Exploring the Sociolinguistic Dimensions in Children's Communication with Autism at Al-Sibtain Academy for Autism and Developmental Disorders

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Abstract

The present study focuses on investigating the sociolinguistic dimensions of communication among autistic children attending Al-Sibtain Academy for Autism and Developmental Disorders. Its primary objective is to explore the sociolinguistic aspects of communication in autistic children, specifically by examining the components of Hymes' speech framework. Employing a qualitative methodology, the researcher analyzes the collected data to gain valuable insights into the communication patterns exhibited by these children.

The study's findings highlight that sociolinguistic models and approaches offer valuable insights into social interaction skills and challenges, serving as a foundation for informed interventions and effective strategies to support social communication. Conducted at Al-Sibtain Academy, the research also identifies contextual factors, participants, and genres that contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the unique communication requirements of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), ultimately informing the development of impactful teaching and learning approaches.

Key Words: Sociolinguistics, Communication, Autism spectrum disorders (ASD), Al-Sibtain Academy, ABLLS-R. Hymes' model.

أستكشاف الأبعاد اللغوية الاجتماعية في تواصل الأطفال المصابين بطيف التوحد في أكاديمية السبطين للتوحد واضطرابات النمو

المستخلص:

تركز الدراسة الحالية على التحقق من الأبعاد اللغوية الاجتماعية للتواصل بين الأطفال المصابين بطيف التوحد في أكاديمية السبطين للتوحد واضطرابات النمو. الهدف الأساسي من هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف الجوانب اللغوية الاجتماعية للتواصل لدى الأطفال المصابين بالتوحد ، وتحديداً استخدام منهجية نوعية في فحص مكونات الإطار التحليلي لـ Hymes ، تحلل الباحثة البيانات التي تم جمعها للحصول على رؤى قيمة في أنماط الاتصال التي أظهرها هؤلاء الأطفال. تسلط نتائج الدراسة الضوء على أن النماذج والمقاربات اللغوية الاجتماعية حيث تقدم أنماطا مهمة في مهارات التفاعل الاجتماعي، وتعمل كأساس للتدخلات المستنيرة والاستراتيجيات الفعالة لدعم التواصل الاجتماعي. يحدد البحث الذي تم إجراؤه في أكاديمية السبطين العوامل السياقية والمشاركين في التعلم

والأنواع التي تساهم في فهم شامل لمتطلبات الاتصال التخاطبي الخاصة باضطراب طيف التوحد لدى الأطفال، مما يساهم في نهاية المطاف في تطوير مناهج التدريس والتعلم المؤثرة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: علم اللغة الأجتماعي ، التخاطب، اضطرابات طيف التوحد، أكاديمية السبطين، برنامج تقيم المهارات اللغوية والتعليمية الاساسية ABLLS-R، نموذج Hymes .

1.Introduction

Language and communication development play a vital role in cognitive development, social interaction, and acquiring knowledge about the world. Communication involves the exchange of information through various means (Heflin & Alaimo, 2007). The development of communication, social skills, and appropriate behaviors are essential for children with autism spectrum disorders. (Rapin & Tuchman, 2008).

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder that affects social interaction, imaginative play, repetitive behaviors, and motor skills. It manifests in infancy and early childhood, causing delays in many fundamental areas of development. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders is characterized by difficulty with social communication in addition to restrictive, limited behaviors, interests, or activities. Understanding the language and social development of autistic children requires the use of the sociolinguistic approach to autism. Researchers can create positive outcomes and forms of treatment to assist autistic children in overcoming these challenges. (American Psychiatric Association 2013). Autism is characterized by a tendency to withdraw and display introverted behaviors, which can impede external contact and connection (King-Sears, 2008).

Accordingly, 25% of children with ASD aged 12-18 months use single words, some stop speaking suddenly, others gradually revert and lose speech. (Kurita:1985).

