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PROMOTING MULTILINGUAL SKILLS IN CHILDREN WITH AUTISM: PARENT AND TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHING ESL

Annotation. Research on autistic children who grow up in multilingual environments remains sparse, despite more than half of the global population being multilingual. Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) is characterized by severe impairments in communication and language skills. Many ASD parents ask specialists for advice about whether their child should study both languages simultaneously in a bilingual environment. The study investigated the challenges faced by teachers and parents in educating children with ASD in learning English as a Second language (ESL). The study sample consisted of nine parents and five teachers of children with ASD who were interviewed using a qualitative approach. According to the findings of the study, teaching English as a Second Language to children with autism spectrum disorders with visual aids, modeling, and repetition has been shown to be an effective method to enhance the language and social abilities of children with autism. While it is difficult to develop teaching strategies that are effective for children with autism spectrum disorders, teachers have found that these children are extremely proficient in acquiring new languages. Additionally, to ensure successful language learning programs for children with ASD, it is essential that educators and parents collaborate in order to make the programs successful. Moreover, this study demonstrates various methods that educators and parents could use in order to assist children in achieving bilingualism. The study recommends that more research is needed to fully comprehend the difficulties that ESL teachers face when they are trying to teach children with ASD how to learn languages.

Keywords: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD); children; ESL; multilingual abilities; parental perspectives; teaching.

Introduction

Being able to speak, read, and write in numerous languages is referred to as multilingualism, and it is increasingly prevalent in today's global culture. Research has shown that children raised in multilingual households may experience cognitive benefits such as enhanced creativity, problem-solving

skills, and cognitive adaptability. The benefits stem from the unique linguistic and cultural encounters that multilingual youngsters are exposed to, which can enhance their cognitive development (From et al., 2022; Pundziuvienė et al., 2023; Zeng et al., 2022).

Multilingualism has a positive impact on both social communication and intellectual success. Bilingual children excel academically in certain topics, have a deeper understanding of cultural diversity, and engage more effectively with individuals from various backgrounds. Nevertheless, multilingualism can have intricate effects on cognitive development that differ based on various contexts. It can also lead to challenges such as language interference or mixing. Research on multilingualism is an intriguing subject that reveals the relationships between language, culture, and cognition (Aldabas, 2022; Charamba, 2021; Fisher et al., 2022).

Extensive research has been conducted on the topic of multilingualism over the years. Globalization has led to an increase in the popularity of multilingualism. Enhanced academic achievement, more social and cultural understanding, and improved cognitive abilities are some of the benefits of being multilingual. Studying multilingualism is crucial for gaining insights into how the brain encodes and handles language, which can inform the creation of language interventions and educational programs (Festman, 2021; Irgashevich et al., 2022).

Examining multilingualism in children with ASD is crucial due to its potential impact on policies and practical applications. Proficiency in various languages can enhance executive function and social skills in children with ASD. Recognizing these advantages helps shape language education and cultural diversity policy, as well as efficient language learning methods for children with ASD. It is crucial to provide efficient language learning and teaching methods for children with ASD. Research indicates that bilingual children who are developing typically may experience cognitive benefits, including enhanced attentional control and behavioral regulation, as a result of switching between languages (Castro & Prishker, 2019; Goodrich et al., 2022; Kircher et al., 2022; Nolte et al., 2021; Titone & Tiv, 2023). Thus, advocating for multilingualism is essential for both neurotypical children and those with ASD.

This study addresses a research gap by collecting input from parents

and teachers on the most effective ways to assist multilingual children with ASD in developing their language skills. Children with ASD may experience challenges and delays in language development, especially when exposed to many languages. The study's results can guide the creation of successful language therapies for these youngsters, improving their well-being and future opportunities.

RQ.1: What teaching strategies and methods are most effective in supporting language learning for children with ASD in the context of ESL instruction, from the perspective of both teachers and parents?

RQ.2: How do parents of children with ASD navigate the challenges of supporting their child's language learning in the context of ESL instruction, and what strategies do they find to be most effective?

RQ.3: What role can technology play in supporting language learning for children with ASD in the ESL classroom, and how do teachers and parents perceive its effectiveness?

Literature Review

The study of multilingualism is often approached from personal and societal perspectives. Li's 2008 definition of multilingualism describes it as the ability of individuals to use many languages for communication, either actively through speaking and writing or passively through listening and reading. This term highlights the pragmatic use of numerous languages in an individual's life. The European Commission (2007) defined multilingualism as the ability of individuals, groups, institutions, and communities to often use many languages in their everyday activities, emphasizing its importance at the societal level.

