

## Student B

Read the text carefully and draw a mindmap representing the main points of information.

# Understanding language disorders

Language disorders can make it difficult for kids to understand what people are saying to them and to express their own thoughts and feelings through speech. They can also affect how kids learn and socialize.

A language disorder is an impairment that makes it hard for someone to find the right words and form clear sentences when speaking. It can also make it difficult to understand what another person says. A child may have difficulty understanding what others say, may struggle to put thoughts into words, or both.

You may notice that your child's vocabulary is very basic, and his sentences are short, ungrammatical, and incomplete. While his peers chat and tell jokes, your child may have trouble following the conversation and miss the jokes. He also may speak in two-word sentences and have trouble answering even simple questions.

If a language disorder isn't caught early or is misdiagnosed, it can create wide-reaching complications in a person's life — complications that often extend from childhood to adulthood. Social situations, for example, can be challenging for someone with either a receptive or an expressive language disorder. Difficulties with self-expression or comprehension of what others are saying can cause someone to withdraw or endure being ostracized. In extreme situations, a child with a language disorder may become so frustrated at his inability to make himself understood that he lashes out at adults or other children — earning him the label of "bully" or "problem child."

It's important to note that a language disorder is *not* the same as a hearing issue or a speech disorder. Children with language disorders typically have no trouble hearing or pronouncing words. Their challenge is mastering and applying the rules of language, like grammar. They aren't simply "late talkers." Without treatment, their communication problems will continue and may lead to emotional issues and academic struggles.

There are three kinds of language disorders.

- **Receptive language issues** involve difficulty understanding what others are saying.

- **Expressive language issues** involve difficulty expressing thoughts and ideas.
- **Mixed receptive-expressive language issues** involve difficulty understanding *and* using spoken language.

Language disorders can either be acquired or developmental. An acquired language disorder shows up only after the person has had a neurological illness or injury. This could be a stroke or traumatic head injury.

A developmental language disorder is much more common in children. Kids with developmental language disorders often start speaking later than their peers. This delay isn't related to their intelligence level. In fact, kids with developmental language disorders typically have average or above-average intelligence. They usually have problems with receptive and expressive language skills before the age of 4.

Experts aren't sure what causes language disorders. Most of the research has focused on the broader category of speech and language impairments (SLI), which includes language disorders *and* speech disorders. That research has been extensive and suggests some possible causes for SLI, such as:

- **Genes and heredity:** Research has found that 20 to 40 percent of children with a family history of speech and language impairment have the condition themselves, compared with about 4 percent of those with no family history of SLI.
- **Prenatal nutrition:** Some research has shown that when a woman takes prenatal folic acid supplements during pregnancy, her baby is less likely to have severe language issues.
- **Other conditions:** Down syndrome, intellectual disabilities, and premature birth might also cause language disorders.

### **Symptoms of Language Processing Disorders**

When a child is born with a language disorder, he or she is often a "late talker," with other symptoms usually appearing before age 4. Though language disorders are sometimes diagnosed in those with intellectual disabilities, they most often appear in those with average or above-average intelligence — though those with language disorders may find they have trouble demonstrating that intelligence to the outside world.

If a language disorder is mild, its symptoms may be difficult to detect. The person may just appear a little "spacey" or even shy. Look for the following basic symptoms that may indicate

a language disorder. If you notice these symptoms in yourself or your child, talk with your doctor or the staff at your child's school.

Kids with receptive language issues may have trouble understanding what other people say. They could also have difficulty following simple directions and organizing information they hear. Receptive language issues can be hard to spot in very young children.

Someone with a receptive language disorder might:

- Seem disinterested in conversations or social situations
- Have difficulty following directions
- Often misunderstand what is asked and answer or act inappropriately
- Have difficulty getting jokes
- Seem shy or withdrawn

Expressive language issues can be easier to identify early. This is because kids with expressive language issues may be late to start talking and not speak until age 2. At age 3, they may be talking but hard to understand, and the problems persist into preschool. Some kids, for instance, might understand the stories read to them but not be able to describe them even in a simple way.

Here are other signs of expressive language issues:

- Have a limited vocabulary for their age
- Use a lot of filler words like "um," or use "stuff" and "things" instead of more specific words
- Confuse verb tenses
- Repeat phrases when telling a story or answering a question
- Frequently say sentences that don't make sense
- Have trouble learning new words
- Feel like words are constantly stuck "at the tip of their tongue"
- Often seem frustrated by their inability to communicate thoughts

If someone exhibits symptoms from both lists, it's possible he or she has a combination expressive/receptive language disorder.

If you've noticed some of the above language processing disorder symptoms and think you or your child may have a language disorder, the next step is to get a professional evaluation. Language disorders can be frequently misdiagnosed — they are often misidentified as ADHD, autism, or even just “laziness” — so it's important to work with someone who is familiar with speech and language development.

Most speech therapists test for language disorders in similar ways. It's important for you or your child to be tested in the language with which you're most comfortable — even if it's not the language you speak on a daily basis. Difficulty with a second language is not necessarily a sign of a language disorder. A pediatric speech therapist should interact with and observe your child in various situations, as well as interview you to determine if your communication skills may be contributing to a child's language delays. For an adult diagnosis, your speech therapist may interview your partner or other close family members to get a sense of how your language skills affect your interactions. They may also try different therapy methods to gauge how you or your child responds and begin to determine an effective treatment strategy.

(Adapted from: <http://ceril.net/index.php/articulos?id=630> and <https://www.additudemag.com/language-processing-disorders-recognizing-symptoms/> )