Partington (2010) states that each child with ASD may delay in language development and difficulties in all communicative functions. He indicates that the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills-Revised (ABLLS-R) is an assessment tool, program planning handbook, and tracking system for the ideas and abilities needed for fundamental language and communication development, as well as skills needed to promote learning in the main academic, adaptive, and motor areas (Partington,2010).

Social development processes in the first year of life are crucial to language and speech development, and it is important to address social communication deficits early to promote optimal language and speech development (Aldred, et al., 2004). Therefore,

early intervention is essential to promote optimal language and speech development in children with ASD.

Additionally, interventions such as social skills training and parent-mediated interventions have shown promise in improving social communication abilities in children with ASD. However, careful attention is needed to support their growth and development in this area. Parents, teachers, and clinicians must be aware of the special communication requirements of children with ASD and offer them the proper interventions. Interventions should be tailored to meet the individual needs of each child (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

2- Literature Review

2.1 Multifaceted Fields of Sociolinguistics

Throughout history, languages have predominantly served as a means of everyday communication, despite their diverse nature and objectives. Additionally, language and society are closely intertwined, leading to numerous variations within each language. It is worth noting that language plays a crucial role in the cognitive development of individuals across various domains (Bell, 1976).

Moreover, the study of any language inherently involves an exploration of the corresponding society and its culture.

In this view, Yule (1996, p. 239) expresses: "sociolinguistics deals with the inter-relationship between language and society. It has strong connections to anthropology, through the investigation of language and culture, and to sociology, through the essential role that language plays in the organizations of social groups and institutions".

Sociolinguistics encompasses various facets, but the majority of them concur that it revolves around the study of language use and how society reacts to it.

For instance, Bell (1976) defines it as "a branch of anthropological linguistics that examines how language and culture are related and how language is used in different social contexts". Likewise, Hudson (1996, p. 3) describes it as the "study of the relationship between language and social factors such as class, age, gender, and ethnicity." Trudgill (2000, p.32) adds that "sociolinguistics is the study of the effect of any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, and context, on the way language is used". Similarly, Dijk (2009, p.7) also stresses the importance of context denoting that it refers to "The study of language in relation to its socio-cultural

context". Meanwhile, Wardhaugh (2010, p. 148) links it to stylistic differences by defining it as "the study of stylistics and social variation of language".

2.1.2 Language as a Social Fact

Ferdinand de Saussure, a structural linguist, posits that language is a social phenomenon. The field of sociolinguistics aims to objectively examine the social aspects of language, using Saussure's definition as a foundation (Holmes, 2001).

There are clear connections between language and society. Language plays a predictable role within society, as each social development has a limited impact on language and contributes to social values. Likewise, language and society are mutually intertwined: language influences social interactions, and social relationships shape language (Baker & Thomas, 2001).

Sociolinguistics investigates how language is utilized, its impact on society, and how society, in turn, influences language. Yule (1996) asserts that speech serves as a means of social identification, enabling individuals to identify themselves as members of different social groups.

Consequently, language and society are deeply interconnected, with language serving as a significant social phenomenon that defines cultural identity and shapes social interactions. By studying language in its social context, we can gain insights into human behavior and communication.

2.1.3 Children's Sociolinguistic Knowledge

Children are social beings who are constantly engaging with other children. They learn how to speak in accordance with social rules and how to recognize the speaking practices of others as well as how they produce new utterances. Knowing human language and growth requires understanding how they achieve this. Developing sociolinguistic knowledge in children is a fascinating field yet to be methodically investigated (Cameron-Faulkner & Theakston, 2019).

Relevant to this point, George Yule (1996, p. 239) indicates that "it is a feature of all languages that novel utterances are continually being created. A child learning language is especially active in forming and producing utterances which he or she has never heard before".

Chambers (1995, p.15) summarizes the sociolinguistic evidence for the stages through with children develop their language and the models they imitate as follows:

Babyhood: The examples include parents and people in other professions who speak in "baby talk," which includes expressions like "Baby go night-night now" and terms like "gee-gee," which means "horse."

