**Communication Disorder of The Autistic Character in**

**The “Fly Away” Movie**

Nadira Dinda Prastiwi1, Rohmani Nur Indah2

1,2UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Jalan Gajayana 50, Malang 65145, Indonesia

1[prastiwidinda97@gmail.com](mailto:prastiwidinda97@gmail.com),2indah@bsi.uin-malang.ac.id

Received: Revised: Published:

Abstract

This study aims to identify the type of communication disorder in comprehending the speech of an autistic character in the “Fly Away” movie. In addition, it aims to describe the occurrence of communication disorders. In this study, the researchers used the theory on the type of communication disorder (Paul, 2008). As the findings, there are forty-three data of the five types of communication disorders namely, repetition of words, minimal response, limitation of communication function, use of unusual words, and low frequency. The result stated that word repetition is a type of disorder that often occurs in autistic characters in “Fly Away”. The occurrence of communication disturbance is also sown by several incidents such as, jumping, excessive laughs, rebellion, repeating posture, eyes up, just see the interlocutor and bite the fingers. These things are an expression that happened to the autistic character when experiencing communication disorders. This finding can be used as a guideline for those interacting with autistic individuals applying both verbal and nonverbal communication.

Keywords: communication disorder, autism, “Fly Away” movie.

**Introduction**

Communication ability is one of the most important aspects that every human being should be aware of. This ability enables people to be involved in social interaction since childhood. Yet, not everyone can communicate normally. Some individuals experience communication disorders, so they cannot receive and deliver messages. In addition, those who experience communication disorders are affected by different factors that demand social supports (Eadie et al., 2018). When children have a lack or complete system of sense, the central nervous system, adequate mental capacity, and emotional stability can trigger a variety of communication disorders (Bogdashina, 2005). One of them happened on the autistic. An autistic individual also has a language disorder that becomes barriers for daily communication, particularly when they have difficulties to express their needs (Austriaco et al., 2019).

A communication disorder is a disorder of the ability to receive, transmit, process, and understand the verbal or nonverbal concept. This disorder can occur starting from the severity to a mild, communication disorder that can occur in primary defect sufferer or possibly secondary defect such as what experienced by autistic individuals. Autism is one of the syndromes that experience communication disorders due to certain factors. It is caused by the occurrence of abnormalities occurring in the brain (Huebner & Lane, 2001). 30% of autistic individuals cannot speak for life while 60% of them can speak but experiencing speech delay and they can produce the first word at the age of six years (Lord et al., 2005). It involves a factor of communication disorder so that they cannot communicate and interact with the surroundings. Communication competence is one of the main factors that determined how broadly an autistic person can develop relationships with others and can follow daily activities such as others in common either at school, home or inside the community (Paul & Sutherland, 2005).

A communication disorder is a variety of problems in language, speaking, and hearing. In addition, it is characterized by difficulties in understanding and using language. Most communication disorders occur in autistic individuals because they have mental, speech, auditory, and even visual limitations. They also suffer from minimal sensory processing (Zhang et al., 2019). These limitations make them feel difficult in communicating with the environment. They communicate using body language, sometimes if they are unable to receive and convey the message, occasionally they express with emotion. This case often occurs with autistic teenagers. Autistic adolescents often showed abnormalities in speech and language (Shea & Mesibov, 2005). They suffer from communication disorders that consist of six types. Firstly, the response is minimal in communication. Secondly, it is difficult to focus on. Third, a low frequency of communication. Fourth, there is a limitation of the communication function. Fifth, echolalia or repetition of words. And the last is the use of unusual words (Paul, 2008).

