

Statistical Analysis of Language Problems in Students with Learning Disabilities in Irbid District

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Abstract: The study statistically analyzed expressive and receptive language problems among students with learning disabilities at Irbid District. The sample of the study included students with learning disabilities enrolled at resource rooms in the educational directorate of Irbid District in the second semester of the school year 2022/2023 totaling (241) male and female students (132 males, 109 females). The analytical descriptive design was employed. A (25) items instrument measuring receptive and expressive language problems was developed and administrated. The results of the study indicated that level of receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities at Irbid District was high. There were no statistically significant differences ($\alpha=0.05$) due to gender in the two domains and the total score of receptive and expressive language problems. The study recommended the need for more collaboration among educators and parents to consider the needs of learning disabilities students and that all training, material and moral resources should be provided to develop receptive and expressive language skills among students with learning disabilities.

Keywords: Language Problems, Receptive Language, Expressive Language, Students with Learning Disabilities, Irbid District.

1 Introduction

Paying attention to students with special needs, including students with learning difficulties, is one of the hottest topics that all international and local conventions agree on. These conventions also called for caring for them in various social, educational, and health fields and to work integrating them in society, and to help these students reveal their cognitive, social, emotional, and vocational abilities. Many challenges are faced in the process of teaching students with special needs to prove its effectiveness, and to gain prominence in the educational field as it involves the concept of students with special needs who differ from their peers in one of their mental, behavioral, emotional, physical, behavioral or sensory abilities. This requires all society institutions to work on providing all procedures needed to support this group of students; developing their abilities and helping them cope with the society and integrate them into it (Nawasreh & Almansi, 2018; Al-Khateeb & Al-Hadeaddy, 2011).

Language is one of the most significant inventions in the human history since it is one of the main tools humans employ to communicate with each other in the various communication contexts. It is what distinguishes humans from other species as it is unique to humans. Using language, humans express their ideas and share them with others. It is also the means for expressing the basic needs in addition to being an instrument to acquire and gain knowledge. Finally, language enables humans function in their society (Al-Daher, 2010). Furthermore, language is one of the tools that individuals use to express one self and in understanding others. It is an important mean of mental, cognitive and emotional development. Language is a system of symbols that represent different meanings and submitted to certain language rules (Al-Rousan, 2019).

There are two forms of language. The first is expressive and the second is receptive. Each of these two forms is complementary. For example, receptive language paves the way for the use of expressive language. From their early years, and during their later developmental years, and until the age level appropriate for language production, humans receive from their surroundings to the point he/ she is able to transfer this receptive language into expressive words and sentences as a way to communicate with others. Any malfunctions or difficulties in these two forms of language can be described as a

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major developmental problem needing remedy. Before administrating intervention, there is an urgent need to identify the causes of the language problem and its characteristics to help in the development the suitable intervention; whether it is auditory, visual or mental; or its mainly related to communication problems; the consequence of the behavioral disorders or learning disabilities (Abunyan, 2019; Al-Qamash& Al-Jawaldeh, 2012).

There are different types of language problems documented among students with learning disabilities. Some of these students show part of these language problems while others show them all. These problems may be related to the learner's ability to receive language cues or his/ her ability to express language. Therefore, tracing back language problems documented in related literature and previous studies is very helpful (e.g., Lerner, 2000; Al-Rousan, 2000; Mercer, 1997; Hallahan, Kauffman & Loyal, 1992; Smith, 1991). These can be classified into receptive language problems and expressive language problems.

Receptive language related problems are manifested in the low ability of directions recognition, understanding the different semantics of the same word in the various communication contexts; connecting words accurately to form a sentence and finally, comprehending complicated sentences. Furthermore, individuals having receptive language problems report low level of attention; hearing impairment due to low ability in audio information processing in addition to difficulties in understanding abstract language concepts and words (Lerner, 2000).

