Impact of Socio – Economic Status in Language Development of Children in Primary Schools in Mitrovica

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Abstract—The focus of this research is to understand the impact that socio-economic status has on the linguistic development of children in primary schools in Mitrovica. The research focused on four schools in Mitrovica, primary school "Musa Hoti", P.S. "Andon Zako Çajupi", P.S."Jusuf Rexha", P.S. "Fazli Gërceve", for pupils from 1st to 5th grade.

The selection of schools was done in a planned manner. The sample selected for this research is 100 pupils of these four systematically selected schools. In addition to the students, the research also includes 25 randomly selected parents.

The instrument used for the study is a questionnaire that contains questions about children’s language development and questions about socio-economic status. The questions are scaled-down type with the scale, ordinal and nominal scale. The data were analyzed by the Statistical Packet of Social Sciences - SPSS 21, for which some analyzes were used: frequency analysis, regression analysis and reliability analysis. In this paper it was assumed that the high socio-economic status positively influences the linguistic development of children in elementary schools. Thus, based on the findings of the research according to the frequency analysis and regression analysis, this hypothesis is proved.

Index Terms — Socio-economic status, influence, development, language, children.

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of children's language begins from the moment the child is in the mother's womb. The mother, by her speech to the baby, reading fairy tales and various stories, makes that child, when he is born, be acclimated to the language of his country. From birth, babies begin to produce different sounds such as phonemes, exclamations, syllables, etc., thus stimulating language development.

Then, around the age of one and a half, some meaningful words begin to be spoken, so that by the age of three, they are able to say 50-200 meaningful words, and then the wording of the words and sentences begins accurately and clearly, understandable, in which case their speech manages to be structured at higher linguistic levels.

There is often a desire to understand the various external factors that positively affect the development of children's language, or that also affect them negatively.

A large proportion of children attend kindergartens at an early age, and research, their language and speech is not developed to the proper level from the socialization they create with their peers, talking to them, playing with them, etc., they positively develop language and speech at high levels, but there are others as well, who do not attend kindergartens and based on both daily life and research, their language and speech is not developed to the proper level. Some others grow up in multi-lingual environments and have difficulty speaking, more so than those children who grow up in one-language environments. Then based on various research, we realize that some have problems with language development due to low incomes in their family. And all these factors constitute socio-economic status.

In the international context, we significantly encounter research by various authors who talk about the impact that socio-economic status has on children's language development. However, during the review of the literature in the Balkan countries and especially for countries in transition such as Kosovo, there is no specific research as a topic that we are discussing, but something general that is slightly related to this nature. While when we talk specifically about the city of Mitrovica, research that studies the impact of SES on the language development of the child is not at all. Therefore, I consider it necessary to conduct a research in the place where I live, in Mitrovica.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Different authors give different definitions for the term language. Reference [29] states that language is the sequence of arbitrary symbols that are regularly combined, where these symbols convey meanings and follow conventions. Reference [1] believe that language is intertwined with the notion of who we are, both personally and socially. According to them, the moment we use language, we communicate our individual thoughts, as well as the beliefs and cultural practices of the communities we belong to, such as our families, social groups and other associations.

Reference [26] says that spoken language is a complex network of coordinated knowledge and movements, although it is often considered a skill. It allows individuals to communicate with each other by talking and listening. This complexity of the process makes language intertwined in many disciplines.

Reference [14] emphasizes that language skills continue to improve during early childhood. At the same time, he says that during early childhood the development of the brain and nervous system continues to be quite rapid. So as soon as the brain and nervous system continue to develop cognitive skills and children's behaviors will be more complex. The division

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of the brain into left and right hemispheres refers to the functions involved in one or both hemispheres. The left hemisphere includes functions such as language, writing, logic, mathematics, while the right hemisphere includes creativity, fantasy, artistic and musical skills. Although these hemispheres have separate functions, they coordinate them and work together.

When we talk about language in general, it is worth mentioning that there are some disorders. According to the reference [23] language development disorders include: Articulation disorder; Voice disorder; Fluid disorder; Expressive language disorder; Receptive Language or Audit Processing Disorder; Pragmatic Disorder.

Worth mentioning are also factors affecting language development such as: Home environment and parental interactions [15]; Culture [30] and Socio-Economic Status [3], [4], [6], [7], [8], [24], [27].

Socio-economic status (SES) refers to an individual’s place in society and greatly influences individual experience, starting from childhood and throughout life as adults [19], [22]. It is usually assessed through various variables such as education, occupation and family income, so a combination between them [5].

For a long time it has been a major concern that children with low SES are underestimated academically, compared to children with higher SES. Academic underestimation is often attributed to insufficient language skills to enter the curriculum. The results of an observational and longitudinal study which related to the development of the spoken language of young children with high, medium or low SES, suggest that children who grow up in environments with lower SES, have slower rate of vocabulary growth [20], [32]. Similar research have achieved the same results as the mentioned authors [2], [16], [21].