Childhood: Children of the same age or somewhat older serve as models throughout this time.

Adolescence: It is too late to acquire a new language or dialect correctly; the foundations of language have already been laid for people (Chambers 1995).

Adulthood: Models are other adults, with today's teenagers serving as a possible source of offense or inspiration (Hutchison & Brown, 2008).

In order to comprehend how language develops in children, it is essential to thoroughly examine their communication abilities. The following section explores this concept, emphasizing its importance.

2.2 Communicative Competence

Bloomfield (1933, p. 42) defines a speech community as "a group of people who interact by means of speech". The speech community involves a group of people that often use common signs as they communicate in a particular way because of their competence; they are different from other groups.

Chomsky (1965) uses the word "competence" to refer to an abstract set of principles that are independent of actual usage and based on an intrinsic aptitude for language. This means that a person's linguistic competence is not determined by their ability to use language in real-life situations but rather by their innate ability to understand and produce grammatically correct sentences.

The Chomsky notion is preferable not just in this regard, but also in the language used to distinguish it. "Competence" and "performance" depict certain people, places, and acts. Hence, Chomsky's theoretical position is both a revival and a completion of the classical tradition in structural linguistics. It embodies the desire to deal solely with what is internal to language in practice (Chomsky, 1980).

On the other hand, the notion of communicative competence considers the social and educational dimensions of language usage. This includes factors like

comprehending diverse registers and adapting language appropriately to various situations and settings (Hymes, 1972).

Hymes (1972) defines this term as the knowledge required by a learner to effectively use a language within a specific language community. In contrast, Chomsky (1965) makes a distinction between competence and performance. Chomsky describes competence as the theoretical linguistic ability of an ideal native speaker, while performance is influenced by factors like tiredness, social context, memory lapses, and distractions. (Chomsky, 1993). To conclude, performance refers to "the actual use of language in real-world settings" (Chomsky, 1965, p.9). However, Hymes (1996) states that communicative competence can be defined in two categories, namely:

Textual competence: where speakers can handle both grammatical forms and context into a meaningful structure in both oral and written formats, text unity can be completed by language convergence and semantic coherence. In both formal and informal settings, this proficiency enables people to communicate their ideas and thoughts through language successfully. It is a necessary skill for effective communication across a variety of industries, including politics, business, and education.

Strategic competence refers to the ability to enhance communication effectiveness and prevent errors in both verbal and nonverbal communication. It involves utilizing a variety of communication techniques, including appropriate nonverbal cues, clarification, and paraphrasing. In circumstances where communication breakdowns may have serious repercussions, such as in negotiations or cross-cultural interactions, strategic competence is essential. The ability to navigate challenging communication situations and come out on top can be significantly improved.

This involves the use of communication strategies like paraphrasing, clarification, and repair to overcome communication breakdowns and improve comprehension. It also entails recognizing cultural differences and adapting communication styles appropriately to ensure successful communication in diverse settings (Canale & Swain, 1980).

It is worth mentioning that Hymes (1972) used the term 'communicative competence' in the late 1960s to represent the idea that the capacity to speak a language involves more than understanding its grammatical rules. According to Hymes, communicative competence also includes knowledge of social and cultural norms as well as the ability to use language appropriately in different contexts. This concept has since been widely adopted and has influenced language teaching and learning approaches around the world.

Children grow up in the effort of verbal interactions in which they need to pay attention not only to grammatical form (e.g., the order of words and their inflections) but also to the effects, for themselves and other participants, of what is said. To the extent to which linguistic research is concerned with the association between forms and meanings, it should be recognized that any linguistic expression is associated with and often imitates a set of attitudes, values, and beliefs about the world. To be a fluent speaker means to be able to recognize and exploit such attitudes, values, and beliefs (Tomasello, 2003).