Communication disorder has been investigated in some studies. The autistic character in My Name is Khan movie performed various types of language disorder (Suherman, 2016). While, the speech of character with cerebral palsy showed several types of speech and language disorders namely articulation disorder, phonological disorder, voice disorder, and stuttering disorder (Zakiah, 2015). Another study shows that autistic people have difficulties in expressing their feelings, needs, and thoughts (Octavia, 2018). However, in autistic children, sound disturbances and language disability become the barriers they mostly suffered (Nafiah, 2008). In this case, the aided language stimulation method affects the enhancement of autistic child expressive communication (Aprioza & Masitoh, 2019). The movement and touch of autistic students are more dominantly used as a way of communication (Putro, 2017). The improvement of expressive communication in children can be done using the PECS method (Goa & Derung, 2017). Although young autistic communication is far below the chronological age, the intervention given plays a role in developing communication skills (Wijayaptri, 2015).

The majority of previous studies above have used the film as a research object and they also employ the theory of language impairment (Carroll & Snowling, 2004). While this study uses the theory of communication disorder (Paul, 2008). In addition, the studies chose the subject of autistic children and male adults. In this study, the autistic teenage girl is selected as the subject of research. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to identify the types of communication disorders arise in the comprehension process of the autistic character in the “Fly Away” movie. In addition, it also aims at describing how communication disorder occurs in her comprehension process.

**Method**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method for analyzing data. This qualitative method is to interpret and outline the data concerned with the current situation. This research uses descriptive qualitative methods to describe communication disorders that focus on the type of communication disorder that occurs in autistic people in the film “Fly Away”. Thus, the data source of this research is “Fly Away” movie in the Stephanie Young’s Youtube channel published on October 26, 2018. The movie takes 1 hour 15 minutes. The data focuses on Mandy's utterance as the main character in the "Fly Away" movie. The problem analyzed in this study is the type of communication disorder arises in the process of understanding the autistic character in the “Fly Away” movie. Thus, this research is intended to identify and describe, communication disorder occurs in the movie.

There are several steps to collect the data. First, observing the conversation in the movie several times. Then, identifying the communication disorders in the conversation and data coding. The data are then analyzed by firstly noticing some responses to the types of communication disorder according to the theory of communication disorder (Paul, 2008). It is followed by discussing the context and occurrence of the communication disorders identified in the way the character responding to questions and delivering messages. And the last, drawing conclusion.

**Findings and discussion**

The data show some kinds of communication disorder that happened to Mandy as the main character in the “Fly Away” movie. The results of the analysis found forty-three data that correspond to the types of communication disorders. The sense of communication disorder, in general, is a collection of psychological disorders characterized by difficulties such as difficulties in understanding and use of language (Bolis & Schilbach, 2018). The communication disorder causes a person to have an inability to interact with the environment. In addition, one cannot accept, understand, and convey messages according to their thoughts. It is a distraction that inhibits the ability to receive, transmit, process, understand verbal and nonverbal concepts (ASHA, 1993).

Among the forty-three data found, there are six types of communication disorders found, namely repetition of words, minimal response, limitation of communication function, use of unusual words, and low frequency. In general, the type of communication disorder that tends to occur in Mandy’s utterance when communicating with other characters is the anomalous meaning and minimal response. In addition, the findings state that communication disorder low-frequency communication is very rare on Mandy in the film “Fly Away”. Mandy often performs repeated speech communication disorders when communicating with her surroundings. While talking to the other, Mandy tried to listen carefully so that there are a few words that she remembered and then repeated the words over and over again. In addition to repeated words, in the movie, Mandy also often experienced minimal response. In the film, some of Mandy's scenes show minimal response when someone asked her to make a response. Mandy sometimes does not reply to others and sometimes only sees her listeners, when another person calls her name Mandy does not respond to the greeting.

