

Developing Functional Sign Language among Parents of Children with Hearing Impairment

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Introduction

Inclusion of Hearing Impaired children in general schools is the current tendency in deaf education today (Powers 2003). It has been suggested that the goal of inclusion is to promote the academic and social inclusion of Hearing Impaired pupils. Oywa (2010) noted that families and friends of children with hearing loss need to be taught sign language to facilitate communication.

Hearing Impaired Children and their Hearing Parents, have mutual communication problems, struggle to establish satisfactory parent-child relationship patterns. Deaf learners who are unable to communicate their needs, thoughts and experiences may experience social isolation, depression and a low self-concept. Considering these needs the present study aimed in "*Developing Functional Sign language among Parents of Children with Hearing Impairment*".

Functional Sign Language refers to the use of sign in a way similar to how object symbols are used. A smaller number of common, functional and concrete words are used to assist an individual in receiving or conveying a message. Its main purpose is to be concrete and accessible.

Objectives

Method

The site selected for the present study was Inclusive Schools of Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, India. The schools selected for the study are: The present study adopted purposive sampling technique to select the sample. The sample comprised of 30 Parents of 30 Hearing Impaired Students from VI to X Grade.

Functional Sign Language Rating Scale

The Functional Sign Language Rating Scale was developed. A total of 100 words were selected from 12 domains of Indian Sign Language Dictionary published by Ramakrishna mission Vidhyalaya University and the investigator framed 25 sentences using those words. The sentence consists of various types of sentences including Declarative, Imperative, Interrogative, and Exclamatory Sentences used in or day today life. *(The tool has been translated into Tamil Language also.*

Three point rating was given for signing each sentence. Fully Correct- 2, Partially Correct -1, Fully Wrong -0 score was given. Total score is 50.

Implementation Procedure

Preparation of Adapted Functional Sign Language Training Package

From Indian Sign Language Dictionary 12 Domains were selected. Functional Communicative 100 words were listed under the 12 domains. 60 Functional communication sentences used in day today life have been framed using those 100 words. For each domain of words practicing sentences were listed. The Functional Sign Words and sentences were translated in Tamil Language.

Implementing Functional Sign Language Online Training

A pretest was conducted to the parents using the Functional Sign Language Rating Scale. Intervention was given to Parents of children with Hearing Impairment. The intervention training was given through online mode. The participants were introduced with the Functional Sign for 100 words under 12 domains. The training involves introducing the Functional Sign for the words to the participants and make them to practice and remember the sign for each word. And then using the Functional Sign in sentences for communicating was taught by connecting the words with using in example sentences. The participants were given with Hands on training during the online training programme. Each session comprised of teaching as well as practicing. One month intensive training was given to each group of Stakeholders. Each online training was taken for one hour per day. A manual adapted using the Indian Sign Language Dictionary with practice sentences was given to the participants for reference. Posttest was conducted using the same tool.

Results:

Result 1: Comparison of mean scores of Parents of Students with Hearing Impairment before and after Introduction of Functional Sign Language Online Training

Variable	Test	N	Mean	SD	't' value
Functional Sign language of Parents	Pre	30	15.39	3.43	2.56**
	Post	30	20.00	3.00	

From the above Table, it is evident that the 't' value for the Functional Sign Language Development among Parents before and after introduction of Functional Sign Language Online Training is 2.56 which is significant at 0.01 level. It indicates that there is significant difference between pretest and posttest of Functional Sign Language Development of Parents. Hence, the hypothesis stated that *there is no significant difference between pretest and posttest of Functional Sign Language Development of Parents of Students with Hearing Impairment is rejected*. It is concluded that Online Training on Development of Functional Sign language was effective in enhancing Functional Sign language Development among Parents of Students with Hearing Impairment.

Result 2: Comparison of mean scores of Parents of Students with Hearing Impairment before and after Introduction of Functional Sign Language Online Training with respect to Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	't' value
Pretest Score of Functional Sign language of Parents	Father	11	2.37	1.47	35.26**
	Mother	19	5.72	1.28	
Posttest Score of Functional Sign language of Parents	Father	11	7.02	1.64	6.72**
	Mother	19	8.62	0.61	

From the above table, it is evident that the t-value for Development of Functional Sign Language of pretest compared between Father and Mother of Students with Hearing Impairment is 35.26 with df=29 which is significant at 0.01 level. It indicates that the pre scores of Development of Functional Sign Language of Father and Mother differ significantly. It means that the Mothers (Mean:5.72) secured higher score than the Fathers (Mean:2.37) in the pretest. In the light of this, the null hypothesis stated that *“there is no significant difference in mean Development Functional Sign Language among parents of Students with Hearing Impairment with respect to Gender is rejected”*. It may therefore be e concluded that Mothers showed higher Development of Functional Sign Language than Fathers in Pretest.

From the table, it is evident that the t-value for Development of Functional Sign Language of posttest compared between Father and Mother of Students with Hearing Impairment is 6.72 with df=29 which is significant at 0.01 level. It indicates that the pre scores of Development of Functional Sign Language of Father and Mother differ significantly. It means that the Mothers (Mean:8.62) secured higher score than the Fathers (Mean:7.02) in the pretest. In the light of this, the null hypothesis stated that *“there is no significant difference in mean Development Functional Sign Language among Parents of Students with Hearing Impairment with*

respect to Gender is rejected". It may therefore be concluded that Mothers showed higher Development of Functional Sign Language than Fathers in Posttest.

Conclusion

The introduction of Functional Sign Language to parents of Hearingimpaired children allows for the sharing of best practices note the social and intellectual bridges that arise through the use of Functional signing as described by Toth (2009). This study supported the development of functional sign language for better social inclusion.

References

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