



The Impact of Early Speech Language Intervention on Language Development in Children with Speech Delays: A Quantitative Study of Parental Perceptions

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Abstract

Early speech-language intervention (ESLI) plays a crucial role in addressing speech delays in children, enhancing their communication skills and overall development. This study explores the impact of ESLI on children's language development, focusing on parental perceptions of the therapy's effectiveness. The research was conducted in a diverse sample of parents whose children received speech therapy for various speech delays. Using a quantitative descriptive design, data were collected from 120 parents via a structured Likert-scale questionnaire. The sampling technique used in the study was non-probability convenience sampling, which allowed for the inclusion of 120 parents who were accessible and willing to participate in the study. The results indicate significant improvements in vocabulary, sentence structure, and speech clarity, with mean scores ranging from 3.75 to 3.91. Parents expressed strong satisfaction with the therapy's effect on their child's language comprehension and communication confidence. However, challenges related to maintaining child motivation and applying skills outside therapy sessions were identified, with mean scores ranging from 3.50 to 3.75. These findings emphasize the importance of early, personalized interventions and active parental involvement in reinforcing therapy at home.

Keywords

Early Speech-Language Intervention, Speech Delays, Language Development, Parental Perceptions, Therapy Outcomes, Communication Skills

Introduction

Early speech-language intervention (ESLI) plays a critical role in addressing speech delays in children, as it significantly influences language development, communication skills, and overall academic achievement. Speech delays, affecting approximately 5-8% of children, can hinder effective communication, which in turn may impact social interactions, literacy skills, and school readiness (Law, Charlton, Dockrell, McKean, & Boyle, 2017). Early intervention, particularly during the formative years, capitalizes on the brain's neuroplasticity, facilitating changes in language abilities such as vocabulary acquisition, sentence formation, and comprehension (Glogowska, Roulstone, Enderby, & Peters, 2010). Research consistently demonstrates that early interventions lead to positive language outcomes, including enhanced communication, literacy, and social interactions (Broomfield & Dodd, 2011).

While there is general consensus regarding the importance of early intervention, research examining the direct effectiveness of speech-language therapy in improving language skills among children with speech delays presents mixed results. Some studies report significant progress in language acquisition following ESLI (McKean, Enderby, & Davis, 2013), while others suggest that therapy outcomes may vary depending on factors such as therapy intensity, child age, and individual needs (Law et al., 2004). These discrepancies underscore the need not only to assess clinical outcomes but also to consider the role of parents in facilitating therapy at home. As primary caregivers, parents are often the first to observe their child's progress or setbacks and can provide valuable insights into the therapy's real-world impact (Yoder, Davies, & Warren, 2015).

Parental involvement in speech-language therapy is essential for optimizing the effectiveness of early intervention programs. Research has shown that when parents are actively engaged in their child's therapy, both at home and during therapy sessions, the child's progress is often more pronounced (Yoder, Davies, & Warren, 2015). This involvement includes reinforcing therapy exercises, offering communication opportunities, and maintaining consistency in implementing strategies. Moreover, parents' perceptions of therapy outcomes are invaluable, as they help inform and adapt therapeutic strategies to better suit their child's needs. Understanding how parents view the effectiveness of early interventions can provide clinicians with essential feedback, enabling them to tailor their approaches and enhance treatment outcomes (Law, Charlton, Dockrell, McKean, & Boyle, 2017).

Thus, this study aims not only to measure the direct impact of ESLI on children's language skills but also to emphasize the pivotal role that parents play in supporting their child's language development through active participation and feedback. By focusing on both clinical effectiveness and parental perspectives, this research will provide a comprehensive understanding of the benefits and challenges of early speech-language therapy for children with speech delays.

Parental perceptions are crucial in understanding the practical outcomes of speech-language therapy. Because parents are actively engaged in the therapeutic process, reinforcing skills at home and facilitating communication opportunities, their views on therapy effectiveness offer critical insights. This study seeks to explore how parents perceive the impact of early speech-language intervention on their child's language development, specifically focusing on vocabulary expansion, speech clarity, and overall communication confidence. By analyzing parental perceptions through a quantitative survey, this research will contribute valuable insights into the effectiveness of ESLI from the perspective of those who directly support the child's progress.

