



Expressive Skill Level of Selected Tutees of CIT University

Cando Jean Marie^{a*}, Cellona Michelle A.^b, Villacastin LuniN^c

^{a,b,c}*Cebu Institute of Technology - University, Cebu City, Philippines*

^a*Email: jeanmariecando@yahoo.com*

^b*Email: mikaelajuliana@yahoo.com*

^c*Email: luniville_01@yahoo.com*

Abstract

To be recognized and appreciated are fundamental human needs leading to the fulfillment of a person's desire for significance, a belief that one's life has meaning and importance. When a person's idea or work is appreciated, this can lead to a lasting feeling of fulfillment and a greater discovery of one's self. However, if a person, beginning from his/her childhood, has learned to suppress sharing his/her emotions, then self-expression can become more restricted and difficult in the later years. The purpose of this study therefore is to compare the expressive skill levels of boys and girls who had a free tutorial service sponsored by the Elementary and High School Departments of CIT University, Cebu City. Specifically, it aims to assess the expressive skill level of the pupils; identify factors that inhibit and reinforce the development of their expressive skills; and determine if there is a significant difference between the boys' and girls' level of expressive skills. The study used a 17-item tool, Expressive Skills Inventory, with a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.9 and focused group discussion as data gathering instruments and Microsoft Excel for statistical analysis. T-test was used to determine the significant difference between the means of the two (2) variables. A total of twenty-five (25) boys and girls, aged 5 – 9 years old were taken as subjects. These tutees were originally enrolled as students in the Day Care Center of Barangay Labangon, Cebu City. Findings revealed that the combined subjects' mean was 3.73 that generated a descriptive rating of High expressive skill level.

* Corresponding author.

Furthermore, there were five (5) factors that inhibited the tutees' expressive skill, which were identified as fear of punishment, fear of verbal reprimand, busy parents, shyness, and grumpy mood of parents; while factors that reinforced the subjects' expressive skills were categorized into positive (freedom to share anything, curiosity, and sweet moments with parents) and negative (inattentive, tendency to share things with other people instead of parents, and making unpleasant facial expressions) reinforcements. With no statistical difference found between the boys' and girls' expressive skill levels, it is recommended that future researches be conducted that would compare pupils with and without tutorial sessions to check on differences in their expressive skill levels.

Keywords: expressive skill; recognition; appreciation; inhibition; reinforcement.

1. Introduction

The capacity to express one's ideas, thoughts, and feelings is one skill that one needs to develop to survive. With this skill, one's needs, may it be simple or complicated, will be addressed. However, the capacity to express one's thoughts and feelings does not just come naturally. It has to be taught by adults to the children and to be learned by them while they are growing up. These teaching and learning experiences come from different venues, at home, in school, and in the community. In many instances, difficulty in expressing one's ideas can cause significant distress, discomfort, and limitations on academic, social, vocational, and interpersonal competencies. Therefore, the evaluation of an individual's expressive skill is important so that areas where an individual has limited capacity will be addressed. In a focused group discussion with Human Resource practitioners, some of the causes for not considering an applicant to continue the application process were discussed. They mentioned that other than skill and knowledge of the job, communication is highly regarded. When one could not articulate his ideas, even if he is skillful and knowledgeable of the job, they would prefer entertaining other applicants who possess the skill, knowledge, and the capacity to convey and articulate their ideas. It is therefore convincing to say that no matter how important knowledge and skills are, it cannot be said that they are enough to guarantee self-fulfillment and eventually life's success. Self-fulfillment may begin by having the experience of being recognized and appreciated for what has been said or done. This will open opportunities for an individual to finally share or express ideas. To be recognized and appreciated are fundamental human needs leading to the fulfillment of a person's desire for significance, a belief that one's life has meaning and importance. When a person's idea or work is appreciated, this can lead to a lasting feeling of fulfillment and a greater discovery of one's self. However, if a person, beginning from his/her childhood, has learned to suppress sharing his/her emotions, then self-expression become more restricted and difficult in the later years. One of the important facets of a child's social and emotional development is his communication skills. The need to communicate and convey one's thoughts and ideas are important to a child. When adults use positive communication styles with children, this supports and promotes a child's social and emotional wellbeing and future mental health [1]. Cellona [2] asserts that children who are carefully made to understand how vital self-expression is would blossom into fulfilled adults who will give importance to their own and other people's opinions. They are not imprisoned by their own fear of other people's misunderstanding and criticism because they themselves have a concrete understanding and knowledge about their own self. This, of course, is effective under the nurturing and loving guidance of concerned parents and caretakers.

