

# Montessori Teachers' Communication Effects On Cognitive Development Of Children

Sara Fayyaz<sup>1</sup>, Ajab Ali Lashari<sup>2</sup>, Khushboo Rafiq<sup>3</sup>, Umm e Ammara<sup>4</sup>,  
Madiha<sup>5</sup>, Nazia Jabeen<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1,4,5,6</sup>MS Scholar, Department of Education, Sindh Madressatul Islam University, Sindh Pakistan.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Education, Sindh Madressatul Islam University, Karachi, Sindh Pakistan.

Department of Media & Communication Studies Sindh Madressatul Islam University, Karachi Sindh Pakistan.

Corresponding author email: [ajablashari@smiu.edu.pk](mailto:ajablashari@smiu.edu.pk)

## Abstract

Teachers' communication skills are one of the most critical aspects that must be considered in teaching-learning, especially in Montessori education, where the children are in the initial linguistic and cognitive development stage. Montessori classes provide designed environments, allowing children to exercise autonomy in selecting their tasks and actively engage in self-directed learning. If the teacher and children are not well prepared in the triangle of classroom environment, and management, it will be futile to teach the Montessori children. The study is designed to explore the Montessori teachers' effects on communication skills of the children's cognitive development. Private Montessori School of Karachi. This study uses the qualitative method for data collection and analysis. Semi-structured interviews with six teachers were conducted. The finding shows that Montessori teachers' communication skills are essential to students' cognitive and language development. Effective communication skills of teachers contribute to the holistic development of children. It is recommended that teachers be professionally trained, and a better classroom environment should be provided for self-learning based on auto-corrective strategies.

Keywords: Montessori Teachers, Communication, Cognitive, Language Development, Children.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Montessori education program provides a remarkable educational opportunity by promoting the holistic development of children through its child-centred approach, individualised instruction using natural resources, and a pedagogical methodology (Oguz & Akyol, 2006). The Montessori Method of education concentrates on natural preferences, self-instructed learning, independent learning, practical competencies, real-life skills, hands-on learning, self-guided activities and positive decision-making of the child instead of using conventional teaching techniques. Montessori education is one of the most known and competent alternative educational forms in the United States and globally (Lillard, 2019; Aljabreen, 2020). Montessori education points out a study that concentrates on all five senses rather than only through reading, speaking and listening. Children develop in the Montessori Method by engaging in activities of their choosing from various options, moving at their own pace. A mixed-age group of students in Montessori classes forms a localised group of children where the older children share information with younger children (Guttek, 2004). Montessori teachers play a fundamental role in student development because they provide education at the beginning stage of students' lives. This stage of life is crucial for the learning and development of student's cognitive skills, so it is crucial for teachers that they must use effective communication strategies. The cognitive domain focuses on student's knowledge development. How students identify, understand and solve problems using the practical communication skills of Montessori teachers.

Montessori education incorporates distinct pedagogical tools, such as multisensory self-directed and self-corrective materials, provided by teachers who have received training in the Montessori philosophy to contribute to language (Lashari, Umrani & Buriro, 2021). These materials are

tailored to the individual learning pace of children (Lillard & McHugh, 2019). The materials, part of the classroom teaching and learning, are categorised based on language, mathematics, science, and practical life (Lashari, Umrani & Buriro, 2023; Madiha, Lashari & Ammara, 2023). The resources have intentionally enabled children to independently identify and rectify their faults without any external assistance or involvement. Furthermore, it has been observed that children acquire more knowledge and skills through their interaction with the well-designed learning environment (Lashari et al., 2023) educational resources (Madiha, Lashari & Ammara, 2023) and their peers, as opposed to their interaction with the guides or instructors. Teaching methods, training, modules and communicative competence of teachers can contribute generously to the linguistic as well as cognitive development of children at the very early stage. Montessori teachers use many strategies to provide students with knowledge and cognitive skills development. Montessori teachers use a variety of communication strategies to manage the class well and get the desired results.

Teachers use verbal and non-verbal communication strategies such as using gestures, facial expressions, visual indicators, facial indicators, maintaining eye contact, utilising positive language and open dialogues (Khan, Lashari & Iqbal, 2022), active listening, using clear and concise language, providing individualized guidance to help students understand, to improve student's cognitive skills and to improve students language learning (Lashari, Umrani & Buriro, 2021). The transfer of ideas, knowledge, information, and emotions between two parties is only possible with the help of effective communication. A positive relationship between the message sender and the recipient is developed due to a shift in attitude (Brinton & Fujki 2017; Lashari, Buriro & Umrani, 2021). There is no longer any disagreement among experts about how important communication is. Everyone agrees that effective communication is essential for a person's survival, relationship success at work and overall well-being (Astuti, Nurhfizah & Yulsyofriend, 2019).