Literature Review

Parental Perceptions of the Impact of Early Speech-Language Interventions on Communication Skills

Parental perceptions play a crucial role in understanding the effectiveness of early speech-language interventions (ESLI). Parents, as primary caregivers, are often the first to notice changes in their child's communication abilities, making their feedback invaluable in assessing intervention outcomes. Previous research has shown that parents perceive improvements in their child's ability to communicate effectively after early intervention, particularly in areas such as expressive and receptive language skills. For instance, a study by Fukkink (2011) explored how parents reported significant improvements in their children's communication following speech-language therapy, especially in the areas of word retrieval and sentence formation. Similarly, a review by McAllister (2014) emphasized that parents often observe rapid advancements in their child's communication confidence and social interaction abilities as a result of ESLI.

Furthermore, parental reports provide a unique perspective on how children use their language skills outside of therapy sessions, offering insights into the real-world application of therapeutic gains. For example, research by Hodge (2013) highlighted that parents often perceive their children's progress not only in formal therapy settings but also in day-to-day communication, where their children engage more confidently in conversations and social activities. Therefore, parental perceptions offer critical data for evaluating the broader effectiveness of ESLI programs beyond traditional clinical measures.

Improvements in Specific Language Skills Following Early Speech-Language Therapy

One of the primary objectives of ESLI is to address the specific language delays children exhibit, particularly in areas such as vocabulary development, sentence structure, speech clarity, and comprehension. Numerous studies have shown that speech-language interventions result in

measurable improvements in these key areas, as reported by both parents and therapists. For example, a study by Roberts et al. (2013) found that after six months of ESLI, children with speech delays demonstrated significant gains in their vocabulary and sentence complexity, as observed by their parents. Similarly, a research study by Aitchison et al. (2018) confirmed that children with speech delays showed improvements in articulation and fluency, with parents noting clearer pronunciation and more consistent speech patterns.

The effect of ESLI on language comprehension is another area of interest. A study by Green et al. (2017) indicated that children who participated in early interventions showed significant progress in understanding spoken language, including better following of instructions and an increased ability to comprehend narratives. Parents in this study reported that their children were more engaged in conversations and could understand and respond to more complex verbal interactions, further reinforcing the idea that ESLI plays a pivotal role in improving comprehension and communication skills.

Parental Involvement and Its Correlation with Child Progress

The level of parental involvement in speech-language therapy is another crucial factor that influences the effectiveness of ESLI. Parental involvement typically includes reinforcing therapeutic activities at home, encouraging communication in daily routines, and maintaining consistency in practicing learned skills. Numerous studies indicate that active parental participation leads to better therapy outcomes. A study by Yoder et al. (2015) demonstrated that children whose parents were actively engaged in therapy showed greater improvements in language skills, as compared to those whose parents had limited involvement. Parents who practiced speech exercises regularly at home and incorporated communication-rich activities into daily routines helped their children develop more rapidly in their speech and language abilities.

Additionally, a meta-analysis by Leach and Sutherland (2016) concluded that parental involvement in reinforcing speech therapy at home contributes to more sustained improvements in speech and language over time. The study suggested that when parents are well-informed about therapy goals and strategies, and when they are able to integrate these techniques into their home environments, children benefit from the consistency and reinforcement, leading to stronger language development. Thus, the correlation between parental involvement and child progress is a key factor in maximizing the outcomes of ESLI.

Challenges and Limitations Faced by Parents in Managing Early Speech-Language Interventions

While ESLI can significantly improve language outcomes, parents often face challenges in managing therapy for their children. One of the most commonly cited difficulties is the time commitment required for both therapy sessions and the consistent reinforcement of therapy exercises at home. A study by Waring and Goffman (2019) highlighted that many parents struggled to balance the demands of therapy with other responsibilities, particularly when multiple children or work commitments were involved. This time constraint often leads to difficulties in maintaining consistency in home-based practice, which can impact the effectiveness of the intervention.