Expressive language has been defined as the use of words, sentences, gestures, and writing to convey meaning and messages to others. Expressive language skills include being able to label objects in the environment, describe actions and events, put words together in sentences, use grammar correctly, retell a story, answer questions and write stories [3]. Moreover, expressive skill in this study is defined as the capacity to communicate one's wants and needs. It encompasses verbal and nonverbal communication skills and how an individual uses language. Ayoub [4] conducted a study that examined the roles of parenting and early intervention on the developmental pathways to integrated social skills. Findings showed that relations were found between family risks, parenting-relatedness stresses, and parent-child interactions that contribute either independently or through mediation to the children's acquisition of self-regulatory skills even when accounting for the influence of language development. Furthermore, findings indicate that Early Head Start protects parenting, child language, and self-regulatory development from the effects of demographic risks and parenting stress, and thus supports parents to raise healthy children. Given that everyone has different ways of expressing one's thoughts and feelings within all contexts and relationships, it stands to reason that expressive skill is developed within a variety of important adult-child relationships including parent-child relationship. In this study, the level of expressive skill of the selected tutees as well as the factors that reinforce and inhibit the development of their expressive skill will be explored.

The study is therefore aimed at:

1. Identifying the expressive skill level of selected tutees of CIT University;
2. Determine the factors that inhibit and reinforce the development of the tutees' expressive skills; and
3. Determine if there is a significant difference between the boys' and girls' level of expressive skills.

It is assumed that there is no significant difference between the boys' and girls' level of expressive skills.

2. Methodology

2.1 Setting and respondents

A total of twenty-five (25) boys and girls, aged 5 – 9 years old were taken as subjects. These tutees were originally enrolled as students in the Day Care Center of Barangay Labangon, Cebu City. Such tutees were classified as scholars (pupils whose school expenses were sponsored by the faculty members from the elementary and high school departments of CIT University). Since the tutees were still young and were studying in a public school because their parents could not afford to enroll them in private schools that would require higher school fees, they were believed to still lack the capability to read and understand concepts well enough. Thus, their parents were requested to help their child in answering the tool, which was a more accurate way of ensuring that the desired objectives of the study would be met.

2.2 Instrument

The study utilized a descriptive survey and interview methods in the conduct of data gathering. It specifically used a 17-item tool, *Expressive Skills Inventory (ESI)* by Cellona [2], with a test-retest reliability coefficient of

0.9, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as data gathering tools, and Microsoft Excel for statistical analysis.

The following questions during the FGD were asked:

1. How does the child express his thoughts and feelings?
2. What influenced him/her to express his/her thoughts and feelings in such manner?
3. What reinforces the child to express his/her thoughts and feelings?
4. What inhibits him/her to express her thoughts and feelings?

2.3 Data Gathering Procedure

The parents of the tutees were requested to attend one (1) session of the enhancement program conducted by the elementary and high school departments and they were requested to answer the tool that would generate the level of expressive skill of their child. Furthermore, FGD followed by thematic analysis were conducted in gathering the information on the factors that reinforce and inhibit the tutees' expressive skill.

2.4 Statistical Treatment

T-test was used to determine the significant difference between the means of the two (2) variables.