***Mandy’s Communication Disorder***

The first type of communication disorder found is anomalous meaning. The repetition of the word occurs when someone is talking then the sufferer remembers the words and repeats them repeatedly. This is because the autistic has a very good memory, or an autistic can repeat the word repeatedly as she can pronounce to convey the message in her mind. Based on the analysis, Mandy often experienced repeated words in the film. Those occur in the following datum: *[2.1] you can do that you can do that you can you hmm, [7.1] stay day schooll about the ice cream, ice cream, ice cream, ice cream, ice cream, [8.1] chocolate, chocolate, chocolate, chocolate, chocolate, [9.1] let’s go, lets go, lets go, lets go, go, go, go, go, [11.1] Jammers, jammers, jammers, jammers, [14.1] inside, inside, inside, inside.* In this context, Mandy repeats the word many times and the repetition is also followed by repetitive body movements. These may involve arms, hands, fingers, and lower limbs (Purpura et al., 2017).

The next type found is a minimal response. The minimal response is limited attention at the time of the speech, which one fails to respond to people's talks or ignore when asked to communicate. Based on the analysis, Mandy often experienced minimal response as she got difficulty understanding other's speech. The following data are the utterances that made Mandy failed to respond appropriately. Thus, she ignores the greeting, questions, command or affirmative sentences such as the following: *[2.2] Mandy daddy’s here, [3.1] Mandy do you have to apologize to Daddy, [4.1] Mandy look at a time watch, [5.1] Mandy look how cute you see the little chihuahua, [6.1] see you Mandy, [7.1] Good job, [8.1] Mandy get some shoes we’re gonna take Ross, [9.2] Hey Mandy Mandy, [10.1] Then after we lock the oven we'll call grandma's I'm going to go is grocery stores, okay and then we come home, [11.1] it's not funny young lady it's not funny at all, [12.1] Mandy do you like dances?, [13.1] Mandy would you like to take a walk around the grounds hmm how about it?* In this case, Mandy did not respond as she focused on something else in her mind.It refers to the restricted interest of autistic individuals (Flax et al., 2019). In addition, the failure to respond to the implicit meaning of others showed that autistic individuals experience social pragmatic communication disorder (Baird & Norbury, 2016).

Another type found is the limitation of the communication function. It is a type of communication disorder in autism where communication only serves to request and refuse a message. It happens as they cannot digest, and convey the message well. They can not convey a message with a long sentence just enough with a word or two words. Based on the finding, Mandy often experienced restrictions on the communication function in the conversation. The following data represented the limitation of communication function: *[1.1] my computer my computer , [2.1] huaaaaa....haaa...no...no... huuuu buy the ice cream, [3.1] I hate you..I hate you...I hate you..., [4.1] Berrrrr....., [5.1] huaaa.....haaaa....haaa...huaaaa...* Mandy had difficulty to express her need to have the thing she wanted. She represented the intended phrases with repeated speech or paralinguistic cues. In this case, autistic individuals tend to produce less sophisticated language than they can comprehend (Gernsbacher et al., 2016).

The use of the unusual word is shown when the words she created make people cannot understand. It covers vague words that do not conform to context. Based on the results of the finding, six data show that there were several times unusual words appear in her speech such as the following data: *[1.1] a...a...aa...., [2.1] you’ve accepted, accepted playing sky...., [3.1] Boeing 747 carries 524, [4.1] but our planes, [4.1] dogs and birds “Fly Away”, [5.1] got skywriting is a word that I'm saying.* In these contexts, the expressions or the words stated are not directly related to the context, therefore the listeners find it difficult to understand. In addition, the pronunciation is also not clear.

The low frequency of communication occurs when autistic people are not able to express what is in their minds because there is interference with hearing and speech causing the low frequency of communication. Based on the results of the analysis, three data show that Mandy had a low frequency of communication: *[1.1] ] everyone Boeing 747 best is playing sky., [2.1] no dog bark, [3.1] funny, it’s so funny.* In this context, Mandy was unable to express what was in her mind. When she repetitive speech, it does not relate to the social function. In other words, the use of phrases does not always relate to social responsiveness (Gladfelter & VanZuiden, 2020).

***The Communication Disorder Arise in Comprehension Process***

After conducting the analysis, it is found that there is one type of communication disorder that does not occur in the main character in the movie “Fly Away” which is difficult to focus on the speech of others. Table 1 is a summary of the results of the analysis.