Montessori teachers' communication skills aim to develop a supportive and respectful learning environment that enables students to take ownership of their learning journey. The teacher develops communication strategies to connect with students and help them focus on achieving success in classroom activities. Teacher Communication strategy means the plan for communicating with your students (Lillard, 2019). Building a relationship between the child and teachers requires effective communication strategies. Montessori teachers allow children to choose their tasks freely and construct their learning (Nurhafizah, 2019; Samejo, Lashari & Mahar, 2023). This study aims to analyze the effects of the communication skills of Montessori teachers on children's cognitive development at the Montessori level in Karachi, Pakistan, how communication skills of Montessori teachers Play their role in identifying, understanding, problem-solving and thinking skills of children, and to explore that how the communication skills play their role in improving children behaviour, self-management, class participation, children interest.

Teachers with strong communication skills will create an influential teaching and learning environment for the children. However, a person with strong communication skills can encourage others. Practical communication skills help to achieve success (Guerrero & Floyd, 2006). The Montessori system is prevalent, and in Pakistan, most schools offer the Montessori education system to early-grade children (Samad & Lashari, 2022), so this dramatic increase in this system needs to be investigated. There is a need to address which communication strategies Montessori teachers use and how these strategies are helpful for students learning and cognitive development. It must address whether communication strategies are effective for students' skills development.

**Research Questions:**

- 1) What is the role of Montessori teachers' communication skills on children's cognitive development?

- 2) What is the role of communication skills of Montessori teachers on children's language development?
- 3) How Montessori teachers play their role in the understanding and problem-solving skills of children?

### **Literature Review**

Dr. Maria Montessori produced the Montessori Method in the early 1900s. A unique form of child-centred education that covers child-led activities with kids of different ages and instructors who support freedom among their students. She trusted that the early eight years of children are fundamental for the students to construct their skills (Cakiroglu Wilbrandt, 2013).

The Montessori education system is still followed by multiple public and private schools worldwide (Mooney, 2013). Early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Italian educator and physician Maria Montessori designed the Montessori educational method, highlighting independent study time, self-guided learning, hands-on materials, and the absence of grading (Aljabreen, 2020). The holistic growth of a child, including their physical, emotional, social, moral, cognitive and human courage, is highly regarded in Montessori education.

The teacher, child, and environment create a triangle for learning at the early stages of learning (Mooman, Ali & Lashari, 2023). The teachers assist and direct the students to properly handle and utilise the substances (Diamond & Lee 2011). Interaction with fellow students and adults helps the child develop numerous social skills (Jordan, Carlile & Stack, 2008). Montessori education develops competence, high self-respect, and teamwork in children. Children use multiple learning styles and skills while learning, including listening, feeling, seeing, and gestures / mingling the on-top skills. Children are enabled to learn these skills and develop these talents by teaching lessons that are taught to them (Black et al., 2017). Montessori teachers create the learning environment of Montessori classes according to child developmental necessities. Teacher helps students express their potential through their observations during learning (Aljabreen, 2017). In Montessori classrooms, one of the

goals for teachers and students is learning to communicate in a pleasant structure (Thayer-Bacon, 2011).

### **The Scope of Communication Skills of Montessori Teachers**

The development of internal discipline and self-confidence of students is the aim of the Montessori teachers (Edwards, 2002). Children are encouraged to discuss with each other consciously by their Montessori teachers. Teachers should be careful to speak in a soft and kind accent and set an example with their moral and ethical behaviour (Montessori 2009; Samejo, Lashari & Mahar, 2023). The significant components of brain development that affect all body tissues, such as the immune system, cognition, behaviour, skills, abilities and performance, are long-term affected by early childhood development (Mustard 2002; Ahmed, Lashari & Golo, 2023).

Achieving the objectives of Montessori education requires teachers' effective communication strategies that help in students learning and social and emotional development. The early years of a child's existence are significant. This stage can give children a robust basis for life, or it can damage them consequently for the rest of their lives (UNESCO, 2010). According to the Canadian Study Board, as Crosser (1996) expressed, the first five years of education are crucial for well-being and future outcomes in school, community, and work. This is more important than other learning experiences at any other stage of life.

### **Communication Skills and Cognitive Development**

Communication Skills of Montessori teachers play a significant role in students' learning and cognitive development. It is the development of problem-solving skills, knowledge and attitude that help children understand and think about the world around them (Lashari, Mashori, Abbasi & Talpur, 2018; Ahmed, Lashari & Golo, 2023).