There are various theories that explain terms such as children's language development and socio-economic status. Reference 29 shows that theories of linguistic development are: "Learning and Behavior Theory" (Reference 28), "Biological/Nativist Theories" [12] and "Interactionist Theories" [31]. Also Socio-economic status theories are: “Social Class Theory” [33], “Modern Social Theory” [25] and “Functional layering theory” [13].

### III. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to understand the impact that socio-economic status has on children's language development in primary schools in Mitrovica. The hypothesis in this study is: High socio-economic status has a positive effect on children's language development in primary schools. To study this phenomenon, we will be using qualitative research methods.

The research focused on four schools in Mitrovica, for students from grade I to grade V. School selection is done in a planned manner. The sample selected for this research was 100 students from these four schools, to whom the questionnaires will be distributed and the selection of these students was done systematically, so we are dealing with a systematic sample. Also selected as sample are 50 females and 50 males, from all four schools. In addition to students, 25 parents participated in the research.

The instrument used for the study was the “Speech / Language Development Parent Questionnaire For Speech Referrals (Reference 30)” questionnaire, which contains questions about children's language development, while socio-economic status questions are combined from daily life. The data were analyzed with the Statistical Package of Social Sciences- SPSS 21 and are used frequency analysis, regression analysis and cronbach’s alpha. The completion of the questionnaires is not anonymous and the data is confidential.

#### A. Results of Survey

Questionnaires for parents and students are intended to gather information about the impact that SES has on children's language development. After reviewing the relevant theories and using methods and fieldwork, we have reached the findings that we will present below.

#### B. Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis helps us to understand whether we have the reliability of the questionnaire or not. And according to Cronbach’s alpha results we understand that we have good reliability of the questionnaire with 0.811.

| Cronbach’s alpha | Cronbach’s alpha based on standardizes questions | Number of questions |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 0.811            | 0.846                                         | 24                 |

#### C. Figures

Frequency analysis helps us to collect, organize, summarize and present data by percentage.

The first figure presents the differences in the responses of parents and students to the monthly income in their family, it is also seen that there are no major differences in their responses. About 2% of students report that their family's monthly income is € 100-300, and 2% of parents report the same.

Then 17% of students claim that the monthly income in the family is € 300-500, while 15% of parents report on this monthly income. Also, 46% of students share that they have a monthly income in the family of up to € 500-700, and 48% of parents report this figure. 26% of students and 27% of parents indicate that they have a monthly income of € 700-1000 and 9% of students and 8% of parents report a monthly income of over € 1000.

Fig.1. Differences in parent and student responses for family income per month.

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About the variable: "My family understands me when I speak", 12% of students disagree at all, 20% of them disagree, 10% are neutral, 33% agree and 25% fully agree.

Meanwhile, 4% of parents for the variable: "I understand my child when he speaks", say that they do not agree at all, while 20% of them do not agree, then 20% are neutral, 36% agree and 20% do not agree at all.

In the second graph it is seen that there are differences in the responses of students and parents to the understanding of children when speaking by family members, mainly by parents.

In the third graph shows the statements of students and parents about how well these children are understood by other individuals during their speech and from this graph we see that we have differences in the responses of both parties.

Thus, 15% of students do not agree at all with the fact that others understand them when they speak, 20% of them disagree, 15% are neutral, 30% agree and 20% fully agree. While 6% of parents disagree at all with the variable that others may understand their child when they speak, then 13% disagree, 22% are neutral, 34% agree, and 25% fully agree.

D. Regression Analysis

Regression analysis aims to test the independent variable using the dependent variable. So it shows us the impact that the independent variable has on the dependent variable.
Based on the findings of Table 2, according to regression analysis there is a significant correlation between SES and language development. So the independent variable (SES) affects the dependent variable (Language Development). In this case R represents the correlation, ie the correlation between the variables 0,050.

| TABLE II: MODEL SUMMARY |
|-------------------------|
| Model | R  | R square | Adjusted R square | Std. error of the estimate |
|-------|----|----------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1     | 0.050 | 0.004 | -0.007 | 5.66315 |
| a. Predictor (Constant), SES |
| b. Dependent variable: Language development |

**IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The main focus of this research is to understand the impact that socio-economic status has on children's language development in primary schools in Mitrovica. More specifically, this research assumed that "High socio-economic status has a positive effect on children's language development in primary schools", thus, based on the findings of research according to frequency analysis as well as regression analysis this hypothesis verified.

