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ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATIVE ADJUSTMENT ACTIVITIES USED TO ENHANCE SPEECH PRODUCTION AND USE AMONG CHILDREN WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES IN SPECIAL UNITS IN VIHIGA COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Communication is an essential aspect of life. Language forms the basis of communication. Communication adjustment refers to the shift in speech style depending on the interlocutors and context for better understanding. Children with mental disabilities suffer from retardation in respect to normal growth especially in their cognitive capacities. Consequently; they suffer from speech and language problems that lead to ineffective communication. They are therefore discriminated. It is in this view that the study analyzed communicative adjustment activities used to enhance speech production and use among children with mental disabilities in Vihiga County, Kenya. The study employed descriptive survey design. Sample was drawn from the special units in Vihiga County, Kenya. Data was collected using observation schedule and questionnaire. The instruments. Data analysis was through descriptive statistics; specifically frequency counts and percentages. The study found out that communicative adjustment activities enhance speech production and use among children with mild mental disabilities in Vihiga County. This calls for language instructors to be well grounded in a variety of communicative adjustment activities. The instructors' level of understanding of the adjustment activities and their appropriate application will always enhance the speech production and use among the mentally challenged children. The study further found out that there was a relationship between communication adjustment skills and oral language use in children mental disabilities in Vihiga County. According to Cregan, 1998, as cited in Shiel et al., 2012 oral language is the first, most important and most frequently used structured medium of communication. It is the primary medium through which each individual child will be enabled to structure, to evaluate, to describe and to control his/her experience. It was noted that using fun activities to educate children with mild mental disabilities boost their oral language use. The use of storytelling to teach children with mild mental disabilities improves their use of oral language. It was found out those using interactive activities at home to teach communication skills to children with mild mental disabilities enhance their oral language use. It was found out that applying early intervention programmes to teach language skills to children with mild mental disabilities improves their use of oral language. The study further noted that language instructors and caregivers have influence on language production and use among children with mental disabilities in Vihiga County. Language instructors and caregivers can positively or negatively influence language production and use among children with mental disabilities. The caregivers' language use has a direct influence on language production and use among children with mental disabilities. The training and experience of the language instructor affects the production and use of language by children with mental disabilities. Both the quantity and quality of what caregivers say matter for the mentally disabled children's learning of language particularly on its production and use. Language instructors and caregivers can ask children with mental disabilities questions starting with words like who, what, when, where and why to encourage them to provide more complex response. Language instructors and caregivers play complementary roles in boosting language production and use among children with mental disabilities.

KEYWORDS communication adjustment, mental disabilities, caregivers, instructors, oral language



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Background to the Study

Communication accommodation is concerned with adjustment of speech or shift in speech style depending on the context and interlocutors for better understanding. It refers to the interplay of language, context and identity. It involves convergence-strategies through which an individual adapts to each other's linguistic behavior and divergence strategies that individuals accentuate speech and nonverbal differences to increase distance between them. For individuals with speech disorders, and in this case, the mentally handicapped, the instructor's role is to create a nonthreatening environment in which they can communicate. A research carried out by the Ministry of education, (2008), stated that learners with special needs have not been actively involved in activities that foster their growth including language growth. It further argues that their participation is limited due to inaccessibility of facilities. These sentiments are echoed by Bryan (1996), who in his study on effects of patronizing speech and over accommodation, say that people with disabilities are recipients of negative attitude because of their disabilities. This, he says results into patronizing speech based on stereotype and not the truth. He does not however look at the other factors affecting speech like the environment and context in which individuals communicate which this study will attempt to explain.

Statement of the Problem

Individuals with mental disability have to use language for communication, and this is a tool for social communication. Although basic language skills develop before children enter school, language continues to evolve through school age years. Statistics show that about 10% of children who enter schools have speech and language disorders. Out of this 8% accounts for learners with mental disabilities. Over 85% of these learners are mainstreamed in normal classrooms. The rest are in special schools and units and here different strategies are expected to be used to help them improve in language growth and specifically speech development. Exceptional children are children who deviate from the norm in age and grades with respect to various dimension of growth and development of their personality. Mentally handicap children are exceptional and do not grow and develop normally. They do so at a slower rate than their normal counterparts. One of the areas they affected in speech and language use. Such children are on the rise in Vihiga County, something that necessitated this study.