Research indicates that multilingualism positively impacts children's cognitive development by improving executive function skills such as memory and attention control, in comparison to monolingual children. Moreover, it has been linked to enhanced creativity and higher academic performance. The relationship between multilingualism and cognitive development in children with ASD is yet unclear. Recent studies suggest that multilingualism could enhance the cognitive development of children with ASD, although more

research is needed to fully understand this connection.

Kriegel et al. (2023) state that ASDs are neurodevelopmental disorders that impact behavioral, social, communication, and sensory processing abilities. Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder struggle with language acquisition, underscoring the significance of early identification and support (Gernsbacher & Yergeau, 2019). Pliatsikas et al. (2018) suggest that multilingualism can offer cognitive and social advantages, but it necessitates certain diagnostic and therapeutic methods. Lorah et al. (2018) recommend integrating computer-assisted therapy, naturalistic instruction and applied behavior analysis for language intervention in individuals with ASD.

Speech therapy is often necessary for many children with ASD due to their diverse language development capabilities. Research conducted by Chu et al. (2020) and Sánchez Pérez et al. (2020) has shown that children with ASD exhibit a noticeable delay in expressive language development, but it typically aligns with the developmental pattern seen in typically developing (TD) children. For young children to develop language skills optimally, they need to get appropriate treatment.

Children with ASD may struggle with acquiring and using language skills, especially in the areas of social communication, pragmatics, and generalization. Individuals with ASD who are bilingual may face increased challenges when learning a second language. Therefore, children in multilingual households with ASD may need specialized language assessment and intervention strategies. Recognizing and addressing language acquisition challenges is crucial for supporting the language development and social communication abilities of children with ASD (Chu et al., 2020; Cola et al., 2020; Kapranov, & Voloshyna, 2023; Moseley et al., 2020).

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder who are learning English as a Second Language require specialized teaching methods and approaches that cater to their requirements. Utilizing visual aids, maintaining regular schedules, providing specific instruction, and using tailored materials and tasks are essential for promoting involvement and understanding. Language acquisition can be enhanced by the use of multimodal strategies and breaking down language into smaller segments. Children with ASD need to repeatedly practice and reinforce new language skills. Utilizing these effective teaching

methods and tactics can enhance language learning for children with ASD (Boyer & Lee, 2001; Hsu, 2011; Wilder et al., 2004).

Establishing a regular and expected schedule is advantageous for children with ASD who are learning English as a Second Language. They flourish in environments with clear organization, which helps alleviate stress in new or unfamiliar circumstances. Teachers can start with a warm-up, introduce linguistic topics, engage in practice exercises, and conclude with a review. Visual timetables or checklists aid children in comprehending the order and length of activities. Establishing a well-organized schedule is crucial for implementing successful teaching methods for children with ASD who are learning English as a Second Language, as suggested by Al-khresheh et al. (2022), Burgstahler & Russo-Gleicher (2015), and Mesibov et al. (2004).

Parental participation is essential for the language acquisition of children with ASD in English as a Second Language. Establishing a language-rich household by speaking English, engaging in shared reading, and playing language-learning activities are successful methods. Demonstrating proper English language and working together with the child's ESL teacher is also advantageous. Encouraging behavior and acknowledging achievements boost drive and involvement. Parental involvement is crucial for facilitating language acquisition and guaranteeing achievement for children with ASD in an ESL setting (Tincani et al., 2009; Yan et al., 2022; Saracho & Evans, 2021).

Collaboration between teachers and parents is crucial for facilitating the language acquisition of children with ASD in an English as a Second Language setting. They can collaborate to pinpoint the child's strengths and weaknesses and create personalized learning strategies. Consistent communication can keep everyone updated on the child's development, and teachers can offer recommendations for enhancing language acquisition at home. Parents can provide details about their child's hobbies, which teachers can then utilize to customize language learning tasks. Utilizing collaborative methods can establish a positive and motivating atmosphere that improves language acquisition (Althiabi, 2021; Bakhsh, 2020; Stehle Wallace et al., 2022).

Speech therapy can be advantageous for children with ASD who have delayed language development, as indicated by Chu et al. (2020) and Sánchez

Pérez et al. (2020). Parental views towards bilingualism are a contributing factor to language proficiency maintenance, as indicated by Haq et al. (2021) and Howard et al. (2021a). Educators are dealing with constrained resources because of COVID-19, which is affecting their ability to help neurodiverse children from linguistically diverse families. Online parent education and training programs have proven to be effective in providing a support network in this situation (Howard et al., 2021b). There is a scarcity of research on educating children with ASD in ESL settings, as noted by Howard et al. (2021).