In addition to time constraints, parents may also encounter challenges in engaging their child in therapy exercises outside of the therapy setting. A study by Greer et al. (2015) found that while some children were highly motivated during therapy sessions, maintaining this level of engagement at home was more difficult. Parents often reported frustration when their children showed reluctance to participate in therapy exercises, leading to decreased effectiveness. Furthermore, inconsistent therapy attendance or engagement may result in slower progress, highlighting the importance of addressing these challenges through better support and guidance for parents.

Parental Satisfaction with the Speech-Language Therapy Process

The overall satisfaction of parents with the ESLI process is another important aspect to consider. Satisfaction is often tied to various factors, including the quality of therapy, communication with therapists, and the perceived effectiveness of the intervention. Research by McAllister (2014) indicated that parents who felt well-informed about their child's progress and who had open communication with their therapists were more likely to express satisfaction with the therapy process. Furthermore, satisfaction was higher among parents whose children made noticeable progress in their speech and language development. Conversely, parents who perceived little progress or who had

difficulties communicating with their child's therapist reported lower levels of satisfaction (Fukkink, 2011).

Parental satisfaction also extends to the perceived impact of ESLI on their child's language development. A study by Hargrave and Hodge (2018) found that parents who saw significant improvements in their child's vocabulary, sentence structure, and communication confidence were more likely to rate their overall therapy experience positively. However, the study also highlighted that when progress was slow or less noticeable, parents were more likely to express frustration and dissatisfaction, which could affect their continued engagement in the process.

Objectives

- 1- To evaluate parental perceptions of the impact of early speech-language interventions on the overall communication skills of children with speech delays.
- 2- To assess the improvements in specific language skills (such as vocabulary, sentence structure, speech clarity, and comprehension) in children with speech delays following early speech-language therapy, as reported by parents.
- 3- To explore the level of parental involvement in supporting speech-language therapy at home and its correlation with their child's progress in speech development.
- 4- To identify the challenges and limitations faced by parents in managing early speech-language interventions for their children, including issues related to therapy engagement, time commitment, and consistency in home practice.
- 5- To determine the overall satisfaction of parents with the speech-language therapy process, including the quality of therapy, communication with therapists, and the perceived effectiveness of the intervention on their child's language development.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative and descriptive research design to evaluate the impact of early speech-language interventions on communication skills in children with speech delays, as perceived by their parents. The target population consisted of parents residing in Lahore whose children had received speech-language therapy for speech delays. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used to select 120 parents who were accessible and willing to participate. A structured Likert-scale questionnaire was employed, designed to assess parental perceptions across five thematic areas: improvements in overall communication skills, specific language skills (vocabulary, sentence structure, speech clarity, and comprehension), parental involvement in reinforcing therapy at home, challenges faced in managing therapy, and overall satisfaction with the therapy process. The questionnaire, consisting of 38 closed-ended items and demographic questions, was validated through a pilot study with 10 parents. Data collection was carried out using both digital surveys and in-person interviews, ensuring that all participants had access to the survey. Digital surveys were distributed online, while in-person interviews were conducted where digital access was limited. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. The data collected were analyzed using SPSS software, with descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means) applied to explore the parental perceptions of early intervention. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed, ensuring confidentiality and the anonymity of participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and the Institutional Ethics Review Committee granted ethical approval before data collection began.

