus et al, 2002)

A research was done by Dr. Pringle which was published in British Medical Journal On November, 7th 1896 reported that a fourteen years old boy writing convey no impression to his mind. Based on this statement, a child with dyslexia cannot make any sense of what they read and write because they could relate each letters in it. The inability to make meaning from what they did penalized them in term of self esteem and academically and this continues to happened if there is no action taken by anyone. The main reasons for reading problems are:

1. Ineffective reading instruction
2. Auditory perception difficulties
3. Visual perception difficulties
4. Language processing difficulties

(Child Development Institute, n.d)

In concluding, this research was conducted in order to identify the responses, the ability in completing correctly the resources given and to study the pattern of children with dyslexia spelling.

1.3 Research Question

- Whether a child with dyslexia is able to give appropriate responses and learning effectively by using learning resources with the assistance of an adult?

1.4 Objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to find out responses of a child with dyslexia in interacting with adults through play. The objectives of this study are to:-

- a. Find out the responses a child with dyslexia uses in his interaction with adult in learning.

- b. Find out whether a child with dyslexia is able to use correctly the resources use in their learning activity.
- c. Find out the spelling pattern of a child with dyslexia in his writing.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study is expected to enhance the understanding of parents of children with dyslexia in enhancing their approaches in coping with their children. Furthermore, it can be a source of information and reference for parents, educators and society about the issues of Children with dyslexia. Finally, this study is expected to be a reference for future researchers in conducting their study in the field of learning disabilities.

1.6 Operational definition of key Terms

1.6.1 Dyslexia

“A disorder in children who, despite conventional classroom experience, fail to attain the language skills of reading, writing and spelling commensurate with their intellectual abilities (Ott, 1997)

1.6.2 Responses

In relation to this study, responses can be defined as a feedback or reaction given by children to the researcher. For example, children answers explain and extend on what they do in an activity.

1.6.3 Interaction

In this study, interaction can be defined as ways the child with dyslexia communicate with adult throughout the learning processes. Interaction may occur in different ways such as verbally and non-verbally. For example,

when an adult point to specific information, the children will follow and do it.

1.6.4 Adult

This refers to the teacher and volunteers in the classroom which are responsible to conduct the teaching and learning process to the children with dyslexia.

1.6.5 `Play

In this study, learning is conducted based on word games and flash card to increase the level of enthusiasm for learning.

1.7 Scope of the study

This case study was conducted in Dyslexia Association of Sarawak at Jalan Kedandi in Tabuan Jaya. This centre was chosen as it was the only approved dyslexia centre in Sarawak and had a lot of experience in handling children with dyslexia.

In this study, a child with dyslexia was selected and observed in a fifteen observation session. Having said that, the participant for this study may differ; therefore the finding may not represent other children with dyslexia as they may differ from their level of severity.

1.8 Chapter Review

This chapter discusses the change of a research problem to a more specific in order to accommodate the objectives of the study. It explains in briefs the significance of the study and the relevancy of this study. In the following chapter, the researcher will review the studies done in relation to the issues and important matters in dyslexia.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction.

Throughout the century, the ability to read and write had been link to the capability of an individual intelligent. This perception had been planted in all the educationist mind in which sometimes lead to bad labeling which may hamper children learning motivation in class. Dyslexics are always considered to be lazy, dumb, class clowns, unmotivated, misfits, or individuals with low intelligence (Ott, 1997,). In this present day, the issues of learning disabilities had become the most controversial issues as every person may confront with different type of learning disabilities.

One of the most active learning disabilities discussed in this modern world is Dyslexia which in general can be defined a as the difficulty in reading and spelling . Dyslexia may exist in an individual from their childhood without them noticing it as dyslexia may exist in different level of severity. Dyslexia is defined as a failure to learn to read at an age appropriate level despite adequate intelligence and appropriate opportunity. A lot of definition was used to describe the condition of dyslexia but none of it can fit it.