Figure 1. Types of Communication Disorder

The results of the study stated that the interruption of communication of Mandy as the main character in the “Fly Away” movie occurs due to several difficulties. Sometimes when she communicates and generates types of communication disorders, the responses are followed by several paralinguistic cues such as, jumping, excessive laughs, rebellion, repeating the posture of the fore and aft, eyes up, just see the interlocutor and talk while biting finger. These things are an expression that happened to Mandy when communicating with others. It also becomes an indication of emotional change while conversing with others (Rofiah et al., 2018).

In this research, it was found that communication disorders arise in the process of understanding of an individual female autistic. The results of this study support the findings from previous research that autistic individuals experience expressive and receptive communication disorders in general. It arises in the process of understanding the message conveyed by other people (Suherman, 2016). The communication disorder is shown by the autistic character also refers to what is later known as social pragmatic communication disorder (Brukner-Wertman et al., 2016). It also relates to a deficit in using communication for social purpose, following rules of conversation and understanding implicit message (Yuan & Dollaghan, 2018).

**Conclusion and suggestion**

This study explores the types of communication disorders and communication disorders that occur in the autistic. The communication disorder found covers five types. Firstly, the response is minimal in communicating. Secondly, a low frequency of communication. Third, there is a limitation of the communication function. Fourth, echolalia or repetition of words. And the last is the use of unusual words. In this case, the repetition word is a type of communication disorder that often occurs in the autistic female character in the “Fly Away” movie. In addition, the type of communication disorder that rarely occurs in the autistic character in the movie is the low frequency of communication disorder. Mandy, the main character, does not experience any communication disorder that is difficult to focus or pay attention to.

In addition to examining the types of communication disorders, the occurrence of communication disorders on the autistic character in the movie also varied. It is related to disturbance to Mandy when she communicates and produces types of communication disorders, it is followed by paralinguistic cues. They are in the form of jumping, excessive laughs, rebellion, repeating posture fore and behind, eyes up, just see the interlocutor, and bite the fingers. These things are an expression that happened to Mandy when experiencing communication disorders.

This study found that the repetition of words is the most common type in the autistic and there is often a rebellion in the autistic when he or she wants to refuse or be unable to receive a message. Therefore, this research results can be used as guidelines for people interacting with the autistic individuals, so that they can understand their character better. In addition, they can apply nonverbal communication to help autistic individuals understand any intended message. Verbal communication is not enough for autistic individuals. In this movie, Mandy needs help with the prompt in the form of gestures by the interlocutor.

Future researchers on language disorder who have an interest in researching communication disorders on autistic individuals can continue the investigation for different objectives and to different objects. The implications of communication disorder research results are expected to be used as a reference and benchmark for further research.

**References**

Aprioza, A., & Masitoh, S. (2019). Metode aided language stimulation terhadap komunikasi ekspresif anak dengan spektrum autis. *Jurnal Pendidikan Khusus*, *12*(3).

ASHA, A. S.-L.-H. A. (1993). *Definitions of communication disorders and variations.* https://www.asha.org/policy/RP1993-00208.htm

Austriaco, K., Aban, I., Willig, J., & Kong, M. (2019). Contemporary Trainee Knowledge of Autism: How Prepared Are Our Future Providers? *Frontiers in Pediatrics*, *7*, 165.

Baird, G., & Norbury, C. F. (2016). Social (pragmatic) communication disorders and autism spectrum disorder. *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, *101*(8), 745–751.

Bogdashina, O. (2005). *Theory of Mind and the Triad of Perspectives on Autism and Asperger Syndrome: A view from the bridge*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Bolis, D., & Schilbach, L. (2018). Observing and participating in social interactions: Action perception and action control across the autistic spectrum. *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*, *29*, 168–175.

Brukner-Wertman, Y., Laor, N., & Golan, O. (2016). Social (pragmatic) communication disorder and its relation to the autism spectrum: Dilemmas arising from the DSM-5 classification. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *46*(8), 2821–2829.