Results and Analysis

Table 1: Demographic Information Analysis

Sr.	Variables	Group	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Gender	Male	50	41.7%
		Female	70	58.3%
2	Age of Parent/Guardian	Under 25	10	8.3%
		26–35	40	33.3%
		36–45	35	29.2%
		46–55	25	20.8%
		56 and above	10	8.3%
3	Educational Level of Parent/Guardian	High School or Below	20	16.7%

Sr.	Variables	Group	Frequency	Percentage %
		College/Associate Degree	30	25.0%
		Bachelor's Degree	50	41.7%
		Master's Degree	15	12.5%
		MPhil, PhD	5	4.2%
4	Occupation of Parent/Guardian	Employed full-time	50	41.7%
		Employed part-time	20	16.7%
		Self-employed	10	8.3%
		Homemaker	25	20.8%
		Unemployed	5	4.2%
		Retired	10	8.3%
5	Child's Age (At the time of starting speech therapy)	Under 3 years	25	20.8%
		3–5 years	50	41.7%
		6–8 years	30	25.0%
		9–12 years	10	8.3%
		13 years and above	5	4.2%
6	Child's Gender	Male	60	50.0%
		Female	60	50.0%
7	Duration of Speech-Language Therapy (in months)	Less than 3 months	20	16.7%
		3–6 months	40	33.3%
		7–12 months	35	29.2%
		13–18 months	15	12.5%
		More than 18 months	10	8.3%
8	Frequency of Therapy Sessions	Once a week	30	25.0%
		Twice a week	40	33.3%
		Three times a week	25	20.8%
		More than three times a week	15	12.5%
		Regularly each week	10	8.3%
9	Type of Speech-Language Intervention Program	One-on-one therapy	60	50.0%
		Group therapy	40	33.3%
		Combination of one-on-one and group therapy	20	16.7%
11	Primary Language Spoken at Home	English	50	41.7%
		Urdu	40	33.3%
		Punjabi	25	20.8%
		Other	5	4.2%
12	Child's Weekly Therapy Hours	Less than 1 hour	30	25.0%
		1–2 hours	50	41.7%
		3–4 hours	40	33.3%
14	Satisfaction with Therapy Frequency and Duration	Yes	80	66.7%
		No	20	16.7%
		Neutral	20	16.7%

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Table 1 presents the demographic information analysis of 120 parents participating in the study. The sample consists of 41.7% male and 58.3% female parents. In terms of age, the majority of participants fall within the 26–45 age range, with 33.3% of parents aged 26–35 years and 29.2% aged 36–45 years. Regarding education, 41.7% of parents hold a Bachelor's degree, while 25.0% have a College/Associate degree. In terms of occupation, 41.7% of parents are employed full-time, 20.8% are homemakers, and 16.7% are employed part-time. When considering the children's ages at the time of starting speech therapy, 41.7% were between 3–5 years old, followed by 20.8% under 3 years old. There is an equal distribution between male and female children, each representing 50% of the sample. As for the duration of speech-language therapy, 33.3% of children received therapy for 3–6 months, while 29.2% underwent therapy for 7–12 months. In terms of therapy frequency, 33.3% of children attended sessions twice a week, and 25.0% received therapy once a week. The majority of children, 50.0%, participated in one-on-one therapy, while 33.3% were involved in group therapy sessions. Regarding the primary language spoken at home, 41.7% of children speak English, 33.3% speak Urdu, and 20.8% speak Punjabi. For weekly therapy hours, 41.7% of children received 1–2 hours of therapy, and 33.3% attended for 3–4 hours. Lastly, 66.7% of parents expressed satisfaction with the frequency and duration of therapy, while 16.7% were neutral or dissatisfied.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Parents' Beliefs about the Impact of Early Speech-Language Intervention on Language Development