Methodology

Participants

The study took place from March 2023 to June 2023, spanning three months. Participants were allotted a two-week interval to reply to the interview questions over email. Nine multilingual parents of children with ASD and five ESL teachers were chosen for the study using purposive sampling after the process was completed. The demographic statistics of the participants are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Global English has proliferated in the Gulf region, leading to an acceleration of globalization. English is the predominant common language in the Gulf region due to its stable migrant population. English is transitioning from a foreign language to a second language at a fast pace (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011). Hence, parents of children with ASD aim to develop a wide range of skills for their children, and learning a second language is one of these important skills (Lange et al., 2024).

This method ensured participants' expertise in providing a thorough analysis of the research topic. Instructors with experience in teaching English to children with autism and parents of bilingual children with ASD offered unique perspectives on the challenges and benefits of raising these children. The sample was gathered through online discussion boards and social media groups, and all participants provided informed consent. Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research to ensure participants possess relevant knowledge and experience, and the sample size is determined by data

saturation rather than large numbers (Sandelowski, 1995).

The current study, which concentrated on 3- to 10-year-old ASD children, acknowledged that developmental stages and unique demands may have a significant impact on the selection and effectiveness of instructional strategies. The age range was selected to encompass the formative years of language development, a critical period where intervention can provide meaningful results. However, some age groups could require tailored approaches. While older children may gain more from organized exercises that are appropriate for their cognitive levels, younger children may benefit more from participatory, play-based techniques.

Table 1

Characteristics of ESL Teachers Participating in the Study

ID	Gender	Age	Teaching Experience	Experience with ASD Students
Teacher 1	Female	34	8	4
Teacher 2	Male	40	15	6
Teacher 3	Female	27	3	2
Teacher 4	Male	45	18	8
Teacher 5	Female	32	5	3

The characteristics of the ESL teachers who took part in the study are shown in Table 1. According to the research, the instructors' experiences working with students who have ASD range from two to eight years. The teachers' backgrounds and areas of experience in working with students on the autism spectrum are briefly described in this description.

Table 2

Characteristics of Parents Participating in the Study

ID	Gender	Age	Child's Age	No. of children	Language exposure
Parent 1	Female	38	7	2	Arabic, English
Parent 2	Male	42	4	1	Korean, English
Parent 3	Female	30	6	3	French, English
Parent 4	Male	36	8	2	Chinese, English
Parent 5	Female	40	5	1	Arabic, English
Parent 6	Male	33	9	3	Japanese, English
Parent 7	Female	39	3	1	Spanish, English
Parent 8	Male	37	10	2	Hindi, English
Parent 9	Female	34	6	2	German, English

The characteristics of the parents taking part in the study are compiled in Table 2. Nine parents' worth of data is shown in the table, representing a wide variety of backgrounds. The children are of varying ages, while the parents are of varied genders and age groups. There are one to three children for every parent. The table also shows the variety of languages that the kids are exposed to, such as Hindi, Arabic, English, Korean, French, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, and Hindi. An overview of the varied linguistic and demographic traits of the study's parents is given in this summary.

Instrument

The study aimed to explore effective teaching strategies and methods to support the language learning of children with ASD in an ESL context. Data was collected from 9 parents and 5 teachers experienced in teaching or supporting children with ASD in ESL using email interviews. The collected data was analyzed to identify effective strategies, challenges faced by teachers and parents, and recommendations for supporting the language learning of children with ASD in ESL. Participants were asked 10 open-ended questions to gather qualitative data on their experiences and perspectives on supporting language learning for children with ASD in an ESL context. The questions were designed to gather detailed information from both teachers and parents. Table 3 shows what questions were asked of the ESL teachers during the interview, while Table 4 shows what questions were asked of the parents.

Table 3

Teachers' Interview Questions

No.	Question Item
1	What teaching strategies and methods have you found most effective for teaching English to children with ASD?
2	What can teachers do to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment for children with ASD?
3	In teaching ESL to children with autism, what challenges do teachers typically face and how can they overcome them?
4	In ESL instruction, how can teachers collaborate with parents to support language learning for children with ASD?
5	How can technology support language learning for children with ASD?

Table 4

Parents' Interview Questions

No.	Question Item
1	When it comes to promoting multilingualism in your child with ASD, what challenges have you faced?
2	How have you supported your child with ASD in their language learning journey, especially in the context of ESL?
3	How are parents of children with ASD challenged in teaching ESL differently than parents of neurotypical children?
4	How has language learning benefited your child with ASD, compared to neurotypical children?
5	What advice would you give other parents looking for ways to support their child's language learning?

Procedure

Email interviews were used to gather data, and a semi-structured guide of open-ended questions was used to ask questions about the language learning strategies and difficulties faced by teachers and parents of children with ASD. To make sure everything was clear, a small sample of people tested the instructions. Participants were recruited via email and invited to respond in writing within a two-week timeframe. Participants had the option to decline to answer any questions or to withdraw from the study at any time.