Literature Review

Mangal (2009) describes language as a verbal mode of human communication. Oral language can be defined as system of sounds and words spoken rather than written. When looking at oral language therefore, we are looking at speech development. Language has several components that is, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. This study will focus majorly onpragmatics; that is, how to use language appropriately in social contexts in order to achieve a certain goal, get specific information, fulfilling a need or sharing a thought. In addition, how these contexts help in fostering speech growth.

After children are born, they grow and so language growth is expected. Language development among children follows a typical sequence exhibiting specific language acquisition stages at roughly the same age, however with a degree of variation. Language, according to American Speech Language and Hearing Association (ASHA), is a code made up of rules that include what words mean, how to make words, and how to put them together. Growth of language will therefore look at word combinations that are best in specific situations and how it improves, stagnates or deteriorates as children grow.

Oral language development is concerned with speech development and is both receptive-understanding the use of words and expressive-using the exact words acquired in different situations.

Jerome Brunner (1983) says that proficiency in oral language provides children with vital tools for thought. Without language children find it difficult to think. From this, what most scholars echo is that as much as language is acquired, measures should be put in place to nature this acquisition to grow. This is irrespective to whether the children are normal or with disabilities. This research will therefore be carried out against this background.

Communication is the activity or process of expressing ideas and feelings or giving people information. Speech is the fastest form of communication in any interaction. Communication is key since knowledge and information has to be passed from one person to another. Carl Rogers as cited by Omulimi (2006) states that behavior change is dynamic; has output and input and that, humans tend to develop positively and constructively if the environments conducive. This is true with communicative environments.

This therefore, affects the receptive and expressive aspects of language, thus an individual will have both internal and external forces while the environment has its own pressures and pulls that affect learning. Individuals with mental disabilities, who form the subject of this study, undergo different challenges as they make effort to grow and develop. Roulstone (2002), in her study on the role of language in children's educational outcomes in England states that of all learners who enroll in school approximately 15% possess speech and language disorders. She however adds that most children develop language and speech skills effortlessly with no instruction but with considerable variations. With these she echoes what Chomsky (1957) insists, that children have an innate ability to learn a language. He further states that an individual is capable of producing an infinite set of sentences. This study therefore attempted to answer the question of how true this is in children with mental disabilities.

Acquisition of language is one of the most remarkable achievements in children's growth and development. Children make transition from cooing and babbling to fully communicating individuals as they grow. Roulstone (2000), in her study on investigating the role of language in children's early educational outcome in the United Kingdom, focused on how communicative environment in the early years of a child affects language development in later years. From this study, it was concluded that a rich communicative environment helped learners develop language as opposed to their social backgrounds.

Communicative environment which entails different communicative or language activities is a more dominant predictor of early learning than the social background and consequently language development. Ramsden et al as cited by Roulstone (2010) suggest that there is variation in children with speech and language impairments progressing terms of language growth depending on what they have been exposed to. By a rich communicative environment, Roulstone looks at the number of books at their disposal, television programmes and random language activities. This however may not be true with learners with mental disabilities. Even when flooded in a communicative environment minimal or no progress in terms of speech development is made to some of them. This, therefore, means that there is something that is lacking in the communicative environment for this to happen. The language activities that should specifically characterize this environment may be lacking. This shows that there is a possible link between language activities and speech development. The ability of information processing in learners with mental disabilities may lack in some of them for example classifying objects. Because of their short retention span, they are said to be interested in limited

activities and may only engage in repetitive activities learnt from people around them Mangal (2009). This may be the problem in the communicative environment, thus lack of a variety of activities to boost this growth. Roulstone does not address this. The present study will therefore attempt to find out how some of the communication accommodation activities and their presence in a communicative environment that affects speech development of children with disabilities. In addition, children with mental disabilities suffer from different setbacks. The short term memory or organizational strategies like grouping may be difficult to them (Robinson and Robinson, 1976). To add on this they have limited or reduced vocabulary thus may lack words to express a thought. Some on the other hand are poor in memorization and are characterized by improper use of words. These difficulties make their socialization quite a challenge to them that is using language as a vehicle for interaction and communication and so the need for relevant activities to help them overcome this. Most of them use language for demand rather than conveying ideas. For communication and growth to take place there should be an integration of speaking, learning and hearing abilities. Therefore, as Anastasion (1993) writes, '...language exercises for these learners should include development and understanding the use of verbal concepts and communication skills like listening to stories, discussing pictures, rhymes, dramatization and play.' By addressing challenging behavior using behavioral support is providing the learner with alternative communication structures in the communicative environment. It is argued that language becomes more natural in a natural environment Fowler (2000). The extent to which this is true to children with mental disabilities in Vihiga county will be the subject of this study since no study has been carried out on learners with disabilities in the area.