The nature of the underlying deficit in dyslexia is debated until now as Dyslexia symptom may varied according to different individual. Some of people believe that Dyslexia is not a learning disabilities but it just a different way of learning. As mentioned by Pollock and Waller (1994), dyslexia is just a different way

of individual way of learning rather than disabilities as an individual with dyslexia can learn something but they can be termed as slow learners and not mentally or physically disable, moreover; they just learn something in different way from normal individual. They are able to learn everything just like normal individual but they need more extra commitment in their learning in order to cope with normal individual. As been stated in Ministry of Education, Te Tahuu o te Matauranga (n.d), There are three main deficit theories on what causes the characteristics of dyslexia:

- The phonological deficit theory explains difficulties dyslexic individuals show linking sounds with symbols in reading and spelling.
- The cerebellar deficit theory suggests there is a problem in central processing linked to learning and automaticity.
- The magnocellular deficit theory suggests that problems arise as a result of visual or auditory deficits.

Furthermore, Bender (1992) confirmed that dyslexia is a term in the beginning defined as a specific break down in the brain formation which leads to uncertainty in the perception of letters or words. British Dyslexia Association's definition (Ott, 1997) of dyslexia in 1996 is acknowledged as below:

“Dyslexia is a complex neurological condition which is legitimate in origin. The symptoms existed in dyslexia might affect many areas of learning abilities, and may be described as a specific difficulty in reading, spelling, and written language. One or more of these areas may be affected. Numeracy, notational skills (music), motor function and organizational skills may also be involved. However, it is particularly related to mastering written language, although oral language may be affected to some degree.”

As mentioned by Hynd (1992, cited in Lerner, 2000), there are four general agreement of dyslexia causes; firstly, dyslexia has a biological basis and is due to a congenital neurological condition. Secondly, dyslexic problems continue into

adolescence and adulthood. Thirdly, dyslexia has different perceptual, cognitive, and language dimensions and finally, dyslexia leads to difficulties in many areas of life as the individual matures.

As stated by Pollock & Waller (2000), dyslexia define as “difficulty with words read, words spelt, words pronounced, words written, and association of the meaning with words.” An individual with dyslexia sometimes are labeled as having “word blindness” (Fawcus, 2000). They find it difficult to deal with textual materials. They have problems in recognizing letters and words and interpret information that is presented in printed form (Lerner, 2000).

The difficulties that they faced consist of late reading, poor in spelling and paper work (Ott, 1997). Moreover, children with dyslexia also face difficulty with awareness, perception, direction, memory, verbal skills, abstract reasoning, hand-eye coordination, and social work (Livni, 2002).

Gans, Kenny and Ghany (2003) found that children with dyslexia of ages seven to eighteen have minor overall self-worth and lower perceived competence compared to their peers who were normal. However, dyslexia is not the effect of low intelligence as they have their own way of learning. As stated by International Dyslexia Association (1998, cited in Lerner, 2000), many individual with dyslexia are creative, and talented in art, architecture, electronic, mechanic, music, or drama and able to compete with normal people.

According to Ott (1997), dyslexics will have significantly fewer problems in learning with appropriate teaching than do children with dyslexia that are not known and assisted. Children with dyslexia can usually succeed as others once they are diagnosed, provided with special help, and given attention at home and in school (Livni, 2002). This means that, children with dyslexia are able to be assisted carefully when they are properly checked and assisted not only in school but also at home by parents and family member.

Children with dyslexia display more than one following characteristics (Ryden, 1997) which are; hyperactive and bouncy, require less sleep compared to the normal children, easily diverted, untidy and disordered, poor motor skill, prone to hopelessness and prefer to be alone because they are ashamed of their own weaknesses.

So it is vital to distinguishing between children with dyslexia and slow learner with poor reading skills. According to Lerner (2002), the definition of dyslexia and the criteria used to assess the condition are the main objective to identify children with dyslexia.