Data Collection

Nine parents and five teachers with expertise in instructing or assisting students with ASD in ESL participated in email interviews to provide data for the study. The survey was conducted from March 2023 to June 2023, lasting for three months. The information was examined to determine the most successful teaching methods and the obstacles facing children with ASD who are learning ESL. The study's goal was to give parents and instructors suggestions for assisting children with ASD in their ESL language acquisition.

Ten open-ended questions about their experiences in assisting language acquisition for children with ASD in an ESL setting were used to gather data from the participants (Table 3 and Table 4). Participants had plenty of time to reply by email, so there was a written record for careful examination.

The use of thematic analysis enabled the identification of both the problems that teachers and parents face and the best instructional strategies. The study aimed to identify effective methods for promoting the language learning of children with ASD in ESL. The findings were based on the responses provided by participants in the email interviews.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the email interviews was analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. The researchers reviewed the responses from each participant and identified key themes and patterns related to the research questions. The researchers then organized the themes into categories and sub-categories and used these to develop a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives of both parents and teachers regarding teaching ESL to children with ASD.

Results

Teachers' Perspectives

1 - What teaching strategies and methods have you found most effective for teaching English to children with ASD? Some seasoned ESL teachers claim that there are numerous efficient teaching techniques and strategies that can be used to support English language acquisition in children with ASD. "Using visual aids and hands-on exercises has been extremely useful for students with ASD," Teacher 1 said. Teacher 2 stated that when language concepts are divided into smaller, more manageable chunks, children with autism spectrum disorder are better able to comprehend and retain those language concepts." Other teachers emphasized the importance of patience and understanding, as well as tailoring lessons to individual needs and learning styles. Teacher 3 noted that "by using social stories and real-life scenarios, students will be able to get a better understanding of how the language is applied and will be more motivated to learn it." Finally, incorporating

multisensory activities and games that involve movement can also be helpful. As Teacher 5 said, "The more senses they are engaged in and the more physical activity they are involved in, the more likely they are to stay focused and remember what they are taught."

2 - What can teachers do to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment for children with ASD? Teachers need to be cognizant of and sensitive to the special requirements of children with ASD to establish an inclusive and supportive learning environment for them within the framework of ESL instruction. Instructors "need to take into account the sensory sensitivity of children with ASD and modify their teaching approaches accordingly," states Teacher 1. To provide these students with a sense of security and familiarity in the classroom, Teacher 2 emphasized the need to set up routines and define norms. Teachers need to be cognizant of and sensitive to the special requirements of children with ASD in order to establish an inclusive and supportive learning environment for them within the framework of ESL instruction. According to Teacher 3, it is critical to establish a secure, accepting, and nonjudgmental environment where pupils feel valued and accepted. Teacher 4 highlighted the importance of using positive reinforcement and providing many opportunities for pupils to practice new abilities. In order to establish a welcoming and supportive learning environment, Teacher 5 argues that awareness, adaptation, routine, safety, positive reinforcement, and practice are all essential. In general, these findings from different teachers highlight the need for an all-encompassing approach that considers the unique needs of these students to establish an inclusive and encouraging learning environment for children with ASD within the framework of ESL instruction.

3 - In teaching ESL to children with autism, what challenges do teachers typically face, and how can they overcome them? Children with ASD present a great many difficulties in learning ESL, which calls for specialized approaches to address them. Teacher 1 indicated that "children with ASD may have difficulties expressing themselves or grasping new vocabulary and grammar norms," emphasizing that communication can be a major barrier for children with ASD. As Teacher 2 put it, "It's crucial to recognize each student's unique strengths and challenges and alter teaching tactics appropriately." He

emphasized the significance of tailoring classes to match individual needs.

Promoting social interaction and managing behavior can also be challenging. Teacher 3 noted that "Children with ASD may struggle with social skills, which can impact their participation and progress in language learning." However, Teacher 4 emphasized that patience, flexibility, and collaboration are key to navigating these challenges, saying, "We need to be willing to adapt our teaching strategies and use a variety of approaches to engage and support students with ASD."

As Teacher 5 stated, "By working together, we can provide the necessary support and accommodations to help these students succeed in learning ESL," collaboration between parents, educators, and therapists is essential to creating a supportive learning environment for children with ASD. In conclusion, to effectively teach English to children with ASD, teachers must be ready to deal with a variety of obstacles by taking a flexible and cooperative approach and working to suit the individual needs of each student.

4 - In ESL instruction, how can teachers collaborate with parents to support language learning for children with ASD? According to Teacher 1, "Parents are experts on their children, and they can provide valuable insights into their strengths, challenges, and interests," emphasizing the importance of collaboration between teachers and parents in supporting the language learning of children with ASD in the context of ESL instruction. Teacher 2 also emphasized the significance of regular communication between teachers and parents to ensure that students receive consistent support and reinforcement at home and school, stating, "By working together, we can create a cohesive and supportive learning environment for these students."