The national council of education research and training states that children with mental disabilities are characterized by significant sub-average functioning of the I.Q, approximately 70% or below Gauri (2001). They are however grouped into various categories basing on their cognitive abilities. Mild ones will therefore range from 50-55% of I.Q. According to the Wechsler Adult Intelligence scale (WAIS), an individual with mild mental retardation has an intelligence quotient between 50 and 69. Rosenberg, (1993), however insists that mentally handicapped children follow a similar set of universal principals in acquisition of word meaning just like their able peers. It is only at an advanced stage that they face difficulties that go beyond their cognition linguistic levels. At their level with help, they are capable of performing different activities that can help them advance to the next level in language use.

What Rosenberg implies is that the mentally handicapped have potential for speech growth that is only pulled back by cognitive disabilities. Peterson (2002) echoes this by saying that these children's deficits in language may contribute independently to behavior development disorders and interfere with the child's ability to make him or her understood or understands others. Oral language development should be one of the most natural and impressive accomplishment a child should experience.

Methodology

The study employed descriptive survey design. Sample was drawn from the special units in Vihiga County, Kenya. Data was collected using observation schedule and questionnaire. The instruments. Data analysis was through descriptive statistics; specifically frequency counts and percentages.

Findings

The study analyzed communicative adjustment activities used to enhance speech production and use among children with mental disabilities in Vihiga County. The research items were measured in a

likert scale to elicit information whereby SA=strongly agree, A=agree, U=undecided, D=disagree and SD strongly disagree. Table 1 indicates respondents' responses on communicative adjustment activities used to enhance speech production and use among children with mental disabilities in Vihiga County.

Table 1: Communicative Adjustment Activities Used to Enhance Speech Production and Use among Children with Mental Disabilities in Vihiga County

S/no.	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
1.	I use communicative adjustment activities in my class to enhance speech production and use among children with mild mental disabilities in this school.	3(30%)	4(40%)	1(10%)	1(10%)	1(10%)	10(100%)
2.	Children with mild mental disabilities enhance their production of speech and use whenever communicative adjustment activities are employed in the teaching of language.	4(40%)	4(40%)	0(0.0%)	1(10%)	1(10%)	10(100%)
3.	Teachers who are knowledgeable in communicative adjustment activities help learners with mild mental disabilities to produce speech and use it effectively.	2(20%)	5(50%)	1(10%)	1(10%)	1(10%)	10(100%)

4.	There is a difference in language performance between learners with mild mental disabilities who are exposed to communicative adjustment activities and those who are not.	3(30%)	5(50%)	1(10%)	1(0.0%)	0(10%)	10(100%)
5.	Empathetic listening of the teacher to children with mild mental disabilities allows them to feel heard enhancing their participation and undertaking language activities to produce coherent speech.	2(20%)	6(60%)	1(10%)	1(0.0%)	0(10%)	10(100%)
6.	Use of gestures and non-verbal communication can enhance speech production of mild mentally disabled children since they will connect them to what is being said and thereby improving their competency and performance gradually	3(30%)	4(40%)	1(10%)	2(20%)	1(10%)	10(100%)
7.	Reading for and	2(20%)	4(40%)	2(20%)	2(20%)	0(0.0%)	10(100%)

	talking to learners with mild mental disabilities enhance their language production abilities and performance						
8.	Provision of constant explanation is key in enhancing speech production and use by learners with mild mental disabilities.	2(20%)	5(50%)	1(10%)	2(20%)	0(0.0%)	10(100%)
9.	Use of pictures, flash cards and associating still photos with words will enhance language performance and competence in children with mild mental disabilities.	5(50%)	3(30%)	1(20%)	1(10%)	0(0.0%)	10(100%)
10.	Realizing, respecting and appreciating the differences and limitations of children with mild mental disabilities will enhance their use of language in a communication set up.	5(50%)	4(40%)	0(0.0%)	1(10%)	0(0.0%)	10(100%)

Source: Field Data (2022)

The first aspect to be tested as shown in table 1 was on the statement that “I use communicative adjustment activities in my class to enhance speech production and use among children with mild mental disabilities in this school”. The statement was subjected language instructors only, thus N=10. It was found out that majority 4(40%) of the respondents involved in the study agreed with the statement that they used communicative adjustment activities in their classes to enhance speech production and use among children with mild mental disabilities in school. Similarly, 3(30%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement in question that they used communicative adjustment activities in their classes to enhance speech production and use among children with mild mental disabilities in school. Cumulatively, therefore, 7(70%) of the respondents involved in the study acknowledged that they used communicative adjustment activities in their classes to enhance speech production and use among children with mild mental disabilities in school. This is an indication in itself communicative adjustment activities enhance speech production and use among children with mild mental disabilities in school.