3. Results and Discussion

The following data focuses on the expressive skill level of the tutees, as well as the factors that inhibit and reinforce the development of their expressive skills.

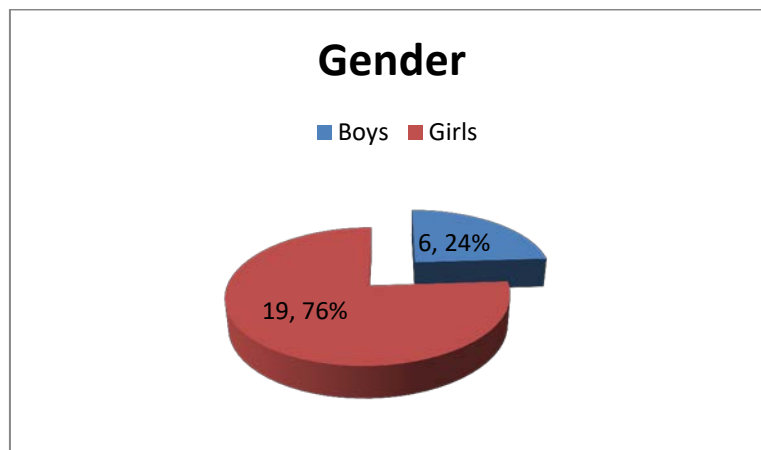


Figure 1: presents the gender of the tutees.

Of the total 25 tutees, only 6 or 24% were boys, and a greater number at 19, or 76% were girls.

3.1 Expressive skill level of the tutees

As for of the expressive skill level, Table 1 presents the tutees' expressive skill level in terms of the mean and its descriptive equivalent, which is based on the 17-item ESI.

Table 1: Tutees' expressive skill level using ESI

Indicator	Mean	DE
1. I have the confidence to participate in the class discussion	4.32	Very High
2. During class discussion, I respond by using:	3.52	High
a. single word (YES, NO, Um)		
b. gesture (nodding, smiling, etc.)	3.12	Average
c. phrases	3.28	Average
d. sentences	4.56	Very High
3. I use complete thoughts when speaking	4.16	High
4. I voice out my opinion in class	3.84	High
5. I initiate conversation	3.68	High
6. I ask questions or clarifications when I don't understand the instruction or topic.	4.16	High
7. I attend to the teacher by maintaining eye contact	3.76	High
8. I can link ideas with others	3.88	High
9. When I talk, I say "um" and substitute general words like "stuff" and "things" for more precise words	4.20	Very High
10. When talking, I use certain phrases over and over again	3.88	High
11. I don't not talk much, but understand what other people say.	3.88	High
12. I am able to pronounce words and sounds, but my ideas don't make sense.	3.60	High
13. I seem to have the same ideas as other people but I could hardly express my ideas.	3.64	High
14. I find it hard to cooperate in class discussion; I might be criticized or humiliated.	3.12	Average
15. When I voice out my opinion, I worry about what other people think of me	3.24	Average
16. I am frustrated by my inability to communicate my thoughts and feelings to others	3.16	Average
17. I hold back if I suspect people won't like what I say	3.60	High
Grand Mean	3.73	High

Legend:

Very High – 4.21 – 5.0

High – 3.41 – 4.2

Average – 2.61 – 3.40

Low – 1.81 – 2.60

Very Low – 1.0 – 1.8

Findings revealed that the combined subjects' mean was 3.73, which is shown in Table 1 that generated a descriptive rating of High expressive skill level. Certainly, the tutees at their current level have the ability to openly express their opinions or ideas, without any apprehension or inhibition. This is proven by Tomasello [5]

when he said, “For the young child, language serves primarily social goals; such as negotiating social interactions, communicating needs, and representing one’s own point of view”.