Furthermore, this competence is essential to attitudes, values, and motives about language, its properties, and uses, as well as competence for, and attitudes toward, the interrelationship of language with other standards of communicative behavior (Canale & Swain, 1980). Unquestionably, social experience, wants, motives, and issues in action support the development of such competence. Therefore, a language model must be designed with a focus on communicative behavior and social life. So, attention to the social component is not limited to situations in which social variables appear to interfere with or limit linguistics. The use of language in social situations has a positive and beneficial component (Gumperz, 1982).

2.3 Autism

In 1943, Leo Kanner, an American psychologist, made a groundbreaking discovery in the field of autism. During his study of a group of children previously diagnosed with various mental disorders, Kanner observed distinct and recurring characteristics. These children exhibited an inability to engage with others and their surroundings in typical ways, which he referred to as "extreme autistic aloneness" (Kanner, 1943, p. 250). Consequently, the term "autism" was used for many years to describe this condition. However, it was later reclassified as (ASD) to encompass a wider range of symptoms and severity levels. Currently, ASD is recognized as a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects communication, social interaction, and behavior.

2.3.1 Characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder

In 1980, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) introduced the concept of Pervasive Developmental Disorders, which encompasses impairments in social interaction, imaginative activity, communication skills, and repetitive interests. Within this spectrum, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is identified by challenges in communication and social interaction that vary in severity and may evolve over time.

According to the Resource Guide (2007, p.16), the characteristics associated with ASD are categorized into three groups: Social interaction, Communication, and Behavior.

2.3.1.1 Social skills:

Children with ASD who have impermanent in social skills may fall into the following categories:

1. "*demonstrates difficulties interacting with peers and adults*",
2. "*has difficulty reading and understanding social cues or situations*",
3. "*withdraws from or provides unusual responses in social situations*", and
4. "*engages in play that is lacking in the imaginative qualities of social play*" Guide (2007, p.16.).

2.3.1.2 Communication skills

The following groups of children with ASD who have problems communication abilities could include:

1. "*has difficulty communicating thoughts and needs verbally and non-verbally*",
2. "*has difficulty with non-verbal communication such as the use of gestures, pictures, eye contact, and facial expressions*", and
3. "*uses speech that includes repetitive, echolalic, or unusual language*" (Guide, 2007, p.16).

2.3.1.3 Behavior

Children with autism spectrum disorders often face challenges in various aspects of behavior, including the following categories:

1. "*displays obsessions or preoccupations with specific themes or objects*",
2. "*likes order and may line up toys repeatedly*",
3. 3." *engages in unusual behaviors such as rocking, spinning, or hand flapping*",
4. "*gets extremely upset with changes in routine or schedules*", and
5. "*has an unusual response to loud noises or other sensory stimuli*".

Each category contains a number of particular elements that are frequently impacted by those who have ASD (ibid.).

2.4. ABLLS-R Program

The Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills- Revised (ABLLS-R) Program, initially established in 1998 by Sundberg and Partington, underwent further enhancements in 2006 (Partington, 2010). It is an evaluation tool for language that incorporates principles from Skinner's influential work on the behavioral study of language, as described in his book Verbal Behavior (VB) published in 1957.

The ABLLS is founded upon a criterion-referenced set of skills that enables the ongoing assessment of a student's expanding repertoire (Partington, 2010). Its purpose is to assist parents and trainers in identifying particular skills that should be the focus of intervention for children encountering language challenges.

The ABLLS-R is Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skill-Revised an assessment, curriculum guide, and skills-tracking system designed to help children with ASD identify particular abilities that require intervention and establish Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and objectives to be taught using ABA teaching (Partington, 2010); Reinforcement Unlimited, 2014).

The manual for the ABLLS-R Skill Acquisition Program is a an invaluable "It offers specific steps and suggestions that will greatly aid parents, teachers, and instructors in putting into practice efficient, evidence-based teaching strategies to help learners develop those crucial skills" (Partington & Sundberg, 2020, p. 5).

The primary function of the ABLLS-R is to identify language and other essential skills that require improvement, thereby enabling children to enhance their learning from real-world experiences (Partington, 2010).