However, 1(10%) of the respondents involved in the study was undecided about whether the use of communicative adjustment activities enhance speech production and use among children with mild mental disabilities in school. Furthermore, 1(10%) and 1(10%) of the respondents respectively disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement that they used communicative adjustment activities in their classes to enhance speech production and use among children with mild mental disabilities in school.

Secondly, respondents were subjected to the statement that “children with mild mental disabilities enhance their production of speech and use whenever communicative adjustment activities are employed in the teaching of language”. It was found that 4(40%) of the respondents involved in this study as instructors strongly agreed with the statement that children with mild mental disabilities enhance their production of speech and use whenever communicative adjustment activities are employed in the teaching of language. In addition, 4(40%) of the respondents involved in the study agreed with the same statement that children with mild mental disabilities enhance their production of speech and use whenever communicative adjustment activities are employed in the teaching of language. Therefore, 8(80%) of the respondents involved in the study as instructors supported the statement that children with mild mental disabilities enhance their production of speech and use whenever communicative adjustment activities are employed in the teaching of language. Those who were undecided about the statement that children with mild mental disabilities enhance their production of speech and use whenever communicative adjustment activities are employed in the teaching of language stood at 0(0.0%). Nevertheless, 1(10%) of the respondents involved in the study disagreed with the statement that children with mild mental disabilities enhance their production of speech and use whenever communicative adjustment activities are employed in the teaching of language. Similarly, 1(10%) of the respondents involved in the study as instructors strongly disagreed with the statement that children with mild mental disabilities enhance their production of speech and use whenever communicative adjustment activities are employed in the teaching of language. Cumulatively, 2(20%) of the respondents involved in the study as instructors refuted the statement that children with mild mental disabilities enhance their production of speech and use whenever communicative adjustment activities are employed in the teaching of language.

Thirdly, instructor respondents were subjected to the statement that teachers who are knowledgeable in communicative adjustment activities help learners with mild mental disabilities to produce speech and use it effectively. Majority, 5(50%) of instructor respondents involved in the study agreed with the statement that teachers who are knowledgeable in communicative adjustment activities help learners with mild mental disabilities to produce speech and use it effectively. Additionally, 2(20%)

of the respondents involved in the study as instructors strongly agreed with the statement that teachers who are knowledgeable in communicative adjustment activities help learners with mild mental disabilities to produce speech and use it effectively. This shows that 7(70%) of the respondents involved in the study as instructors supported the statement that teachers who are knowledgeable in communicative adjustment activities help learners with mild mental disabilities to produce speech and use it effectively. It was noted that 1(10%) of the respondents in question was undecided about the statement that teachers who are knowledgeable in communicative adjustment activities help learners with mild mental disabilities to produce speech and use it effectively. However, 1(10%) of the respondents involved in the study under the category of language instructors disagreed with the statement that teachers who are knowledgeable in communicative adjustment activities help learners with mild mental disabilities to produce speech and use it effectively. Likewise, 1(10%) the instructor respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that teachers who are knowledgeable in communicative adjustment activities help learners with mild mental disabilities to produce speech and use it effectively. Therefore, 2(20%) of the instructor respondents refuted the statement that teachers who are knowledgeable in communicative adjustment activities help learners with mild mental disabilities to produce speech and use it effectively.

Fourthly, instructor respondents were subjected to the statement that there is a difference in language performance between learners with mild mental disabilities who are exposed to communicative adjustment activities and those who are not. It was established that majority, 5(50%) of the instructor respondents agreed with the statement that there is a difference in language performance between learners with mild mental disabilities who are exposed to communicative adjustment activities and those who are not. In addition, 3(30%) of the respondents in this category strongly agreed with the statement that there is a difference in language performance between learners with mild mental disabilities who are exposed to communicative adjustment activities and those who are not. Cumulatively, therefore, 8(80%) of the respondents involved in this study as language instructors supported the statement that there is a difference in language performance between learners with mild mental disabilities who are exposed to communicative adjustment activities and those who are not. Further, 1(10%) of the respondents involved in the study as instructors were undecided about the statement that there is a difference in language performance between learners with mild mental disabilities who are exposed to communicative adjustment activities and those who are not. It was also notable that those who disagreed with the statement that there is a difference in language performance between learners with mild mental disabilities who are exposed to communicative adjustment activities and those who are not were represented by 0(0.0%). However, 1(10%) of the respondents involved in the study strongly disagreed with the statement that there is a difference in language performance between learners with mild mental disabilities who are exposed to communicative adjustment activities and those who are not. Therefore, only paltry 1(10%) of the instructors did not support the statement that there is a difference in language performance between learners with mild mental disabilities who are exposed to communicative adjustment activities and those who are not.