2.1 The symptom of Dyslexia

These are the following symptom of dyslexia condition stated by (Fawcus, 2000), that is reading; writing; spelling, math, memory and grammar; speech; direction; time; concentration and activity; balance and coordination; self-esteem; phobias and related mood; and lastly psychosomatics.

2.1.1 Reading: Fawcus (2000) stated that there are a number of symptoms under reading difficulties face by children with dyslexia. they are poor memory of letters, words, or numbers, a tendency to skip over letters, words, and sentences, poor, slow, and fatiguing reading ability, reversals of letters such as 'n' and 'u', words such as 'saw' and 'was', and numbers such as '6' and '9' or '27' and '72', letters and words blurring, doubling, movement, scrambling, omission, insertion, and size change and poor concentration, distractibility, light sensitivity (photophobia), tunnel vision, delayed visual and phonetic processing.

2.1.2 Writing: Fawcus (2000) stated two symptoms of this subtype of dyslexia, first is an individual with dyslexia cannot write properly and neatly in which the curve of the letter is not form according to the original form of the letter and it is difficult to read and the handwriting is really poor in form.

2.1.3 Speech: Poor in speech as an individual with dyslexia have poor auditory memory and motor-skill in pronouncing words properly.

2.1.4 Spelling, Math, Memory, and Grammar: As a result of poor memory, children with dyslexia are unable to keep information such as spelling, numbers, and grammar.

2.1.5 Direction: An individual with dyslexia has poor orientation of direction as they are confused in determine left and right.

2.1.6 Time: They have problem in learning to tell time as resulted from poor memory and sequencing.

2.1.7 Concentration and Activity: Easily distracted and hyperactive. They unable to concentrate in their learning and they are only able to focus in learning in a short period of time.

2.1.8 Balance and Coordination: Poor in balancing and body coordination such as marching and performing routine task e.g. tying shoe laces and sport activity that required total physical movement such as soccer.

2.1.9 Self-esteem: Suffer low self esteem as they perceived themselves as stupid and slow in everything if compared to normal person.

2.2 Speech and language processing in children with dyslexia.

Children with dyslexia is not handicapped, they just face with problem in learning depending on their condition severity. In general, children with dyslexia have weaknesses in language processing as they tend to misuse words and understand text. This condition occurred as they always confused with alphabet that have a similar shaped which can lead to some kind of condition that known as 'mirror image'. Alphabets that can produce mirror image such as b and d can confused them

as they were unable to process the image of the alphabet which they confused a lot. In describing the condition of children with dyslexia speech and language processing problems, as mentioned by Pollock and Waller (1994), occasionally the term “dysphasia” was used to refer to this problem, this term may not really suitable to describe the speech and language processing problem face by children with dyslexia as it is a term used in medical field to refer to speech problem that face by stroke patient.

Moreover, as mentioned by Pollock & Waller (1994), children with dyslexia is poor in auditory discrimination, poor in short-term auditory memory and auditory recall in term of phonology. According to Heisler (1983) in Pollock and Waller (Ott, 1997), a child that slow or delay in language might developed stress and frustration in communicating as they fail to convey or express their message to others and this condition lead them to become shy or withdrawn.

Children with dyslexia need to be presented frequently with word before they can produce it as they are poor in auditory sequential memory, according to Catts (1989, cited in Ott, 1997) “*upon hearing a new word, dyslexics often need multiple presentations of the word before they can accurately and consistently produce it*”. Children with dyslexia need a rapid presentation of new words as their auditory memory need to store the new words in their mind and repetition of it may help them to retain the words.

2.3 Second language acquisition problem in children with dyslexia.

The ability to speak properly is closely related to the language capability of an individual. There are links between dyslexia and language where dyslexia is not only affects the first language but also the second language children with dyslexia.

According to Miller-Guron and Lundberg (2000), the dyslexic who is low in their proficiency in the native language would restrain the development of their second language proficiency. “The dyslexic individual, who reads native language