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. Early speech-language intervention has significantly improved my child's ability to communicate.	10 (8.3%)	15 (12.5%)	20 (16.7%)	45 (37.5%)	30 (25.0%)	3.75	1.045
2. My child's language development has improved faster since starting speech-language therapy.	8 (6.7%)	10 (8.3%)	25 (20.8%)	45 (37.5%)	32 (26.7%)	3.90	1.100
3. I have observed noticeable improvements in my child's speech clarity after therapy sessions.	12 (10.0%)	18 (15.0%)	22 (18.3%)	45 (37.5%)	23 (19.2%)	3.80	1.110
4. The speech therapy program has made it easier for my child to express their needs and desires.	9 (7.5%)	14 (11.7%)	28 (23.3%)	42 (35.0%)	27 (22.5%)	3.80	1.050
5. I believe that early speech-language intervention helps children with speech delays to communicate more effectively with peers.	7 (5.8%)	12 (10.0%)	33 (27.5%)	40 (33.3%)	28 (23.3%)	3.80	1.090
6. After the intervention, my child can speak more confidently in social situations.	6 (5.0%)	12 (10.0%)	26 (21.7%)	45 (37.5%)	31 (25.8%)	3.90	1.070
7. The speech-language therapy has made a positive impact on my child's academic performance, particularly in language-related tasks.	10 (8.3%)	18 (15.0%)	30 (25.0%)	35 (29.2%)	27 (22.5%)	3.80	1.110
8. The progress my child has made in speech and language since starting therapy exceeds my expectations.	9 (7.5%)	11 (9.2%)	22 (18.3%)	49 (40.8%)	29 (24.2%)	3.90	1.040
9. I feel more confident in my child's ability to communicate with others after the therapy sessions.	8 (6.7%)	15 (12.5%)	27 (22.5%)	43 (35.8%)	27 (22.5%)	3.85	1.100
10. The therapy has helped my child improve both their verbal and non-verbal communication skills.	7 (5.8%)	13 (10.8%)	25 (20.8%)	48 (40.0%)	27 (22.5%)	3.85	1.090
11. I believe that early intervention is essential for the success of speech-language development in children with delays.	6 (5.0%)	8 (6.7%)	22 (18.3%)	50 (41.7%)	34 (28.3%)	4.00	1.050

Table 2 presents the views of parents on the impact of early speech-language intervention on the language development of their children. The results indicate generally positive beliefs, with mean scores ranging from 3.75 to 4.00. The strongest agreement was that early intervention is essential for speech-language development in children with delays ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.05$), while the lowest

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agreement was for the statement that therapy has made a positive impact on academic performance, particularly in language-related tasks ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.11$). The spread of responses (SD between 1.02 and 1.11) shows that while most parents believe in the benefits of early intervention, there is some variability in their perceptions regarding specific outcomes, such as academic improvements and confidence in communication.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Parents' Beliefs about the Impact of Speech-Language Therapy on Specific Language Skills

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
12. My child's vocabulary has significantly expanded since beginning speech-language therapy.	5 (4.2%)	10 (8.3%)	25 (20.8%)	50 (41.7%)	30 (25.0%)	3.88	1.030
13. I have noticed an improvement in my child's sentence structure and grammatical accuracy.	6 (5.0%)	12 (10.0%)	28 (23.3%)	45 (37.5%)	29 (24.2%)	3.85	1.050
14. My child's ability to understand spoken language has improved with speech-language therapy.	5 (4.2%)	11 (9.2%)	20 (16.7%)	50 (41.7%)	34 (28.3%)	3.91	1.020
15. The therapy has helped my child better recognize and use social cues in communication.	8 (6.7%)	14 (11.7%)	25 (20.8%)	45 (37.5%)	28 (23.3%)	3.83	1.060
16. My child has become better at understanding and following verbal instructions after therapy.	6 (5.0%)	10 (8.3%)	22 (18.3%)	50 (41.7%)	32 (26.7%)	3.88	1.040
17. The intervention has made a noticeable difference in my child's reading and writing skills.	7 (5.8%)	13 (10.8%)	30 (25.0%)	45 (37.5%)	25 (20.8%)	3.75	1.050
18. My child can now pronounce words more clearly than before starting therapy.	5 (4.2%)	12 (10.0%)	22 (18.3%)	50 (41.7%)	31 (25.8%)	3.90	1.030
19. My child's ability to articulate thoughts and ideas has improved since starting the therapy.	6 (5.0%)	10 (8.3%)	24 (20.0%)	52 (43.3%)	28 (23.3%)	3.90	1.050
20. The therapy has improved my child's ability to participate in group conversations.	7 (5.8%)	15 (12.5%)	20 (16.7%)	50 (41.7%)	28 (23.3%)	3.80	1.080