As for expressive language problems, these can include low ability to employ long or complex or abstract sentences; impairment in the use of accurate syntactical rules, words or phrases; the inability to recognize the social interaction context; low ability in maintaining the flow of speech and the selection of accurate words. As such, the problems may be manifested in low ability to discuss terms and concepts and expressing experiences using accurate semantic, lexical or syntactical structures able to express the personal ideas accurately (Awad, 2009). In this respect, Al-Far (2003) claimed that expressive language problems may entail some or all of the following: *Firstly*, the person shows resistance against the engagement in speech or answering questions; *Secondly*, the use of limited number of words and language phrases and that his responses are only limited to a number of speech patterns; *Thirdly*, the language expression employed by the person is immature or produces words that may appear to be under his chronicle developmental age group compared to peers in the same age.

Studies have examined receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities. In one of these studies, and to define the relation of symbolic play to receptive and expressive language abilities and skills among preschool children with learning disabilities, Ajodan (1993) used a sample of (62) preschool children. The results showed a delay among the sampled children in the symbolic play compared with their average peers as well as weakness in receptive and expressive languages. The results also showed that chronological age has a greater impact on receptive language.

Nippold and Duthie (2003) employed a semi-experimental design by administrating an instructional program based on the individual system based on direct education on a sample consisting of (12) students with learning disabilities in primary schools that integrate students with learning disabilities with ordinary students in Britain to define its effect on developing the expressive skills of these students. The results revealed statistically significant differences in the mean scores between the experimental and control groups' responses, in favor of the experimental group taught using the instructional program.

Another study in Saudi Arabia by Matar and Al-Ayed (2009) sought to investigate the effectiveness of a computer based instructional program in developing language skills among students with reading difficulties. A sample of (32) students randomly distributing into two groups (experimental, control). The analysis showed statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in the language skills means scores, in favor of the experimental group.

Another study by Alzig and Alsewairy (2010) examined receptive and expressive language problems among Saudi students with language difficulties. The sample of the study included (150) language difficulties students and a comparison group of (150) students without language difficulties. It was reported in the study that the most common receptive language problems among students with language difficulties were listening within a group of people, understanding words meaning, following instructions, classroom discussion comprehension, information retrieval, propositions recognition and discussion comprehension in general. As for the expressive language problems, the most common were related to voice rate and tune; separating words; grammar; words retrieval; naming prepositions; matching verbs with pictures; spelling errors; expressing personal ideas; and finally, written expression. There were statistically significant differences in the prevalence level of receptive and expressive language problems, in favor of students with language difficulties compared to students without language difficulties.

In the same vein, Al-Qwaqneh (2020) investigated the effect of a training program on developing receptive and expressive language skills and social interaction skills among a sample of (20) students with learning disabilities. A semi-experimental research design was employed. The results of the study indicated that there were statistically significant differences on the total score and the individual domains of the receptive and expressive language skills and the social interaction skills, in

favor of the posttest means scores.

In Saudi Arabia, Alsamiri and Alhassani (2021) examined the most prevalent receptive and expressive language problems among elementary school students with learning disabilities from teachers' perceptions. Using a sample of (94) male and female elementary school teachers, the sampled teachers reported their observations concerning the most prevalent receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities. It was found in the study that receptive and expressive language problems from elementary school teachers' perceptions were high. As for the differences in elementary school teachers' perception, there were no statistically significant differences due to teacher's gender, year of teaching experience and specialization.

2. Problem of the Study

As the researchers work with students with learning disabilities, they noticed that the majority of these students suffer from receptive and expressive language problems. Also, as the researchers supervise several university theses examining various problems among students with learning disabilities, this was informative to them to observe that such a problem is common among Jordanian students with learning disabilities. For the above reasons, the problem of this study may be summarized in the attempt to identify the receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities which have severe negative outcomes on this group of students such as impairing their academic achievement and the appearance of socio- behavioral problems among them.

3. Model of the study

The following figure presents the independent and dependent variables of the study.