Reference [17] by examining the literature on the impact that socio-economic status has on children's language development is in line with the proven research hypothesis. According to reference [17] findings, various differences in language development have been observed in children with high SES and low SES, and according to her SES and language consist of poverty, the level of education of the mother, the home environment, the relationship between mother and the child, the amount of words to which the child is constantly exposed and the language environment in general. Reference [11] in their ten-year research have advanced understanding of the interaction between SES and child language development. They clearly discovered that the state of socio-economic status is very important, because it affects not only children but also adults, with a word, the low socio-economic status has negative consequences for adults and children [10], [18]. Reference [10] in their research found that low-income families and other financial sources tend to experience more family stress, which negatively affects parental interaction and the quality of parental care. Thus, parents who experience more stress will be less involved and tougher with their children. This is expected to negatively affect language development, executive function, behavioral functioning, and cognitive development in children. The opposite of this which includes reality or truth is that parents who have higher SES experience less stress and use more active parenting techniques. In a word, these researches by the high authors mentioned for years have proved that SES affects the development of language in children and they stay in harmony with our established hypothesis.

From the research findings we conclude that the socio-economic status affects the language development of children in primary school. The lower the socio-economic status is children's language development at this age is poorer, than of children with high socio-economic status. It is also worth noting that the research findings make us realize that the better the children pronounce the sounds parents together with other individuals understands better the child during his speech, also the child's understanding lies in correlation with school success, so the better the child articulates the sounds he has higher grades in school. Also, the correct pronunciation of the child's words has a significant correlation with family income and the number of members working at home.

**APPENDIX**

A. Questions for pupils

1. Gender:  
a) Male  
b) Female
2. Residence:  
a) Village  
b) Town
3. Your age:  
4. In which school do you attend classes?
5. What class are you in?
6. Your success at school?
7. How many family members do you live in your home?
8. How many family members work in your home?

I  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |
---|----|----|----|----|
1) Never | 2) Sometimes | 3) Often | 4) Always |
16. I understand others when they talk  
1) I don't agree at all  
2) I don't agree  
3) Neutral  
4) I agree  
5) I completely agree  
17. I listen to and understand others when they tell me short stories  
1) I don't agree at all  
2) I don't agree  
3) Neutral  
4) I agree  
5) I completely agree  
18. I follow the verbal instructions given to me  
1) I don't agree at all  
2) I don't agree  
3) Neutral  
4) I agree  
5) I completely agree  
19. I answer the questions with  
1) Gestures  
2) One word  

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### Questions for parents

1. Gender:
   - a) Male
   - b) Female
2. Residence:
   - a) Village
   - b) Town
3. Your age:
4. In which school does your child attend classe?
5. How many family members do you live in your home?
6. How many family members work in your home?
7. Your religion:
   - a) Muslim
   - b) Christian
   - c) Orthodox
   - d) Other
8. You both parents of the child
   - a) Cohabit
   - b) Married
   - c) Divorced
9. How much is the income in your family?
   - a) less than 100
   - b) 100-300
   - c) 300-500
   - d) 500-7000
   - e) over 1000
10. My child pronounces words correctly
   - a) Some sounds
   - b) Most sounds
   - c) All sounds
11. I understand my child when he reads
   - a) I don't agree at all
   - b) I don't agree
   - c) Neutral
   - d) I agree
   - e) I completely agree
12. Others may understand my child when he reads
   - a) Never
   - b) Sometimes
   - c) Often
   - d) Always
13. My child understands me when I talk to them
   - a) Never
   - b) Sometimes
   - c) Often
   - d) Always
14. My child understands when others talk to him
   - a) Never
   - b) Sometimes
   - c) Often
   - d) Always
15. My child talks to other people
   - a) Never
   - b) Sometimes
   - c) Often
   - d) Always
16. My child listens to and understands short stories
   - a) Never
   - b) Sometimes
   - c) Often
   - d) Always
17. My child follows the verbal instructions given to him
   - a) Never
   - b) Sometimes
   - c) Often
   - d) Always
18. My child answers questions with
   - a) Gestures
   - b) One word
   - c) Phrase
   - d) Sentence
19. My child wants your sentences repeated when someone talks to them
   - a) Never
   - b) Sometimes
   - c) Often
   - d) Always
20. My child speaks new words
   - a) Almost never
   - b) Occasionally
   - c) Often
   - d) Always
21. My child recalls events from the past
   - a) Never
   - b) Rarely
   - c) Occasionally
   - d) Always
22. My child speaks new words
   - a) Never
   - b) Rarely
   - c) Occasionally
   - d) Always
23. My child stutters (repeats and prolongs words and sentences)
   - a) Many times
   - b) Occasionally
   - c) Usually
   - d) Never
24. My baby’s voice is nasal or noisy
   - a) I don't agree at all
   - b) I don't agree
   - c) Neutral
   - d) I agree
   - e) I completely agree
25. I am concerned about the development of my child’s language and speech and want to consult a speech / language clinic.
   - a) Yes
   - b) I'm not sure
   - c) No

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