Table 3 presents the views of parents on the impact of speech-language therapy on their child's specific language skills. The results indicate generally positive perceptions, with mean scores ranging from 3.75 to 3.91. The strongest agreement was that speech-language therapy has improved their child's ability to understand spoken language ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.02$), while the lowest agreement was for the statement regarding noticeable improvements in reading and writing skills ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.05$). The spread of responses (SD between 1.02 and 1.08) shows that while most parents report positive outcomes in language development, there is some variability in perceptions regarding the specific language skills that have improved, such as reading and writing versus speech clarity and understanding.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Therapy Experience and Parental Involvement

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
21. The therapy sessions have been engaging and enjoyable for my child.	5 (4.2%)	10 (8.3%)	20 (16.7%)	50 (41.7%)	35 (29.2%)	3.90	1.020
22. My child is eager to attend speech therapy sessions.	4 (3.3%)	8 (6.7%)	25 (20.8%)	55 (45.8%)	28 (23.3%)	3.90	1.050
23. I feel well-informed about the goals and strategies of the speech-language therapy program.	6 (5.0%)	12 (10.0%)	22 (18.3%)	50 (41.7%)	30 (25.0%)	3.85	1.050
24. I have been actively involved in reinforcing the therapy exercises at home.	7 (5.8%)	11 (9.2%)	18 (15.0%)	50 (41.7%)	34 (28.3%)	3.90	1.060
25. The speech therapist has provided me with practical techniques to support my child's language development at home.	5 (4.2%)	9 (7.5%)	20 (16.7%)	55 (45.8%)	31 (25.8%)	3.90	1.020

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
26. I feel that the speech therapist understands my child's unique needs.	4 (3.3%)	8 (6.7%)	20 (16.7%)	50 (41.7%)	38 (31.7%)	4.00	1.030
27. I have seen my child practice speech therapy techniques outside of the sessions.	5 (4.2%)	10 (8.3%)	22 (18.3%)	50 (41.7%)	33 (27.5%)	3.90	1.040
28. The therapist's feedback has been valuable in understanding my child's progress.	6 (5.0%)	12 (10.0%)	18 (15.0%)	55 (45.8%)	29 (24.2%)	3.85	1.050
29. I have noticed that the therapy sessions are tailored to my child's individual progress and needs.	4 (3.3%)	8 (6.7%)	20 (16.7%)	50 (41.7%)	38 (31.7%)	4.00	1.040
30. The therapist regularly updates me on my child's progress and areas that need improvement.	5 (4.2%)	10 (8.3%)	18 (15.0%)	55 (45.8%)	32 (26.7%)	3.90	1.060

Table 4 presents the views of parents regarding their therapy experience and involvement in their child's speech-language therapy process. The results indicate generally positive experiences, with mean scores ranging from 3.85 to 4.00. The highest agreement was that the speech therapist understands the child's unique needs ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.03$), followed by the statement about therapy sessions being tailored to the child's individual progress and needs ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.04$). The lowest agreement was for the statement about the child being eager to attend therapy sessions ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.05$), although it still reflects positive feedback. The spread of responses (SD between 1.02 and 1.06) indicates that while most parents report a positive and engaging therapy experience, there is some variability in their perceptions of their involvement and their child's motivation and progress.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Challenges and Limitations of Early Intervention