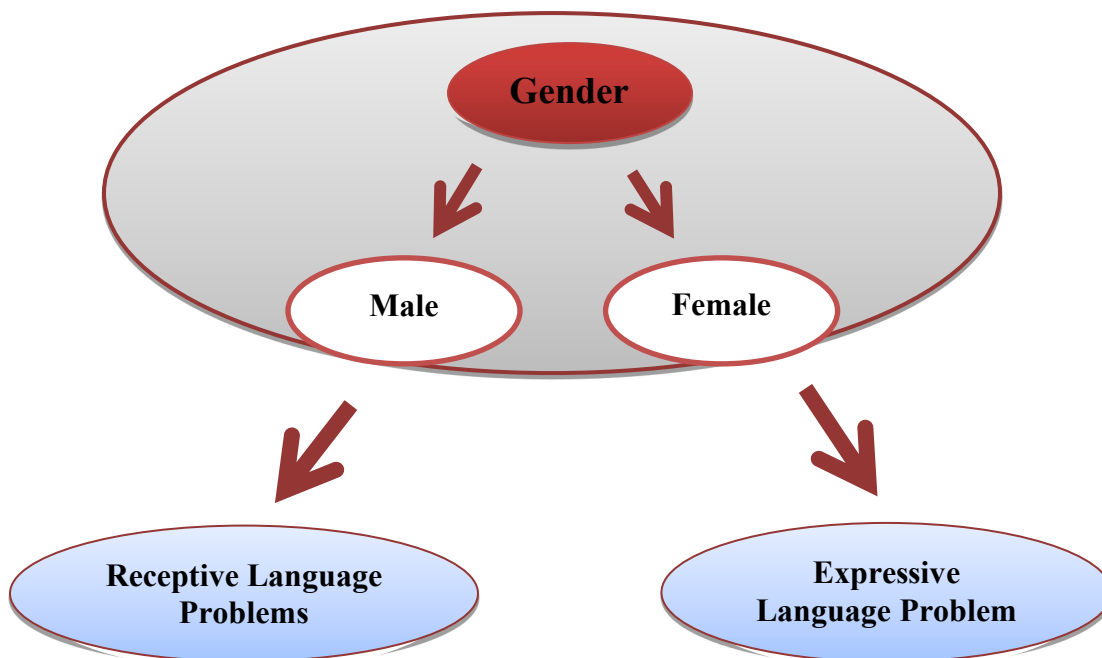


Fig. 1: Model of the study

4. Questions of the Study

Therefore, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities at Irbid District?
2. Are there statistically gender significant differences in the level of receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities?

5. Significance of the Study

The significance of the study may be summarized in the following:

- Shedding light on receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities which may have a positive impact on the development of instructional interventions seeking to solve this problem. Additionally, the results of this study may be employed by teachers, resource rooms specialists and parents in their quest to assist this group of students.
- Identifying gender differences in the level of receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities.
- It is hoped that the results of this study may encourage educators and learning disabilities teachers students to allocate the needed budget to support various programs designed to help students with learning disabilities in developing their receptive and expressive language skills.
- The study provides an instrument for assessing receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities.
- This study is an elaboration on the efforts made by previous researchers examining receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities and this may pave the way for future researchers interested in examining receptive and expressive language problems among other samples groups.

6. Procedures

6.1. Methods

This section outlines the main procedures employed in the study with respect to the design of the study, the study population and sample, the development of the study instrument, its validity and reliability in addition to describing the procedures adopted for data analysis.

6.2. Design of the Study

The study employed a descriptive analytical research paradigm to describe and analyze the level of receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities based on the collection of data using the instrument of the study and then analyzing them statistically. Such a research paradigm is based on the study of related topics taken from the lived reality and express it quantitatively using figures by classifying the information collected and working on organizing them to deepen understanding concerning the relation between such a topic with other topics and then infer conclusions that may be described as generalized to other contexts. This paradigm may contribute in the development of the examined reality without a direct interference in the topic being examined and only interacting with it by description and analysis.