Fifthly, the instructor respondents were subjected to the statement that empathetic listening of the teacher to children with mild mental disabilities allows them to feel heard enhancing their participation and undertaking language activities to produce coherent speech. It was established that majority, 6(60%) of the instructor respondents involved in the study agreed with the statement that empathetic listening of the teacher to children with mild mental disabilities allows them to feel heard enhancing their participation and undertaking language activities to produce coherent speech. In addition, 2(20%) of the respondents involved in the study as instructors strongly agreed with

statement that empathetic listening of the teacher to children with mild mental disabilities allows them to feel heard enhancing their participation and undertaking language activities to produce coherent speech. Consequently, 8(80%) of the respondents supported the statement that empathetic listening of the teacher to children with mild mental disabilities allows them to feel heard enhancing their participation and undertaking language activities to produce coherent speech. Also, 1(10%) of the instructor respondents were undecided about the statement that empathetic listening of the teacher to children with mild mental disabilities allows them to feel heard enhancing their participation and undertaking language activities to produce coherent speech. However, 1(10%) of the instructor respondents disagreed with the statement that empathetic listening of the teacher to children with mild mental disabilities allows them to feel heard enhancing their participation and undertaking language activities to produce coherent speech.

Sixthly, instructor respondents were subjected to the statement that use of gestures and non-verbal communication can enhance speech production of mild mentally disabled children since they will connect them to what is being said and thereby improving their competency and performance gradually. It was found out that majority, 4(40%) of the respondents involved in the study agreed with the statement that use of gestures and non-verbal communication can enhance speech production of mild mentally disabled children since they will connect them to what is being said and thereby improving their competency and performance gradually. Also, 3(30%) of the respondents involved in the study as language instructors strongly agreed with the statement that use of gestures and non-verbal communication can enhance speech production of mild mentally disabled children since they will connect them to what is being said and thereby improving their competency and performance gradually. Collectively, therefore, 7(70%) of the respondents involved in the study supported the view that use of gestures and non-verbal communication can enhance speech production of mild mentally disabled children since they will connect them to what is being said and thereby improving their competency and performance gradually. Gestures such pointing, nodding and focused eye contact can help children with disabilities understand messages. Parents, family members and instructors may need to exaggerate their gestures or prolong them, especially in the beginning to promote comprehension. It was noted that 2(20%) of the respondents involved in the study were undecided about the statement that use of gestures and non-verbal communication can enhance speech production of mild mentally disabled children since they will connect them to what is being said and thereby improving their competency and performance gradually. However, 1(10%) of the instructors involved in the study refuted the statement by disagreeing that use of gestures and non-verbal communication can enhance speech production of mild mentally disabled children since they will connect them to what is being said and thereby improving their competency and performance gradually.

Seventhly, the study subjected instructor respondents to the statement that reading for and talking to learners with mild mental disabilities enhance their language production abilities and performance. It was found out that majority, 4(40%) of the respondents involved in the study as instructors agreed with the statement that reading for and talking to learners with mild mental disabilities enhance their language production abilities and performance. In addition, 2(20%) of the instructor respondents strongly agreed with the statement that reading for and talking to learners with mild mental disabilities enhance their language production abilities and performance. Cumulatively, 6(60%) of the respondent involved in the study as instructors supported the statement that reading for and talking to learners with mild mental disabilities enhance their language production abilities and performance. The first step to learning language is listening. It was established that 2(20%) of the instructor respondents involved in the study were undecided about the statement that reading for and talking to learners with

mild mental disabilities enhance their language production abilities and performance. Furthermore, 2(20%) of the respondents involved in the study did not support the statement that reading for and talking to learners with mild mental disabilities enhance their language production abilities and performance by strongly disagreeing with it.