Teacher 3 proposed that to facilitate language learning at home, educators might offer parents tools and resources, such as "sharing ideas for games, activities, and practice exercises." According to Teacher 4, allowing parents to watch or participate in class activities can help them better comprehend their child's progress and contribute to their learning. This will also make the parents feel more invested and interested in their child's education.

In the context of ESL instruction, Teacher 5 feels that developing a good relationship with parents is essential to assisting the language learning

of children with ASD. Teacher 5 said, "It's crucial to communicate with parents regularly, not just to provide them with information on their child's progress but also to listen to their concerns and suggestions." "Building trust and a good working connection with parents is crucial since they can be invaluable partners in promoting their child's overall growth and language learning."

Teacher 5 also stresses how crucial it is to include parents in helping to set goals for their child's language development. "We can make sure that everyone is committed to the process and that we're all striving towards the same ends by working with parents to develop reasonable and achievable goals," they stated.

The teachers emphasized the need for collaboration between parents and educators to support children with ASD in an ESL context while they learn language, as they concluded. They might establish a calm and supportive learning atmosphere where these children can collaborate and exchange resources and methods to realize their greatest potential. Furthermore, Teacher 5 underlined the need for developing trust, including with parents in goal setting, and maintaining a positive working relationship with parents in order to assist language learning in the context of ESL instruction for children with ASD.

5 - How can technology support language learning for children with ASD? Teacher 1 emphasizes the importance of technology in supporting the language learning of children with ASD in the classroom setting, stating that "technology can help to engage and motivate students with ASD, who may be drawn to visual and interactive materials." Teacher 2 also acknowledges the potential of technology in promoting language learning for these students, noting that "digital games and activities can provide a fun and interactive way to practice language skills, while apps and software programs can provide targeted practice and feedback."

Teacher 3 adds that technology can also promote independence and self-directed learning, stating, "In order to empower students, we need to provide them with access to digital resources and tools in order to empower them to take ownership of their learning and to learn at their own pace." However, Teacher 4 cautions that technology should not replace the role of the teacher in supporting language learning for children with ASD, saying that

"technology should be used as a supplement to classroom instruction, not a replacement for it."

Teacher 5 generally agrees that using technology in the classroom can help children with ASD acquire language more easily. She nonetheless emphasizes the need to use it strategically and in conjunction with other instructional approaches. This would make it possible for educators to design an engaging and immersive learning environment that meets the various needs of all students, including those who have ASD.

Parents' Perspectives

1 - *When it comes to promoting multilingualism in your child with ASD, what challenges have you faced?* Parent 1 observes that it can be challenging to support multilingualism in children with ASD, especially in resource-constrained environments. One of the hardest things to do is to find resources and help for teaching a second language to children with ASD. The resources available that are specifically designed for this group are scarce, they explained. Parent 2 notes that it can be challenging to interest and inspire the child to learn a language. According to them, "Children with ASD may struggle with social contact and may not recognize the usefulness of acquiring a second language for practical purposes." However, Parent 3 argues that persistence and creativity might help navigate the process of promoting multilingualism. "Finding engaging and enjoyable ways to incorporate language learning into daily work might be helpful. For example, we watch TV shows and movies with subtitles, play games that require language learning, and listen to music in the language of our choice," they asserted.

Parent 4 highlights the need of working in tandem with therapists and educators to support children with ASD in becoming bilingual. "We have worked with our child's speech therapist and teacher to create a tailored language learning plan that addresses his unique needs and interests," they stated. As Parent 5 points out, it is critical to look for tools and assistance. "We have joined online communities and support groups where we can connect with other parents and learn from their experiences." Parent 6 also thinks that encouraging multilingualism in kids with ASD requires being adaptable and

flexible to the child's demands. "We have had to adjust our approach over time as we learned what worked best for our child," they stated.

Parents 7 and 8 stress the significance of appreciating any progress, no matter how small. They believe that while life can be challenging at times and discouragement can creep in fast, it is critical to acknowledge achievements. Parent 8 also emphasizes the significance of making language learning enjoyable for the child, since this can enhance everyone's satisfaction with the process. They argue that a child's enjoyment of language learning may increase its engagement and efficacy.

In conclusion, Parent 9 acknowledges that encouraging multilingualism in kids with ASD might be difficult, but they think the work is worthwhile. "It can be a difficult journey, but seeing our child make progress and become more confident in their language skills makes it all worth it," they concluded.