Carroll, J. M., & Snowling, M. J. (2004). Language and phonological skills in children at high risk of reading difficulties. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *45*(3), 631–640.

Eadie, T., Kapsner‐Smith, M., Bolt, S., Sauder, C., Yorkston, K., & Baylor, C. (2018). Relationship between perceived social support and patient‐reported communication outcomes across communication disorders: A systematic review. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, *53*(6), 1059–1077.

Flax, J., Gwin, C., Wilson, S., Fradkin, Y., Buyske, S., & Brzustowicz, L. (2019). Social (Pragmatic) Communication Disorder: Another name for the Broad Autism Phenotype? *Autism*, *23*(8), 1982–1992.

Gernsbacher, M. A., Morson, E. M., & Grace, E. J. (2016). Language and speech in autism. *Annual Review of Linguistics*, *2*, 413–425.

Gladfelter, A., & VanZuiden, C. (2020). The Influence of Language Context on Repetitive Speech Use in Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 1–8.

Goa, L., & Derung, T. N. (2017). Komunikasi Ekspresif dengan Metode PECS bagi Anak dengan Autis. *Jurnal Nomosleca*, *3*(2).

Huebner, R. A., & Lane, S. J. (2001). Neuropsychological findings, etiology, and implications for autism. *Autism: A Sensorimotor Approach to Management*, 61–99.

Lord, C., Wagner, A., Rogers, S., Szatmari, P., Aman, M., Charman, T., Dawson, G., Durand, V. M., Grossman, L., & Guthrie, D. (2005). Challenges in evaluating psychosocial interventions for autistic spectrum disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *35*(6), 695–708.

Nafiah, U. (2008). *A psycholinguistic study on expressive language disorder of the autistic child in Mercury Rising film*. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim.

Octavia, A. (2018). *Expressive language usage of autism sufferer*. UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya.

Paul, R. (2008). Interventions to improve communication in autism. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, *17*(4), 835–856.

Paul, R., & Sutherland, D. (2005). *Enhancing Early Language in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders.*

Purpura, G., Costanzo, V., Chericoni, N., Puopolo, M., Scattoni, M. L., Muratori, F., & Apicella, F. (2017). Bilateral patterns of repetitive movements in 6-to 12-month-old infants with autism spectrum disorders. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *8*, 1168.

Putro, H. E. (2017). Komunikasi Nonverbal Guru Dan Murid Dalam Pemahaman Pesan Pada Anak Autids Di TKLB Aisyiyah Krian. *ETTISAL: Journal of Communication*, *2*(2), 19–29.

Rofiah, K., Mahmudah, S., Purbaningrum, E., Ardianingsih, F., & Ainin, I. K. (2018). Understanding Emotion Patterns in Children with Autism: A Case Study. *2nd Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Conference: Establishing Identities through Language, Culture, and Education (SOSHEC 2018)*.

Shea, V., & Mesibov, G. B. (2005). Adolescents and adults with autism. *Handbook of Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders*, *1*, 288–311.

Suherman, S. (2016). *Language Disorder of Main Character in the Movie “My Name is Khan.”* Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar.

Wijayaptri, N. W. P. (2015). Hambatan Komunikasi pada Penyandang Autisme Remaja: Sebuah Studi Kasus. *INKLUSI*, *2*(1), 41–62.

Yuan, H., & Dollaghan, C. (2018). Measuring the diagnostic features of social (pragmatic) communication disorder: An exploratory study. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, *27*(2), 647–656.

Zakiah, A. F. (2015). *The expressive language disorder of the cerebral palsy in the Skallagrigg movie.* UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim.

Zhang, J., Meng, Y., He, J., Xiang, Y., Wu, C., Wang, S., & Yuan, Z. (2019). McGurk effect by individuals with autism spectrum disorder and typically developing controls: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *49*(1), 34–43.