Eighthly, respondents were subjected to statement that provision of constant explanation is key in enhancing speech production and use by learners with mild mental disabilities. It was established that majority, 5(50%) of the respondents involved in the study as instructors agreed with the statement that provision of constant explanation is key in enhancing speech production and use by learners with mild mental disabilities. Furthermore, 2(20%) of the instructor respondents strongly agreed with statement that provision of constant explanation is key in enhancing speech production and use by learners with mild mental disabilities. Cumulatively, 7(70%) of the respondents involved in the study as instructors supported the statement that provision of constant explanation is key in enhancing speech production and use by learners with mild mental disabilities. For example, in the grocery store, talk to the child at every step. Count the apples as you put them in the shopping bag, read items off the list and check them off with the child and finally allow the child to help you organize and store the items when you get home. This allows you to repeat the items to the child over and over, promoting learning and also teaching her or him about grocery shopping along the way. However, 1(10%) of the respondents involved in the study as instructors was undecided about the statement that provision of constant explanation is key in enhancing speech production and use by learners with mild mental disabilities. Furthermore, 2(20%) of the instructor respondent disagreed with the statement that provision of constant explanation is key in enhancing speech production and use by learners with mild mental disabilities.

Ninthly, the study subjected respondents who were language instructors to the statement that use of pictures, flash cards and associating still photos with words will enhance language performance and competence in children with mild mental disabilities. It was found out that majority, 5(50%) of the instructor respondents strongly agreed with the statement that use of pictures, flash cards and associating still photos with words will enhance language performance and competence in children with mild mental disabilities. In addition, 3(30%) of the instructor respondents agreed with the statement that use of pictures, flash cards and associating still photos with words will enhance language performance and competence in children with mild mental disabilities. Collectively, 8(80%) of the respondents involved in the study supported the statement that use of pictures, flash cards and associating still photos with words will enhance language performance and competence in children with mild mental disabilities. Further, 1(10%) of the respondents involved in the study as instructors was undecided about the statement that use of pictures, flash cards and associating still photos with words will enhance language performance and competence in children with mild mental disabilities. A similar percentage 1(10%) of the respondents involved in the study as instructors disagreed with the statement that use of pictures, flash cards and associating still photos with words will enhance language performance and competence in children with mild mental disabilities.

Tenthly, the study subjected instructor respondents to the statement that realizing, respecting and appreciating the differences and limitations of children with mild mental disabilities will enhance their use of language in a communication set up. It was established that majority, 5(50%) of the respondents involved in the study as instructors strongly agreed with the statement that realizing, respecting and appreciating the differences and limitations of children with mild mental disabilities will enhance their use of language in a communication set up. In addition, 4(40%) of the respondents in this category agreed with the statement that realizing, respecting and appreciating the differences and limitations of children with mild mental disabilities will enhance their use of language in a

communication set up. Cumulatively, 9(90%) of the instructor respondents supported the statement that realizing, respecting and appreciating the differences and limitations of children with mild mental disabilities will enhance their use of language in a communication set up. However, 1(10%) of the respondents involved in the study did not support the statement in question, that realizing, respecting and appreciating the differences and limitations of children with mild mental disabilities will enhance their use of language in a communication set up.

Conclusion

The study found out that communicative adjustment activities enhance speech production and use among children with mild mental disabilities in Vihiga County. This calls for language instructors to be well grounded in a variety of communicative adjustment activities. The instructors' level of understanding of the adjustment activities and their appropriate application will always enhances the speech production and use among the mentally challenged children.

The study further found out that there was a relationship between communication adjustment skills and oral language use in children mental disabilities in Vihiga County. According to Cregan, 1998, as cited in Shiel et al., 2012 oral language is the first, most important and most frequently used structured medium of communication. It is the primary medium through which each individual child will be enabled to structure, to evaluate, to describe and to control his/her experience. It was noted that using fun activities to educate children with mild mental disabilities boost their oral language use. The use of storytelling to teach children with mild mental disabilities improves their use of oral language. It was found out those using interactive activities at home to teach communication skills to children with mild mental disabilities enhance their oral language use. It was found out that applying early intervention programmes to teach language skills to children with mild mental disabilities improves their use of oral language.

Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations:

1. There is need for language instructors and caregivers to be trained on Communicative Adjustment Activities.
2. There should development of more teaching and learning materials that entail communication adjustment skills and oral language as components that assist mentally challenged children.
3. There should be regular in-service trainings for instructors and caregivers to enhance language production and use among children with mental disabilities.

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