Assessment serves as the foundation for developing suitable and effective interventions. The ABLLS-R is made up of two components: the ABLLS-R Protocol and the ABLLS-R Guide. The protocol is comprised of a skill-tracking system, assessing items ranging from listening and language skills to academic Activities of Daily Living (ADL) skills. The scoring system is simple, in that each specific skill is broken down into 2-4 levels (Partington,2006).

The skill is simply marked as the level it matches. The simple organization allows easy tracking of the learner's progress. The ABLLS-R Protocol includes a section on identifying a child's unique abilities in a variety of other key aspects, including academics, self-care, and motor skills. The ABLLS-R Protocol also aims to provide a

curriculum outline and a method for visually displaying the development of new skills on the tracking system for a child with language impairments (Partington 2010).

It is important to recognize that the ABLLS-R is more than just the protocol. It also includes the ABLLS-R Guide which serves two purposes: first, it provides instructions for scoring the ABLLS-R Protocol and filling out the skills tracking grids for an individual student; second, it provides strategies to help parents, educators, and other professionals administering the assessment use the results to develop an effective IEP for the child. Finally, the ABLLS-R assesses skills that typically develop between ages 2-6 (Partington, 2010).

Skinner's analysis of language is an important tool for identifying the specific language deficits experienced by many children with autism as well as pointing to areas most in need of intervention because behavior analysis of language is a functional analysis that focuses on the various environmental conditions in which language occurs (Sundberg, 1991).

In this study, the ABLLS-R is utilized as a tool by the researcher to identify receptive, expressive, and interactional language skills that require assessment in children with ASD, particularly at the primary stage. The objective is to subsequently develop these skills through intensive instruction.

2.4.2.1 ABLLS-R Skills According to Letters

The ABLLS-R is organized into sections based on letters, each corresponding to a different ability. These skills are crucial for enhancing language in children with autism spectrum conditions (*cf.:* appendix: 1):

1. **Cooperation and reinforcement effectiveness skills (A)** involve establishing rapport with children, gradually reducing reinforcement frequency, and providing opportunities for generalization.

2. **Visual performance skills(B)** are essential for cognitive and physical development, leading to the development of speech and language. Incorporating visual perceptual skills in a child's learning plan can improve their ability to focus on complex stimuli and enhance their language development (Bahadori et al., 2014).

3. **Receptive language skills(C)** are crucial for children's vocabulary growth and classification (Partington, 2010).

4. **Motor imitation skills (D)** improve attention and focus, while vocal imitation is essential for children with speech difficulties (Partington, 2010).

5. **Vocal Imitation Skills (E)** are expanding the complexity of vocal models in children with autism allows them to imitate any vocal model, leading to language acquisition. These skills are essential for children with autism to develop their language abilities (Tarbox, et al., 2009).

6. **Requests (Mands) Skills (F)** are used to request items and information, using gestures and a mand as verbal operants (Partington, 2010).

7. **Expressive Language Skills (Labeling) (G)** are **lab**eling abilities that improve with practice, including imitating sign language. Both verbal and nonverbal abilities should be considered in a child's IEP for active language development (ibid.).

8. **Intraverbal Skills (H)** A verbal child with labeling and receptive language skills can use sign language for communication, enhancing their ability to make requests.

9. **Spontaneous Vocalization Skills (I):** Spontaneous language increases in ASD children due to natural reinforcement, affecting speech and social relationships(ibid.).

10. **Syntax and Grammar Skills (J):** Grammar comprises language rules like phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and lexicon. Children develop syntax and grammar skills through interactions with adults, enhancing their language abilities (ibid.).

11. **Play/Leisure Skills (K):** Partington (2010) emphasizes incorporating at least one ability to enhance a child's play and leisure skills, particularly for those who lack toy play and social interactions.