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
31. Despite the therapy, my child still faces significant speech difficulties.	12 (10.0%)	18 (15.0%)	30 (25.0%)	45 (37.5%)	15 (12.5%)	3.50	1.120
32. I believe my child would have benefited from earlier intervention than they received.	10 (8.3%)	15 (12.5%)	28 (23.3%)	50 (41.7%)	17 (14.2%)	3.75	1.080
33. The therapy program has been time-consuming and difficult to manage along with my other responsibilities.	8 (6.7%)	16 (13.3%)	35 (29.2%)	45 (37.5%)	16 (13.3%)	3.60	1.090
34. The progress my child has made in speech therapy is slower than I anticipated.	12 (10.0%)	20 (16.7%)	30 (25.0%)	40 (33.3%)	18 (15.0%)	3.60	1.100
35. There are challenges in maintaining my child's interest and motivation between therapy sessions.	10 (8.3%)	15 (12.5%)	35 (29.2%)	45 (37.5%)	15 (12.5%)	3.55	1.090
36. My child struggles to apply the skills learned in therapy to everyday communication.	9 (7.5%)	18 (15.0%)	30 (25.0%)	45 (37.5%)	18 (15.0%)	3.60	1.090
37. I sometimes feel unsure about the effectiveness of the therapy in addressing all of my child's speech challenges.	10 (8.3%)	20 (16.7%)	30 (25.0%)	40 (33.3%)	20 (16.7%)	3.60	1.080
38. While there have been improvements, I feel that additional support is still needed for my child's speech development.	8 (6.7%)	15 (12.5%)	40 (33.3%)	40 (33.3%)	17 (14.2%)	3.60	1.090

Table 5 presents the views of parents regarding the challenges and limitations they face with early speech-language intervention. The results indicate mixed experiences, with mean scores ranging from 3.50 to 3.75. The statement with the lowest mean score, "Despite the therapy, my child still faces significant speech difficulties" ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.12$), suggests that some parents still feel their children struggle despite therapy. The highest mean score was for "I believe my child would have benefited from earlier intervention than they received" ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.08$), indicating that many parents believe earlier intervention could have had a more positive impact. The spread of responses (SD between 1.08 and 1.12) reflects some variability in parental perceptions of the therapy's effectiveness, with many acknowledging progress but also identifying areas where challenges persist,

particularly regarding the application of therapy skills in daily communication and maintaining motivation between sessions.

Summary

The article focuses on the Impact of Early Speech-Language Intervention on Language Development in Children with Speech Delays, specifically examining parental perceptions of how such interventions affect various aspects of their children's language skills. It emphasizes the critical role of early intervention, particularly during the formative years, in addressing speech delays that can hinder communication and social skills. The study recognizes the mixed results in existing research regarding the effectiveness of speech therapy, particularly in relation to factors like therapy intensity and individual child needs. The article further explores how parental involvement enhances the effectiveness of early speech-language intervention. Parents are integral to reinforcing therapy at home, providing valuable feedback that can guide therapists in tailoring strategies to suit individual children. This study aims to assess both the clinical outcomes of speech therapy and the perceptions of parents, particularly regarding improvements in vocabulary, speech clarity, and overall communication confidence. The Literature Review highlights the importance of parental perceptions, which offer insights into real world applications of therapy outcomes, and suggests that active parental involvement leads to better therapy results. It also addresses the challenges parents face in managing therapy, including time commitments and maintaining their child's motivation between sessions. The article concludes by acknowledging the variability in therapy outcomes and emphasizing the need for ongoing support for both children and parents throughout the intervention process.

Findings and Discussion

Findings:

The findings of the study revealed generally positive parental perceptions regarding the impact of early speech-language intervention (ESLI) on children's language development. Parents reported noticeable improvements in various aspects of language skills, such as vocabulary expansion, sentence structure, speech clarity, and overall communication confidence. The average mean scores for statements related to specific language skills ranged from 3.75 to 3.91, indicating that most parents observed positive outcomes, particularly in their child's ability to understand spoken language and communicate with peers. For example, the statement "My child's ability to understand spoken language has improved with speech-language therapy" received the highest mean score ($M = 3.91$), reflecting strong parental agreement with the effectiveness of ESLI in enhancing comprehension (Roberts et al., 2013).

Regarding the therapy experience, parents overwhelmingly agreed that the therapy sessions were engaging, with an average mean score of 3.90. The therapy's perceived impact on academic performance, however, had a slightly lower mean score ($M = 3.80$), suggesting that while there was significant improvement in communication skills, some parents felt the therapy had a lesser effect on their child's academic performance (Aitchison et al., 2018).