3.2 Reinforcement and inhibitors

Upon exploring the factors that reinforced and inhibited the development of the expressive skill of the children, the following themes provided for in Table 2 emerged:

Table 2: Factors that inhibit and reinforce the tutees expressive skill

INHIBIT	REINFORCEMENT	
	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Fear of punishment	Freedom to share anything	Inattentive
Fear of verbal reprimand	Curiosity	Tendency to share things with other people instead of with the parents
Busy parents	Sweet moments with parents	Making unpleasant facial expressions
Shyness		
Parents’ grumpy mood		

3.3 Positive reinforcements from parents

The presentation of positive reinforcement which is done through the freedom to share anything without critically judging the child’s interpretation of what he/she observed is one of the major contributors that reinforced the development of children’s expressive skill. One of the manifestations of the child’s curiosity is manifested through asking questions. When these actions are positively reinforced by adults through smiles, attention, and sincere answers to the questions asked, children are encouraged to ask and to learn more. These acts of curiosity reinforced positively by adults coupled with shared sweet moments would create great impact to the expressive skill development of children. Through the loving and nurturing relationship with parents, children learn to care and give in relationships with others.

3.3.1 Interaction with peers

The other theme that reinforced the development of children’s expressive skill is through their interaction with peers instead of with their parents. Parents shared during the focus group discussion that their children were more interactive with their peers than with them. This observation is practically true since children in the middle childhood would start to move away from parental influence; the peer group opens new perspectives and frees them to make independent judgments. In this stage, the peer group helps children learn how to get along in society, how to adjust their needs and desires with those of others, when to yield, and when to stand firm. The

peer group also offers emotional security. It is reassuring for children to find out that they are not alone in harboring thoughts that might offend an adult [6].

3.3.2 Fear of punishment and verbal reprimand

One of the specific type of discipline that parents are known to employ is power assertion. It involves the use of physical punishment, withdrawal of privileges or material resources, displays of anger, commands, disapproval, shame and humiliation [7]. Instead of the child expressing to their parents what they have done wrong in school or to their classmates, or voicing out their opinions when they did not like what their parents were saying or doing, they inhibit their selves to do such things due to fear of physical punishment, withdrawal of privileges, or material resources. As shared by some of the research participants, their children would usually not talk when they start to get upset. Parents said that the children might have difficulty to express their feelings or thoughts for fear of being scolded or reprimanded which might result to physical punishment especially when they insist their points.

3.3.3 Busy parents

Another inhibitor of the development of expressive skill of children, which emerged in the focus group discussion, is the busy schedule of the parents. Because they have things to do or more important things to occupy their time at home, parents do not have time to interact with their children. For as long as nobody complains or make a fuss, parents assume that all is well with the children; and they become negligent of the importance of interaction at home.

3.3.4 Shyness

There were few parents who shared that their children have tendencies to shy away. Though most of the children have considerably developed their expressive skill, there are few who are still shy to initiate conversation and would prefer to be silent.

3.3.5 Grumpy Mood of Parents

As shared by the parents, their facial expression would show that they are not in good mood. When this happens their children would usually withdraw and would not talk. When children see their parents display angry outburst and express things negatively, children would usually follow. Parents are the children's models. Albert Bandura, in his social learning theory, asserts that children imitate behaviors of adults. Thus, a grumpy parent will produce a grumpy child disabling the child to develop a positive way of expressing his thoughts and feelings.

3.3.6 Inattentive and Making Unpleasant Facial Expressions

Some of the research participants shared that when they start to nag due to their children's mistakes or inability to follow instructions, their children preferred to be silent accompanied by unpleasant facial expressions to show

their resistance on what their parents think of them. The children preferred doing these acts so as not to exacerbate the negative emotions of their parents.

3.3.7 Statistical Difference between Boys' and Girls' Expressive Skill Level

In addition, Table 3 below shows the computed value as regards the tutees' expressive skill level.