12. **Social Interaction Skills (L):** The ABLLS-R assessment tool assesses social interaction skills for children and adolescents with ASD, focusing on initiation skills, reciprocity, perspective-taking, and nonverbal communication. Targets

are provided to improve these skills and increase social acceptability standards (ibid.).

13. **Group Instruction Skills (M):** Group instruction focuses on applying knowledge skills in small groups for limited language and participation skills, while focusing on learning new language skills and participation in larger groups for advanced students (ibid.).

14. **Classroom Routines Skills (N):** Classroom routines significantly impact students' academic performance, social development, and independence by promoting friendly skills and reducing disruptive behavior during transition activities (ibid.).

15. **Generalized Responding Skills (P):** Generalized responses demonstrate learned knowledge across stimuli and language abilities. Some children struggle with generalization, and educationalists and therapists must incorporate strategies to promote success in diverse settings (ibid.).

16. **Academic Skills (Q-T):** Partington (2010) explains that academic skills from the ABLLS-R are included in the Basic Learner Skills Section due to their importance in language and learning difficulties. For children who understand most of the section, one to two academic objectives can be assessed. For those with strong interest in numbers, letters, or words, one or two objectives may be included.

17. **Self-help Skills (U-X):** Children with ASD should be taught self-help skills in daily activities, using task analysis to facilitate generalization (ibid.).

The present study focuses on receptive, expressive, and social interaction skills, providing a bridge for generalizing basic learner skills.

4. METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a qualitative approach to test the data qualitatively. The qualitative part of this research is represented by Hymes' S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model.

3.1 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS DISCUSSION

The study analyzed 30 children with ASD from Al-Sibtain Academy for Autism and Developmental Disorders, aged 49-123 months. The majority were male, with 25 out of 30 children being male.

Utilizing Hymes' S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model, the researcher is able to identify the important aspects of communication in distinct social communication disorders. The analysis of the samples reveals the following:

Table 1: The Contextual Analysis

Factors	Description
Setting and Scene	• The place is Al-Sibtain Academy for Autism and Developmental Disorders. • The time and date were established on Sunday, June 12, 2022. After two weeks, the specialists assessed the participants according to the ABLLS-R program.
Participants	• The participants are 30 children with ASD who have been psychologically diagnosed to be the sample of the study (cf.: table2). • Psychiatric social workers
Ends	• This will ensure that the assessment accurately measures the skills and abilities of students at the academy, which will ultimately lead to more effective teaching and learning strategies. • Additionally, by using a standardized assessment tool, teachers and administrators can better track student progress over time and make informed decisions about individualized education plans.
Act Sequence	• The content involves investigating the ABLLS-R program for identifiable aspects of communication skills in ABLLS-R .

Key	• Children with autism frequently speak in a flat or monotone tone, without the normal inflections and pitch variations that characterize ordinary speech.
Instrumentalities	• Due to the difficulties children with ASD suffer from, all the following instrumentalities are taken into account: spoken language, nonverbal communication, and sometimes written language.
Norms	• The norms that are given top priority at Al-Sibtain Academy include the safety of the children and their individualized learning plans. This involves assessing both their social language skills and their capacity for language comprehension and usage.
Genre	• The genre of the children's speech is casual speech, orderly every-language discourse, but it is of clinical nature.

4.1. Findings and Discussion

In order to investigate the sociolinguistic aspect of autistic children in Al-Sibtain Academy, a group of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) from the academy were selected for analysis and answering the research question: ***"How to identify the sociolinguistic aspect of autistic children in Al-Sibtain Academy?***

4.1.1 Contextual Analysis

Speech is utilized in a number of ways by different groups of people, and every social group has its own set of linguistic rules. For assessing the language of certain groups, some clearly defined frameworks for ethnographic research on speech need to be used.

The present study aims to adopt Hymes' (1972) model to examine children with ASD at Al-Sibtain Academy for Autistic Children starting with the setting and scene, participants, ends, action sequences, keys, instrumentalities, norms, and genres. Moreover, in some cases, communication could be influenced by events, situations, and acts; thus, the context of communication that occurs could be straightly different. Hymes identifies S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G properties of the communicative situation in order

to account for the fact that language users not only need to learn the rules of grammar or discourse but also need to know in what situation to use text or talk correctly.