6.3. Population of the Study

The population of the study included all students with learning disabilities enrolled in the resource rooms at the educational directorate affiliated to Irbid District in the second semester of the school year 2022/2023, totaling (463) male and female students.

6.4. Sample of the Study

A convenient random sample was selected from the population which consisted of (241) male and female students as shown in table (1) based on gender.

Table (1): Percentage of the Sample Distribution Based on Gender

		No.	%
Gender	Male	132	54.8%
	Female	109	45.2%
Total		241	100%

6.5. Instrument of the Study

The researchers employed a questionnaire he developed by reviewing related literature and previous studies examining receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities. Additionally, the researchers

referred to the studies of Alsamiri and Alhassani (2021); Alzig and Alsewairy (2010) as the items of the questionnaire were selected based on these procedures. The questionnaire included (25) items distributing on (2) domains: Receptive Language Problems (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15) and Expressive Language Problems (16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25).

A (3) point Likert scale is employed to score the items. Each item contained (3) response options: Agree=2, Indifferent=1, Disagree=0 as response option (2) indicates the highest level of receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities. By contrast, the response option (0) indicates the lowest level of receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities. As such, the level of each individual item can be extracted and then the level of each individual domain. Finally, the total score of the receptive and expressive language problems for students with learning disabilities. The following estimations (table 2) were employed to indicate each level.

Table (2): Response estimation average and level

Estimations Average	Level
0 – 0.66	Low
0.67 – 1.33	Moderate
1.34 – 2	High

6.5.1. Validity and Reliability

Content validity was checked by distributing the instrument to a jury of (12) faculty members specialized in special education, learning disabilities, and psychology; in order to define the item representation for its domain, its clarity, and authenticity of phrasing, and to add or delete any item as they see fit. The jury recommended making some amendments with respect to the items' clarity, the authenticity of phrasing, and the representation of their domains. The changes made in light of the jury recommendations made the final format of instrument includes (25) items.

In addition to that, correlation coefficients of the items with the total score were calculated using a pilot sample consisting of (30) students with learning disabilities. The correlation coefficient indicates validity significance for the items in the form of a correlation between the item and the total score; between the item and its domain; and between the domain and the total scale. The correlation coefficient of the items and the total scale ranged between (0.37 – 0.71), and with the domain (0.37 – 0.68) (table 3).

Table (3):Correlation Coefficients between the Item, the Total Scale, and the Domain

Item	correlation coefficients to the domain	correlation coefficients to the instrument	Item	correlation coefficients to the domain	correlation coefficients to the instrument	Item	correlation coefficients to the domain	correlation coefficients to the instrument
1	0.61**	0.68**	10	0.67**	0.63**	19	0.40*	0.39*
2	0.57**	0.53**	11	0.52**	0.47**	20	0.68**	0.70**
3	0.52**	0.47**	12	0.37*	0.63**	21	0.67**	0.71**
4	0.61**	0.68**	13	0.55**	0.48**	22	0.52**	0.68**
5	0.53**	0.47**	14	0.52**	0.48**	23	0.48**	0.37*
6	0.53**	0.51**	15	0.53**	0.48**	24	0.39*	0.59**
7	0.45*	0.47**	16	0.55**	0.53**	25	0.47**	0.51**
8	0.53**	0.48**	17	0.42*	0.37*			
9	0.58**	0.59**	18	0.48**	0.37*			

* Significant at ($\alpha = 0.05$)

** Significant at ($\alpha = 0.01$)

It is worth noting that all correlation coefficients were acceptable and statistically significant. Therefore, none of the items has been deleted. Moreover, domain correlation coefficients have been calculated to the total score and between the domains as table (4) show.