Table 3: Significant difference between boys' and girls' expressive skill level

Variable	N	Mean	T-Computed Value	T-Tabular Value	Interpretation
Girls	19	3.73	0.0558	1.714	There is no significant difference between the boys' and girls' expressive skill levels.
Boys	6				

As shown in Table 3, a T-computed value of 0.0558, which is less than the T-tabular value of 1.714, clearly proves that there is no significant difference between the boys' and girls' expressive skill level. Both boys and girls simply wanted to honestly convey their ideas to be able to gain access to information, as proven in the work of Koenig, and his colleagues [8] when they said that "language is increasingly used as the mechanism for gaining access to information about the physical and social

4. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that the tutees, both boys' and girls' expressive skill level generated a mean score of 3.73, which is given a descriptive equivalent of high expressive skill level. At this point in time, the ability to express opinions or ideas is still easy for the subjects. Whether verbal or through facial expressions, the subjects/tutees were able to communicate well enough to a point that they could be understood, hence, the feeling that they are recognized and appreciated. Furthermore, there were five (5) identified factors that inhibit the tutees' expressive skill, namely: fear of punishment, fear of verbal reprimand, busy parents, shyness, and grumpy mood of parents. Likewise, reinforcement for the tutees were identified as positive (freedom to share anything, curiosity, and sweet moments with parents) and negative (inattentive, tendency to share things with other people instead of parents, and making unpleasant facial expressions). Although expressive skill level is currently high, the aforementioned inhibitors might hinder the tutees' ability to express themselves in the future. As such, reinforcements, whether positive or negative, must overpower the inhibitors that would somehow stabilize the tutees firm hold of the belief in them that they still have the capability of expressing themselves, thereby allowing for the maintenance of a high level of expressive skill. Finally, with a T-computed value of 0.0558, which is lower than the T-tabular value of 1.714, the study proved that there is no significant difference between the boys' and girls' expressive skill level proving that reinforcements create a positive effect on the tutees, regardless of gender. With no statistical difference found between the boys' and girls' expressive skill levels, it is recommended that future researches be conducted that

would compare pupils with and without tutorial sessions to check on differences in their expressive skill levels as changes in the manner by which pupils with tutorial sessions think might have affected their ability to express, compared to those who did not experience tutorial sessions at all. Furthermore, a regular or monthly monitoring of the tutees, with assistance from their parents is also recommended, to make sure that expressive skill is maintained, or inhibitors are addressed to avoid affecting the subjects' current high level of expressive skills.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the members of the administration of the Cebu Institute of Technology – University for the funding of the publication of this research paper.

References

- [1] “Commonwealth of Australia as represented by the Department of Health and Ageing” Internet: http://www.responseability.org/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/4863/Communicating-with-Children.pdf, 2010 [September 14, 2016].
- [2] Michelle C. “Consistent Appreciation and Recognition for Empowerment (CARE) for Parents: A Parenting Guide for Raising Amazingly Gifted Children”. 2016
- [3] Kid Sense (n.d). “Expressive Language (Using Words and Language)”. Internet:<http://www.childdevelopment.com.au> [September 13, 2016].
- [4] Catherine A., Ann M., and Claire V. “Developmental Pathways to Integrated skills: The Roles of Parenting and Early Intervention”. *Journal of Child Development*. Vol. 82, pp. 583-600, March/April 2011.
- [5] Michael T. “Joint attention: Its origins and role in development” in *Joint attention as social cognition*. C. Moore & P.J. Dunham Eds., Hillsdale, NJ: Earlbaum 1995, pp. 103-130.
- [6] Daine P. & Ruth F. “Experience Human Development International Edition”. McGraw Hill Companies, 2012, p.336.
- [7] Lorelie Ann L. & Liane A. “Parent and peer influences on adolescent delinquent behavior and the mediating role of self-regulation”. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 43 (2), p. 115-131, 2010.
- [8] Melissa K, Fabrice C. & Paul H. “Trust in testimony: Children’s use of true and false statements.” *Psychological Science*, 15, pp. 694-698.