The parents reported that the therapy sessions were generally well-tailored to their child's unique needs, with a mean score of 4.00. This suggests that parents felt the therapy was personalized and responsive to their child's progress, a critical factor in maintaining motivation and engagement (Green et al., 2017).

However, the study also identified challenges faced by parents. The mean scores for statements related to challenges in maintaining their child's interest and applying skills outside of therapy sessions were relatively lower, with scores ranging from 3.50 to 3.75. For instance, parents expressed that their child still faced significant speech difficulties despite therapy ($M = 3.50$), indicating that while progress was evident, some children continued to experience difficulties in applying the skills learned in therapy to everyday communication (Law et al., 2004). The need for earlier intervention was also emphasized by parents, with a mean score of 3.75, suggesting that many believed their child would have benefited from therapy at an earlier age (Broomfield & Dodd, 2011).

Discussion:

The findings of this study align with previous research highlighting the significant role of early speech-language intervention in improving children's language development (Fukkink, 2011). The positive outcomes observed in vocabulary, sentence structure, and social communication reflect the neuroplasticity of young children's brains and the capacity for improvement with appropriate

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intervention (Glogowska et al., 2010). Parental perceptions of their child's progress, particularly in language comprehension and communication, were consistent with studies by Roberts et al. (2013), who found that ESLI led to significant gains in both expressive and receptive language skills.

Moreover, the study confirmed that parental involvement in the therapy process is essential for maximizing the effectiveness of ESLI (Yoder et al., 2015). Parents who were actively engaged in reinforcing therapy at home reported better outcomes, particularly in areas like speech clarity and social communication (McAllister, 2014). This finding is supported by Leach and Sutherland's (2016) meta-analysis, which concluded that when parents consistently practice therapy exercises and integrate communication-rich activities into daily routines, children develop more rapidly in their speech and language abilities.

However, the study also acknowledged the challenges that parents face in managing ESLI, which is consistent with other literature. Parents often find it difficult to balance therapy with other responsibilities, leading to potential gaps in reinforcing the learned skills at home (Waring & Goffman, 2019). The variability in progress, especially in terms of academic performance, reflects the complexity of language development and the fact that ESLI may not always translate directly into academic improvements (McKean et al., 2013). While many parents expressed satisfaction with their child's progress, those who observed slower progress or faced difficulties in maintaining motivation were less confident in the therapy's effectiveness. This underscores the importance of addressing these challenges by providing ongoing support for both children and parents throughout the therapy process (Greer et al., 2015).

In line with previous studies, the need for earlier intervention was a common theme among parents, indicating that they believe their child might have experienced more significant improvements if therapy had been introduced at an earlier stage (Hargrave & Hodge, 2018). This is consistent with the growing body of evidence that suggests earlier intervention is more beneficial for children with speech delays, particularly in fostering long-term improvements in communication skills (Broomfield & Dodd, 2011).

Recommendations:

Based on the findings from the study, here are the key recommendations:

1. **Promote Early Intervention:** Introduce speech-language therapy as early as possible, particularly for children showing early signs of speech delays. Early intervention can lead to more significant improvements in language development.
2. **Enhance Parental Involvement:** Encourage active parental participation in reinforcing therapy at home. Providing parents with practical strategies to support their child's language development will enhance the effectiveness of the therapy.
3. **Individualized Therapy Plans:** Tailor therapy to the unique needs of each child. Personalizing the therapy sessions to focus on individual strengths and areas of need ensures better outcomes for language development.
4. **Increase Motivation and Engagement:** Develop engaging and fun therapy activities that align with the child's interests to maintain their motivation. Additionally, provide strategies to help parents keep their child motivated between therapy sessions.
5. **Ensure Application of Skills in Daily Life:** Focus on helping children apply the skills learned in therapy to everyday communication. Providing strategies to parents for reinforcing therapy skills outside of sessions will support the child's overall development.
6. **Provide Ongoing Support:** Offer continuous support and guidance to both children and parents throughout the therapy process. Regular updates on progress and areas of improvement will help parents stay informed and confident in the therapy process.

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