Table (4): Correlation Coefficients between the Domains and the Total score

	Receptive Problems	Language	Expressive Problems	Language	Total Score
Receptive Language Problems	1				
Expressive Language Problems	0.748**		1		
Total Score	0.958**		0.907**		1

**Significant at ($\alpha = 0.01$)

Table (4) indicates that all correlation coefficients were acceptable and statistically significant, suggesting an appropriate level of construct validity. To check the reliability of the instrument, test-retest was employed by administering the instrument and re-administering it after two weeks on a pilot sample consisting of (30) students with learning disabilities, and then calculating Pearson's correlation factor between their responses at the two administrations. Cronbach Alpha coefficient for internal consistency reliabilities was also calculated (table 5). Accordingly, the values were considered appropriate to achieve the objectives of this study.

Table (5): Cronbach Alpha Internal Consistency Reliabilities and Test-Retest Reliability

Domain	Test-Retest Reliability	Internal Consistency Coefficient
Receptive Language Problems	0.84	0.79
Expressive Language Problems	0.81	0.80
Total Score	0.85	0.82

6.6. Statistical Analysis

For data analysis, this study used Pearson's correlation factor, T-Test, test-retest, and Cronbach Alpha coefficient for internal consistency reliabilities and finally, means and standard deviations.

7. Results and Discussion

First Question: "What is the level of receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities at Irbid District?"

To answer this question, means and standard deviations were calculated for the level of receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities at Irbid District as shown in table (6). It is revealed that the level of receptive and expressive language problems was high ($M = 1.39$), as the mean scores ranged between (1.36-1.44); expressive language problems ranked first ($M = 1.44$), and receptive language problems ranked second ($M = 1.36$).

Table (6): Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for the Level of Receptive and Expressive Language Problems among Students with Learning Disabilities at Irbid District in Descending Order According to the Mean

No.	Domain		Mean Score	Std. Devi.	Level
1	Expressive Problems	Language	1.44	0.333	High
2	Receptive Problems	Language	1.36	0.309	High
	Total		1.39	0.304	High

The total level of receptive and expressive language problems was high. This can be attributed to the fact that the difficulty in the items of the receptive language resulting from these items' need for understanding, assimilation, and reasoning. It seems that students with learning disabilities lack this type of ability which is not caused by a low intelligence levels since the definitions of learning disabilities confirm that students with learning disabilities should not be in the category of mental disability or learning impermanent. Thus, the lack in the ability of reasoning and assimilation can be caused by a lack of mental effort for understanding and assimilation. Cognitive Load Theory as mentioned in Sweller's book (1994; 1988)-stresses that the working memory, where reasoning and assimilation happen, is limited in terms of capacity and time of storage. Seemingly, a great deal of time and capacity of the working memory goes to trying to realize language stimuli correctly by the student with learning disabilities, therefore, allocating less capacity and time in the attempt to assimilate

these stimuli and mentally process them.

As for expressive language, the results showed that students with learning disabilities have problems in the expressive language more than receptive one. This can be attributed to the fact that expressive language needs more complex skills compared to receptive language skills and that the expressive language appears in the late stages of natural language development. It also matures last among the components of the language in terms of use, thereby, it needs more complex skills. This means that students with learning disabilities are more likely to have prevalent and frequent language-related problems.

Second Question: "Are there statistically significant differences in the level of receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities in light of gender?"

To answer this question, means and standard deviations were calculated for the level of receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities in light of gender. In order to define the statistical differences between the mean scores, t-test was used as shown in Table (7).

Table (7): Means, Standard Deviations, and T-Test for the Level of Receptive and Expressive Language Problems among Students with Learning Disabilities in Light of Gender

	Gender	Number	Mean Score	Std. Devi.	T Value	Df	Sig.
Receptive Language Problems	Male	132	1.46	0.296	1.495	239	0.136
	Female	109	1.40	0.322			
Expressive Language Problems	Male	132	1.44	0.291	0.752	239	0.453
	Female	109	1.41	0.336			
Total	Male	132	1.45	0.276	1.276	239	0.203
	Female	109	1.40	0.307			

It is noted from the previous table that there are no statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in light of gender in all domains and the total scale for the level of receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities. This result can be explained by the fact that gender is not a crucial factor that may lead to different levels of receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities, and that what these students face of learning disabilities and their consequences of characteristics and problems have a significant role in affecting the level of receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities whether they were males or females.