The contextual analysis demonstrated in the table (1) above is further explained as follows:

1-Setting and Scene

The Al-Sibtain Academy for Autism and Developmental Disorders holds a pioneering status in Iraq as the first of its kind, and the fourth in the region, to implement an inclusive and specialized program known as the Assessment of Basic Language Learning Skills (ABLLS). Since its establishment in 2022, the academy has been dedicated to offering comprehensive treatment and training for children diagnosed with autism and other developmental disorders, while also providing valuable support and guidance for their families. With a dedicated team of 160 members and an extensive caseload of over 500 ongoing cases, the center delivers a range of essential services including behavioral therapy, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and social skills training.

2- Participants (P)

Psychiatric social workers assess 30 children diagnosed with ASD, focusing on their cognitive and social abilities. They observe behavior and interactions to understand individual needs and strengths. Psychiatric social workers analyze social, emotional, interpersonal, and socioeconomic requirements. Consistency in learning materials is maintained throughout training sessions, allowing for uniformity but limiting the ability to modify materials to shape responses or strengthen independence.

Table 2: The Participants of the Study

Participants	Frequency	Percentage
Male	25	83.4%
Female	5	16.6%
Total	30	100%

3- Ends (E)

The researcher examines the impact of learning activities on social interaction skills in children with ASD at Al-Sibtain Academy for Autistic and Developmental Disorders. A mixed-methods approach uses quantitative and qualitative data to understand the effects. The findings could benefit educators, therapists, and parents, who benefit from the academy's welcoming environment, specialized programs, and guidance from experienced professionals.

4- Act Sequence (A)

The SCDS scale is used in open-ended questionnaire sequences to compare ABLLS-R and SCDS programs for communication skills development. The pre-posttest data diagnoses social interaction defects, while the post-test after 24 weeks compares the effectiveness of each program. Both programs support individuals with ASD in developing social communication skills, with SCDS targeting social communication deficits.

5- Key (K)

Autistic children's flat tone lacks inflections and pitch variations, making it difficult for others to discern emotions and intentions. This can impact communication and socialization with peers.

6- Instrumentalities (I)

Autism affects individuals differently, with communication abilities and preferences varying among autistic children. Understanding and respecting these differences is crucial for effective communication. Assistive technology and alternative forms like sign language may be beneficial. The discourse surrounding autism is multifaceted, with debates on interventions, supports, and social implications. As autism prevalence increases, concerns about causes and preventative measures arise. Autistic individuals are advocating for their rights and challenging stereotypes, highlighting the diversity within the autism community and the need for individualized support and accommodations.

7-Norm (N)

Al-Sibtain Academy for Autistic Children's Disorders prioritizes safety and individualized learning plans for children with autism. Services include speech therapy, occupational therapy, and behavioral interventions to support development and success in academic and social environments. The academy employs trained staff to develop

social skills, communication abilities, and independence, preparing children for personal and professional success.

8- Genre (G)

The language used by participants with ASD is clinical, necessitating a supportive and inclusive learning environment that caters to their unique needs and disorders.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The utilization of sociolinguistic model and approach can offer a deeper understanding of the social interaction abilities and challenges experienced by autistic children, leading to informed interventions and support strategies to enhance their social communication skills.

The analysis of Hymes' S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model has provided valuable insights into the communication skills of children with ASD at Al-Sibtain Academy.

This study has identified significant contextual factors, including the impact of communication for individuals with ASD in various settings and contexts. These factors encompass participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms, and genres. By employing this framework, researchers and educators can gain a better understanding of the unique communication needs of children with ASD and develop more effective teaching and learning strategies.

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Appendix

*Figure (1):"The Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills –Reversed (ABLLS-R)". Skill **Trickling System***