



# INFLUENCE OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN- A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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## Abstract

The period of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted education, especially on early childhood education aged 5-6 years. This study aims to determine the influence of pandemic situation on developing language aspects of children aged 5-6 years. Since spring 2020, parents have been working from home and children have been home from daycare and school. Parents are experiencing stress in an attempt to satisfy the demands of work, family, and COVID-19 concerns. Due to the fact that children have been home from daycare and school, parents have the sole responsibility of caring for and teaching their children until schools are able to fully and effectively meet the needs of educating students in an adapted format. This impacted different developmental areas of young children like social, cognitive language etc. Research provides a wealth of information regarding influence of COVID-19 pandemic on language development. Charnery et al. (2021) reported that the language development of children can be negatively affected and there may be language developmental delays due to the pandemic period. With this view present review study mainly focuses on the studies which revealed influence of COVID-19 pandemic on language development among preschool children.

Key words: COVID-19, Pre School, language development, Pandemic

## Introduction

Covid-19, first observed in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, spread rapidly, becoming declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on 11 March 2020. Many activities in health, education, entertainment, and trade were interrupted (Arı-Arat & GülayOgelman, 2021; Wang et al., 2020; WHO, n.d.). Working conditions in educational institutions were restructured by compulsory measures taken to prevent the spread of the pandemic. There were also changes in family lifestyles, as these measures also prevented children from accessing programs and services that promoted their care and development. All these changes reflected on children's lives in different ways, affected their developmental processes, and sometimes had negative consequences on children's psychological well-being as well as changes in anxiety and stress levels (Di Giuseppe et al., 2020; Şahin-İnan, 2020; Tohidast et al., 2020; UNICEF, 2021).

Children do not have the independent power to direct their development and meet their social, emotional, mental, and behavioural needs. In addition, during the pandemic period, it became necessary to comply with the rules about hygiene, eating healthy food, maintaining social distance, etc. Due to their limited experience and lack of skills in situations such as epidemics and natural disasters, children are in the first place of the fragile link that can be affected by traumatic events (Lieberman et al., 2011; Ok, Torun, & Yazıcı, 2021; Schonfeld & Demaria, 2015). In this regard, Charnery et al. (2021) reported that the language development of children can be negatively affected and there may be language developmental delays due to the pandemic period.

Language is the first step in acquiring knowledge and one of the communication tools used to think. Language itself is a means of communication between individuals in the form of symbols and sounds produced by speech tools to communicate with other people (Indrayani, 2016; Putri & Eliza, 2021).

## Aim and Methodology

The aim of the study is to review the existing literature to present studies that examined the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the development of language of preschool children, with special emphasis on the nature and type of that impact.

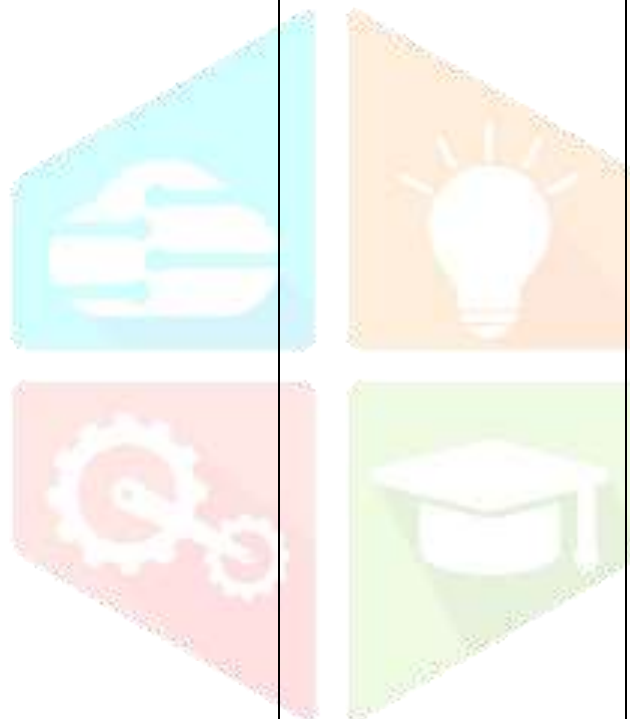
For this study Google Scholar browser, ProQuest browser, Mendeleyand research gate) were used to search the existing literature. Studies in the English language were searched. On the whole 20 research studies covering the different parts of the world were reviewed to analyse the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on language development. All articles were double-screened by two authors according to title. All the studies were assessed in relation to their characteristics, quality, and congruence with the theme. Each study's summary was initially analyzed and those that did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded. Papers whose full-text was included were reviewed by author. After reviewing the available literature, studies which in their

research studied the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on preschool children and on their language development have been presented.

The methods used are, a qualitative case study design was used to investigate the opinions of preschool teachers about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the language development of preschool children, a True Experimental Design by comparing face-to-face learning at school and online education at home, Observational, cross-sectional, cohort, and systematic reviews, in English language were included in the study. Studies of non-human subjects and experimental studies were excluded. The target population for this review was that aged 3 to 6 years, with no limitations related to gender, race or health condition.