In the Montessori method, many activities encourage students to think about numerous solutions to a problem and select the best one. Additionally, Montessori lessons are

created to allow kids to interact, learn, and deal with various problems to develop their cognitive skills (Ahmed, Lashari & Golo, 2023). The classroom format has impacted how immediately the kids think, and the classroom environment helps the children to develop cognitive skills (Harrison & Rainer, 1992; Bacani, 2001; Kayli, 2016; Lashari et al., 2023). Music education also influences learner's emotional and cognitive development. If teachers' policymakers want to develop learner cognitive development to add and support music education in their educational system (Keyli, Kocyigit & Erbay, 2009; Soydan & Dereli, 2014; Lashari et al., 2023). Effective communication skills of Montessori teachers improve students' skills and confidence, creating a supportive, comfortable and engaging learning environment where students can better understand. Students can ask questions, express their thoughts, and actively participate in activities. Communication strategies promote social interaction by encouraging empathy (Courtier et al., 2021; Bukhari et al., 2023).

In an educational setting where social learning develops, choosing grace and kindness in communication is an example for kids. The Montessori approach contains grace and kindness in education, presents them to the child and applies them consistently (Montessori, 2009; Sackett, 2015; Kocabas & Bavli, 2021).

Teachers' acts of kindness contribute to developing a positive atmosphere, solid bonds and prosocial behaviour. Children's prosocial behaviours are stimulated by how often they are welcomed by their teachers and their increased frequency of welcome (Murayama et al., 2020). Clear communication by Montessori teachers helps students express themselves confidently. Effective communication corroborates student's feelings and expressions regarding cognitive development (Nurani et al., 2019).

The teacher's communication skill affects students' attitudes and interest in promoting a fun and educational environment. Communication skills and work motivation are essential in teaching (Duta, Panisoara & Panisoara, 2015). The current study showed that the Montessori

approach positively impacted 3.5-5-year-old children's social ability and emotion regulation skills. Children who get an education through the Montessori technique may experience long-term consequences on their ability to control their emotions and act socially appropriately (Iman et al., 2017).

### **Methods and Procedure**

The study adopts qualitative methods by following an exploratory research design. The data has been collected by using semi-structured interviews. A total of 2 Montessori schools were taken for sample from the Clifton area of Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan. From each school, the same number of teachers were selected. The total number of respondents was 6 Montessori school teachers. This study used convenience sampling due to easy and cost-adequate respondent access.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

To achieve the aims and objectives of the study. This study used semi-structured interviews based on face-to-face, one-on-one interviews for primary data. The interviews were recorded by following the steps to ensure the robust nature of the data set (Creswell & Poth 2016). Transcriptions were analysed by thematic analysis (Braun Clark, 2006). The data was collected through recorded interviews. Audio data was transcribed. The data was read repeatedly to comprehend it thoroughly, and the data was coded to ensure secrecy. The themes were developed and interpreted to reach the study's robust findings.

### **Positive Behavior of Teachers at the Montessori Level**

Teachers use effective communication skills to teach these concepts during classroom instruction. To build positive behaviour concepts. One of them pointed to,

R1: "As we know, the teacher's role is significant in building the positive character of children. In Montessori classes, children's age is the initial age of their life..... This age is significant for learning to build positive behaviour in



children, so I can say that Montessori classroom instructions are very helpful in developing children's positive behaviour....(silence). First, we try to understand children's minds, and then we teach them according to students' needs and comfort levels. We teach and guide them through different activities to behave positively with others."

The teacher shared her opinion that the teacher's role is essential to building children's character, so when teachers teach and instruct children in the classroom, they use their communication skills. Teachers must use effective communication skills to build children's positive Behavior because communication is a way to convey their message to others.

### **Active engagement leads to Cognitive and Linguistic Development.**

When teachers effectively communicate, children participate actively in the classroom. Children feel comfortable and motivated to participate in activities, so we can say that teachers must use effective communication for active participation in classroom activities. When teachers use reward positive reinforcement in the classroom, they celebrate the achievements of children in the classroom. When teachers engage them in hands-on activities, they use materials and tools to catch students' attention and promote active class learning. It helps to build cognitive development in children, and they participate actively in the classroom. As one of the respondents said,

**R2:** "I would like to say that we teach them with actions and movements.... aaa...Students participate actively when teachers create active learning for them. In Montessori classrooms, we provide active learning, then students take interest towards learning and participate actively and learn a lot quickly."

The respondent has shared that active class is only possible with the help of practical communication skills and active engagement of learners. Montessori students need an active learning environment to learn and develop cognitive abilities.