8. Conclusion

Receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities is one of the main topics for special education specialists. Hence, attention to receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities should be a main concern for these specialists. The main problem of the current study revolves around the level of receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities at Irbid District, which is one of the research problems that special education educators and teachers should take it as a serious problem needing effective interventions.

The study found that the means scores of the level of the receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities at Irbid District ranged between (1.36-1.44); expressive language problems ranked first ($M = 1.44$), and receptive language problems ranked second ($M = 1.36$). The total mean score for the instrument was (1.39) with a high level. It also showed that there are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) in light of gender in all domains and the total score for the level of receptive and expressive language problems among students with learning disabilities.

Accordingly, the researchers believe that all the efforts of educators and parents should be combined to paying more attention to learning disabilities students, and to provide all material, moral and training tools to develop and modify their receptive and expressive language for the better.

9. Recommendations

In light of the results, the researchers recommended:

- The need for training courses on receptive and expressive languages development among students with learning

disabilities.

- Provide a positive environment that improves and develops receptive and expressive language of students with learning disabilities.
- Intensive training in receptive and expressive language of students with learning disabilities should be within the student's educational plan.
- Future studies addressing the effect of instructional programs on developing receptive and expressive language of students with learning disabilities are needed.
- Future studies addressing the level of receptive and expressive language problems of students of other groups with special needs are needed.

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Instrument of the Study

My fellow teachers

Greetings,

The researchers are conducting a study addressing *"Statistical Analysis of Language Problems in Students with Learning Disabilities in Irbid District"*. This questionnaire was developed to measure the level of expressive and receptive language problems among students with learning disabilities. Therefore, please read the 25 items of the instrument carefully and answer them honestly by replacing (√) in front of the item that describe the student with learning disabilities, noting that the answers will be used for scientific research purposes only.

Best Regards,

Dr. Nayef Ali Wahsheh

Dr. Ayed Mohammad Melhem

Dr. Faisal Khlaif ALshraah

Dr. Wafa Abdulla AL momani

Gender: Male Female

No.	Item	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Receptive Language Problems				
1	Difficulty in understanding others' signs and gestures.			
2	Difficulty in recognizing the words' sounds (Audible or written).			
3	Difficulty in understanding pictures vocabulary.			
4	Difficulty in listening when in a group.			
5	Difficulty in recognizing color vocabulary (Audible or written).			
6	Difficulty in recognizing body parts vocabulary when hearing them.			
7	Difficulty in understanding the meaning of the audible or written words.			
8	Difficulty in following instructions.			
9	Difficulty in understanding what he hears or reads.			
10	Difficulty in understanding and participating in class discussions.			
11	Difficulty in remembering audible or readable information.			
12	Difficulty in understanding phrases and vocabulary of directions while hearing or reading them (Right – Left).			

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- 13 Difficulty in distinguishing singular name from a plural when hearing or reading them.
 - 14 Difficulty in identifying phrases and vocabulary of time and place adverbs while listening or reading.
 - 15 Difficulty in identifying pronouns in the audible or readable sentences.
-

Expressive Language Problems

- 16 Speaking unclear.
 - 17 Difficulty in pronunciation.
 - 18 Difficulty in adjusting sound intensity and quality.
 - 19 Difficulty in expressing desires.
 - 20 Difficulty in answering questions.
 - 21 Difficulty in using grammar appropriately.
 - 22 Difficulty in using singular and plural while speaking or writing.
 - 23 Difficulty in using prepositions appropriately.
 - 24 Difficulty in using directions.
 - 25 Difficulty in using place and time adverbs.
-