2 - How have you supported your child with ASD in their language learning journey, especially in the context of ESL? Inspiring multilingualism in kids with ASD can be rewarding and challenging, according to parent interviews. Finding resources and help to teach a second language to children with ASD can be difficult, as Parent 1 pointed out. Parent 2 brought out that kids with ASD could struggle in social situations and would not see the value of acquiring a second language for everyday purposes. To successfully navigate the process of fostering multilingualism, Parent 3 recommended being creative and persistent.

Parent 4 highlighted how important it is to work together with teachers and therapists to develop a customized language learning program that considers the child's particular needs and interests. Parent 5 highlighted using internet forums and support groups to find information and assistance. To encourage multilingualism, Parent 6 thought it was important to be adaptable and flexible to the child's requirements.

According to Parents 7 and 8, it is essential to offer positive reinforcement, recognize and celebrate the child's accomplishments, and create a pleasurable language learning environment in order to maintain the child's motivation. In conclusion, Parent 9 stated that although it may be challenging to support multilingualism in children with ASD, it is valuable when the child demonstrates growth and self-assurance in their language skills.

These strategies can be combined by parents to assist their children with ASD in learning a second language.

3 - How are parents of children with ASD challenged in teaching ESL differently than parents of neurotypical children? Parents 1, 2, and 3 face unique challenges when it comes to teaching ESL. "Our child with ASD has trouble with social contact and communication, which might impair their ability to learn and use English in social circumstances," said Parent 1. According to the second parent, "It may be difficult for our child to follow complex directions and understand them, which can make language development activities problematic." Parent 3 highlighted the challenge of balancing the development of their child's English language abilities with their primary language, saying, "We have to strike a balance between supporting our child's primary language while also allowing them to develop their skills."

Parents of neurotypical children may encounter different obstacles than these ones, as Parent 4 clarified when she said, "Neurotypical children may have more ease in learning and using language." Parent 5 and Parent 6 are examples of parents who have children with ASD, but they can still use a range of techniques and tools to help their child on their language learning journey. Parent 6 connects language learning to their child's interests, such as their favorite game or TV show, while Parent 5 employs visual aids like photos and videos. Furthermore, as Parent 9 points out, it can be quite beneficial for kids with ASD to make language learning pleasurable: "When our child is having fun with language learning, it makes the process much more enjoyable for all of us."

4 - How has language learning benefited your child with ASD, compared to neurotypical children? Language learning has proven to be beneficial for children with ASD, according to reports from parents. Parent 1 noted that their child has become more confident in communicating and is more willing to interact with others, while Parent 2 highlighted that their child has become more engaged in the learning process and can express their thoughts and ideas more clearly. Parent 3 added that language learning has helped their child develop better social skills and form stronger connections with peers and adults. However, it is important to note that the benefits may differ from those for neurotypical children, as Parent 4 mentioned. Parent 5 emphasized that

focusing on functional communication skills rather than abstract concepts is necessary, and more visual and hands-on approaches may be needed to support their child's learning. Despite these differences, language learning can still be a valuable tool for children with ASD, as Parent 6 mentioned, supporting their social, emotional, and academic development. Finally, it is clear from the reports of Parent 7, Parent 8, and Parent 9 that language learning can have a positive impact on the lives of children with ASD, enhancing their communication skills, social connections, and overall well-being.

5 - What advice would you give other parents looking for ways to support their child's language learning? Parents of children with ASD offer distinct viewpoints and insights when it comes to assisting their child's language development, as confirmed by Parent 1, Parent 2, and other parents. Parent 1 emphasizes the need for persistence and patience in finding the most suitable strategy for your child and suggests seeking assistance from teachers and therapists. Parent 2 emphasizes the need to establish a favorable and encouraging learning setting that accommodates the specific needs and interests of the child.

Different parents have proposed different methods that parents might use to help their child with language acquisition in addition to these two approaches. Parent 4 suggests dedicating specific reading time, while Parent 3 suggests integrating language acquisition into playtime. Given that Parent 5 emphasizes that parents must prioritize self-care to be the best advocates for their children, we must provide our children with opportunities to practice language in everyday circumstances, such as conversation and reading.

The suggestions from other parents also include using technology and multimedia resources (Parent 7), being flexible with the child's changing needs and skills (Parent 8), breaking down language learning into smaller, more manageable steps (Parent 6), and advocating for the child's language learning needs and rights while collaborating with educators and therapists to develop a comprehensive language development plan (Parent 9). Parents of children with ASD possess valuable insights and tactics that can aid in supporting their child's language learning journey. As such, parents play a vital role in fostering their child's language acquisition and development, and they should have access to the necessary resources and support to assist them in the process.