## Results

S.N	Title of the Study	Authors	Sample	Results & Discussion
1	Effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on language development of preschool children	Filiz Erbay and Ilknur Tarman Istanbul Aydin University, Turkey	This study was carried out with 21 preschool teachers (who teach 4-6-year-old children) from various regions of Turkey. As this study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic period, a convenience sampling method was preferred considering the difficulty of reaching the participants (Büyükoztürk et al., 2013).	Teachers stated that the language development of children was adversely affected during the pandemic period, and they observed developmental delays in verbal language and social communication skills.
2	COVID-19 first lockdown as a window into language acquisition: associations between caregiver-child activities and vocabulary gains	Natalia Kartushina, <i>et.al.</i> ,	The vocabularies of 1742 children aged 8-36 months across 13 countries and 12 languages were evaluated at the beginning and end of the first lockdown period in their respective countries (from March to September 2020).	The recent pandemic of corona virus infection (COVID-19) has led to a state of emergency, quarantine, closure of public institutions, and pre-schools, kindergartens and schools in 172 countries. These

			<p>epidemiological measures have led to social isolation and the need for children to learn from home, which has manifested itself in the emergence of difficulties in the development of speech and language. Research has shown that during the pandemic, children spent significantly more time watching television and computer screens than before pandemic, and less in play and physical activity. The recent pandemic of corona virus infection (COVID-19) has led to a state of emergency, quarantine, closure of public institutions, and pre-schools, kindergartens and schools in 172 countries. These epidemiological measures have led to social isolation and the need for children to learn from home, which has manifested itself in the emergence of difficulties in the development of</p>
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				<p>speech and language. Research has shown that during the pandemic, children spent significantly more time watching television and computer screens than before pandemic, and less in play and physical activity. Results indicated that Children who had less passive screen exposure and whose caregivers read more to them showed larger gains in vocabulary development during lockdown, after controlling for SES and other caregiver-child activities. Children also gained more words than expected (based on normative data) during lockdown; either caregivers were more aware of their child's development, or vocabulary development benefited from intense caregiver-child interaction during lockdown, or both</p>
3	Online Learning on Children's Language Development During the	Alfina Citrasukmawati 1* Wisnu Kristanto Indonesia	The research subjects consisted of two groups, namely experimental and control, with 40	Significant value showed that online learning significantly affects early childhood

	COVID-19 Pandemic		PAUD children from Kindergarten Schools in Surabaya and Gresik. B. , This study followed the opinion of Gall et al. (2003) for the pretest-posttest matching group	language development during the Covid19 pandemic. The reason is, face-to-face learning cannot be done optimally, with reduced learning hours during the Covid-19 pandemic. Conversely, online learning can be done anywhere and anytime, even though the place and distance are different.
4	Developmental Losses in Young Children from Pre-primary Program Closures during the COVID-19 Pandemic	Alejandra Abufhele, <i>et,al.,</i>	This study uses a cross-sectional sample of children from 7 childcare centers in the Metropolitan Región, Chile. In December 2020,	The adverse impacts on children in 2020 compared to children interviewed in 2017 in most development areas. In particular, nine months after the start of the pandemic, found a loss in language development.
5	Study: Pandemic had varying effects on preschool kids	Stephanie Soucheray, MA	This study consisted of child participants assessed at 24 and 54 months of age. At 24 months, the survey used the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, a screening tool measuring communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving, and personal-social skills.	At 24 months, the pandemic-exposed group had significantly higher problem-solving skills (3.93; 95% confidence interval [CI], but lower personal-social skills than the unexposed group.  Pandemic-exposed children also had better fine motor skills than the

				control group. At 54 months, kids exposed to the pandemic had significantly higher vocabulary, picture sequence memory scores, and cognitive composite scores.
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## Conclusion

The situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has led to numerous changes in daily activities that have affected the development of children. As the reviewed studies indicated COVID-19 pandemic had both positive and negative influences on the language development of preschool children.

- ❖ The results of this study show that children experienced problems in verbal language and social communication skills due to reasons such as being away from social environments, increased screen time, distance education, and family interaction not being at the desired level during the pandemic period. The research literature on this topic contains studies with similar results demonstrating that children had language problems for different reasons during the pandemic period. For example, in the study by Yafie, Giavarini and Maulidia (2020), parents reported that their 3-4-year-old children could understand the commands but still had problems expressing what they wanted during the pandemic period. A study by Ok, Torun and Yazıcı (2021) showed that parents had difficulties in relating to and communicating with their children during this period. It was also emphasised that children shouted, used rude expressions, screamed, and refused to communicate. According to the teachers, the increase in screen time, which was included in the results of this study, was seen as an obstacle to language development
- ❖ The frequency and duration of shared book reading and screen exposure were related to respective receptive and expressive vocabulary gains in lockdown – children whose caregivers read more to them and who had less passive screen exposure showed larger receptive and expressive vocabulary gains, respectively, – and that children’s reported receptive and expressive vocabulary development was boosted compared to pre-pandemic CDI norms.

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