### **Self-Awareness Management at Montessori Level**

In the Montessori classroom, children are 2 to 6 years old and unable to do things alone. They need teachers' guidance and instruction on how they manage themselves, such as maintaining their dress, wearing shoes, and coming to school regularly neat and clean. When teachers provide instructions, they learn and manage themselves properly and can do all their work independently. The teacher enables the children to put on shoes and dress independently. The teacher builds their confidence and awareness about their self-management skills. The teacher creates an environment where students practice individual self-skills. One of them addressed,

R3: I want to say that it is Montessori level; we teach them how to maintain their way of dressing, maintain their uniform, and wear shoes, and parents also cooperate with us to guide students about this life skill. We meet with their parents and write all the instructions in their diaries, which also helps us to know them."

The teacher expressed their opinion that at the Montessori level, we guide and instruct them on awareness about self-management because children at this age need to learn about their self-skills.

### **Effective Communication Skills Help to Build Interest**

Effective communication skills help and motivate children to build their interest in learning. At the Montessori level, the teacher directs the children, and they do their activities independently. The teacher provides them the opportunities to do their work independently. Suppose children are interested in learning, so the teacher cannot achieve their purpose of improving students' skills. So, the teacher should use effective communication strategies that help them to build interest in learning. The teacher needs to make a friendly and comfortable environment for children where children feel enjoyable. One of them explained,

R: 3. We communicate with them in a polite and friendly way.... Aaa... so that trust should be developed for better

learning. (door knocked)..... (interrupted).... silence.... We try to make a comfortable environment for them, like their homes, that increases their interest in listening and encourages them to participate in better learning and communication.

R:4. Effective communication strategies build better confidence and trust, and learners share everything like their parents with us after spending much time.

The respondents expressed that teachers who are trained and effective in communication provide a friendly environment, encouraging children to build their interest in learning by building interest in children eager to learn to communicate well.

### **Teaching based on Problem-solving Abilities**

In Montessori schools, teachers design and use a lot of activities and materials that help children to experiment and find solutions independently. It helps them to enhance children's understanding, thinking, and problem-solving skills such as Painting, colouring, and Artwork. Children think about which colour or texture they should use. Different shapes of puzzle word puzzles are used in Montessori class; children look over and customise pieces to find solutions. Projects like structure building with blocks, arranging letters, figuring out understanding and interpreting codes. Hands-on math manipulation with number cards, golden bead materials and bead bars enables children to solve mathematical problems and clear their concepts. All these activities help children to improve their problem-solving skills. One of them said,

R: 6. "In the Montessori classroom, we teach them through different activities like drawings, colouring, painting and playing games. We use number cards, alphabetical cards, and boxes to do different activities for students' skills development, and we even teach lessons through storytelling strategy to improve children's understanding."

The teacher explained their opinion. Montessori is an active learning method. This method helps children to identify,

understand, and solve problems independently. The teachers provide the learners the opportunities to engage in learning by problem-solving. They learn with the help of providing them with different learning opportunities. By providing them with different learning opportunities, learners develop their cognitive skills by memorising, solving problems, differentiating between different colours and cards, and thinking deeply through storytelling strategies.

### **Findings**

The research was conducted in a Private Montessori school in Karachi. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 6 Montessori school teachers. This study analysed the effects of Montessori teachers' communication skills on children's cognitive and language development. The findings indicate that teachers' communication skills play an important role in children's cognitive development and language development, and teachers require practical communication skills to improve children's skills. Different teachers shared their different opinion about the importance of communication skills in cognitive development; the themes were generated from the opinions of teachers that they shared practical communication skills of Montessori teachers is important for children's active participation, building positive Behavior, building interest, awareness of self-management and for problem-solving skills. In Montessori classrooms, there are a lot of different activities that teachers do in the classroom, but for achieving the purpose of any activity, for conveying the message appropriately to children, for improving children's skills, for development of cognitive skills in children's effective communication skills is very important on any level of teaching and learning process without effective communication teacher cannot influence children, a teacher can not catch their attention towards learning, a teacher cannot convey their message to children effectively. Strong communication is very important for teachers and impacts children's development.

### **Conclusion**

This study provides an in-depth analysis of the Montessori education role in children's cognitive and language development. It has focused on how the effective communication skills of Montessori teachers shape their cognitive development and language use. Nowadays, the Montessori approach is known for developing children's different skills. Montessori education enables children to do their work independently. Montessori teachers teach children according to individual needs and personality. Montessori education is very important for children's cognitive development. Children's cognitive development requires teacher support, motivation, encouragement and strong communication skills that help build positive Behavior in children and better language skills. It helps to build interest in children towards active participation in learning, developing problem-solving abilities, and building strong relationships between teachers and students. We should provide different teaching training programs to teachers that help them enhance effective communication skills, which helps them to inspire children.

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