Discussion

Finding the best teaching methods for teaching English to kids with ASD as a second language is the focus of the research. The study's findings support the recommendation of educators with expertise working with students who have ASD to use a variety of instructional strategies. Effective teaching strategies include the use of visual aids, hands-on activities, linguistic concept analysis, personalized courses, social storytelling, real-world scenarios, multimodal activities, and movement-based games. Previous research by Stehle Wallace et al. (2022) and Wilder et al. (2004) supports these strategies.

The study highlights how crucial it is for educators to comprehend the particular needs of their pupils with ASD. It means understanding the obstacles to social interaction, distinct learning styles, behavioral problems, and communication that students with ASD could face. Teachers can establish a warm and supportive learning environment where all students flourish by paying attention to their students' needs and adapting their teaching tactics accordingly.

These results are corroborated by earlier special education research, which highlights the necessity of recognizing the special requirements of children with disabilities and modifying instructional strategies accordingly. By employing effective teaching strategies customized to the needs of each student, including those with ASD, educators may provide an inclusive learning environment and support the academic success of all students (Dalle, 2023; Shaaban & Mohamed, 2023).

To fully utilize the potential of students with ASD, collaboration between educators and parents is essential. For these students, collaborative projects can assist in creating a more efficient and supportive learning environment. To create a more welcoming and encouraging learning environment for students with ASD who are studying English as a Second Language, teachers must work in tandem with parents and employ a variety of instructional strategies. By doing this, teachers can help these students realize their full potential. The results align with the research carried out by Uljarević et al. (2016) and Boyer and Lee (2001).

When learning English as a Second Language, children with ASD can

benefit from tactile learning, multisensory activities, and visual aids—as long as their sensory needs are met. Working together, parents, therapists, and educators may create a conducive learning environment. According to Yan et al. (2022) and Kircher et al. (2022), technology can help with language learning by offering interactive, personalized exercises that cater to each learner's requirements and interests.

Effective teaching strategies for students with ASD learning ESL involve integrating various methods, addressing their individual needs, and working together with parents and therapists to establish an inclusive learning environment. Teachers can assist these children in achieving success and realizing their full potential by employing technology and other innovative approaches.

The second research question investigated the challenges faced by parents of ASD children in promoting multilingualism. Finding specialized resources and help, motivating their child to learn a language, and developing a language acquisition plan that works for their child are some of these problems. Parents can use strategies such as perseverance, imagination, and flexibility to get past these obstacles. They can collaborate with educators and therapists to create specialized tactics and integrate language acquisition into daily routines. Research by Chu and colleagues (2020) and Althiabi (2021) supports this conclusion.

Parents with children with ASD encounter unique hurdles while trying to encourage multilingualism. These challenges can be overcome by utilizing creativity, adaptability, and tenacity, and by working closely with educators and therapists. Parents can assist their children in achieving success and realizing their full potential by integrating language learning into daily activities and developing customized language learning strategies.

Although acquiring a language can be difficult for kids with ASD, there are many benefits to language acquisition, including greater social skills, increased communication ability, and more clarity in thought and idea expression. It might be necessary for language acquisition by kids with ASD to put more emphasis on real-world communication skills than abstract concepts. Parents of children with ASD advise being persistent and patient in figuring out the best approach, creating a supportive environment that is tailored to

the child's needs and preferences, and actively participating in their language development.

It is suggested that in an ESL context technology can help children with ASD acquire language and enhance their communication skills. Computer-based instruction, instructional software, and interactive multimedia tools can offer customized, multimodal learning experiences that enhance language acquisition. With the use of technology, educators may create a welcoming and encouraging learning environment for kids with ASD by customizing lessons to meet their individual needs.

The findings of this study suggest that including technology in language training for kids with ASD can improve their outcomes and overall learning experience. Technology can improve students' motivation, engagement, and language learning outcomes, according to earlier research (Alenezi et al., 2023; Boyer & Lee, 2001; Desideri et al., 2020; Hsu, 2011; Mohamed, 2023; Wilder et al., 2004). Therefore, in the context of teaching English as a Second Language to children with ASD, it is imperative to view technology as an essential component of language acquisition.

When learning English as a Second Language, children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) benefit from a variety of instructional approaches and close collaboration with parents and therapists. Finding relevant resources and motivating their kids makes teaching ESL to parents of ASD children difficult. It is essential to adapt the strategy to each individual. Learning a language can help youngsters with ASD become more social and communicate more effectively. Working together, schools, parents, and therapists can help children with ASD succeed and make language learning easier.

Pedagogical Implications

The results of this study have consequences for educators and parents who help kids with ASD learn languages during ESL classes. It can be beneficial to use a variety of teaching techniques, such as tailored training, organized routines, and visual aids. To determine each child's unique language needs, early intervention and customized testing are crucial. Parents and teachers must work together and communicate. To provide cognitive and social benefits

that are specific to each child's requirements, educators and parents should think about integrating multilingualism into language learning programs for kids with autism spectrum disorders.

