

Exploring Basic Emotion Words Acquisition to Emotion Regulation Skill of Children with Language Impairment in Woodpecker Training Centre

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the connection between the acquisition of basic emotion words, expressive emotion words and emotion regulation skills in children with language impairment. Using a semi-ethnographic approach, in-depth interviews and observations were conducted with four children ($M_{age} = 9$, $SD_{age} = 1$) and four special needs teachers ($M_{age} = 28.2$, $SD_{age} = 1.29$) at the Woodpecker Training Centre, Butterworth Pulau Pinang. Children participated in a task designed to assess basic emotion words by labelling photographs in an emotion picture book. A 13-item questionnaire adapted from the Emotion Expression Questionnaire (Rieffe et al., 2010) was used to assess teachers' perceptions of children's emotional expression following emotion episodes. The Emotion Regulation Checklist (ERC) (Shields & Cicchetti, 1997), a 24-item checklist, was utilized to evaluate emotion regulation skills. Children showed varying abilities in recognizing and labelling emotions. Some could identify and label emotion words, while others faced challenges, particularly in verbal expression. Teachers noted that children with language impairment struggled to verbally express emotions like love and disappointment. Whispering or gesturing was common, indicating difficulties in verbal communication. ERC ratings suggested challenges in emotion regulation, with high scores indicating difficulty in using expressive emotion words appropriately. Behavioral challenges often arose as a result of these communication deficits. These findings highlight the significant impact of language impairment on emotion expression and regulation in children, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to support their emotional development.

Keywords: Emotion Regulation, Feelings, Language Impairment, Emotion Expressive Words, Basic Emotion Words