Limitations and Recommendations

The study offered significant perspectives from parents and teachers regarding ESL teaching for children with ASD. The study's shortcomings encompass a restricted sample size, dependence on self-reported information, omission of children's viewpoints, and restricted applicability to other language learning settings. Future research should address these limitations by increasing the sample size, incorporating children's perspectives and direct observations, and looking into different contexts for interventions. More in-depth studies on particular age-related traits may be conducted in the future to improve and tailor instruction. We can improve the efficacy of language acquisition interventions for kids with ASD by comprehending the various needs of various age groups within the autistic spectrum.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes how important it is to apply specialized teaching techniques in the context of ESL training to improve language learning in kids with ASD. Email exchanges with nine parents and five educators who had worked with ESL students having severe autism served as the source of data for the study. Data analysis was conducted to determine the best teaching practices and difficulties faced by children with ASD in ESL classes. The goal of the study was to guide educators and parents on how to help kids with ASD learn English as a Second Language. Numerous studies have demonstrated the benefits of visual aids, modeling, and repetition in supporting the language and social skill development of young children. Despite the difficulties teachers face in putting these tactics into practice, the study shows how excellent the language learning abilities of children with ASD are.

The study recognized that developmental stages and unique needs

could have a significant influence on the choice and efficacy of instructional tactics. The age range was chosen to include the early phases of language development, which is a crucial time when early intervention may have a significant impact. However, certain age groups could need customized strategies. Younger children might benefit more from play-based, participatory approaches, while older kids might get more out of structured activities catered to their cognitive levels. Further investigation may examine age-specific variables to enhance and better customize instructional strategies. To maximize the benefits and effectiveness of language acquisition interventions for kids on the autism spectrum, it is critical to understand the unique needs of different age groups.

The study emphasizes how crucial it is for parents and ESL instructors to collaborate when creating and implementing specialized language learning programs for kids with ASD. In order to fully realize young children's potential for language learning and to acknowledge and make use of their multilingual skills, coordinated efforts are crucial.

It is critical to acknowledge that additional study is required to completely comprehend the difficulties teachers encounter while creating engaging lesson plans for students with ASD. To develop complete language learning programs that address the unique requirements of these kids, more detailed research is necessary. As our knowledge in this field expands, we will be better equipped to enhance and improve the language learning opportunities for kids with ASD, fostering a more inclusive and engaging learning environment.

Competing Interests

The authors have declared no competing interests.

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**AUTIZMU SERGANČIŲ VAIKŲ DAUGIAKALBYSTĖS ĮGŪDŽIŲ
SKATINIMAS: TĖVŲ IR MOKYTOJŲ POŽIŪRIS Į ANGLŲ KAIP
ANTROSIOS KALBOS MOKYMĄ**

Anotacija. Autistiškų vaikų, augančių daugiakalbėje aplinkoje, tyrimų vis dar nedaug, nors daugiau nei pusė pasaulio gyventojų yra daugiakalbiai. Autizmo spektro sutrikimui (ASS) būdingi sunkūs bendravimo ir kalbos įgūdžių sutrikimai. Daugelis tėvų prašo specialistų patarimo, ar jų vaikas turėtų mokytis abiejų kalbų vienu metu dvikalbėje aplinkoje. Tyrime nagrinėti iššūkiai, su kuriais susiduria mokytojai ir tėvai, ugdydami ASS turinčius vaikus, besimokančius anglų kaip antrosios kalbos. Tyrimo imtį sudarė devyni ASS turinčių vaikų tėvai ir penki mokytojai; jie buvo apklausti taikant kokybinį metodą. Iš tyrimo rezultatų paaiškėjo, kad mokant anglų kaip antrosios kalbos ASS turinčius vaikus ir tam naudojant vaizdines priemones, modeliavimą ir kartojimą yra veiksminga jų kalbos ir socialiniams gebėjimams ugdyti. Nors sunku sukurti mokymo strategijas, kurios būtų veiksmingos ASS turintiems vaikams, mokytojai nustatė, kad šie vaikai labai gerai išmoksta naujų kalbų. Be to, labai svarbu, kad kuriant programas pedagogai ir tėvai bendradarbiautų. Šis tyrimas atskleidė metodus, kuriuos pedagogai ir tėvai galėtų taikyti padėdami vaikams siekti dvikalbystės. Rekomenduojama atlikti daugiau tyrimų, siekiant nustatyti sunkumus, su kuriais susiduria mokytojai, mokydami ASS turinčius vaikus užsienio kalbų.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: autizmo spektro sutrikimas; vaikai; anglų kaip antroji kalba; daugiakalbiai gebėjimai; tėvų požiūris; mokymas.