



Research Paper

Re-examining Child Development Based on the Role of Adverbials in Speech Structure: Insights from a Qur'anic Developmental Framework



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Abstract

Growth is a fundamental aspect of human life and is closely intertwined with human existence and guidance. Early childhood is of particular importance in the educational process, and speech, which can be regarded as a manifestation of the trajectory of human cognitive development, can be used to identify developmental deficiencies during this period. Given the limited attention devoted in the literature to the concept of speech and its role in human development, the present study aimed to re-examine child development based on the role of adverbials in speech structure within the framework of the Qur'anic developmental model. The study employed a qualitative research approach, with the analyses based on conceptual interpretation and in-depth reflection on the literature of the Qur'anic developmental framework concerning the structure of human speech. The research was conducted in four stages: an in-depth examination of the theoretical foundations; analysis and inference of relevant content to extract developmental indicators; convening an expert panel to validate the conceptual indicators; and, ultimately, developing component-based diagrams of development and developmental deficiencies, with a focus on the role of adverbials in children's speech structure. The findings resulted in a matrix of diagnostic statements for development and developmental deficiencies across three indicators of children's utterance (nutq), saying (qawl), and speech (kalam). These statements were formulated around four types of adverbial relations: causality, possession, circumstance, and distinction. The findings indicated that recognition of adverbials and their domains can serve as a foundation for children's acquisition of knowledge, while each type of adverbial, through its specific function within speech structure, can play an influential role in shaping children's behaviors and beliefs. Accordingly, the present study proposes a set of indicators and diagnostic statements for identifying children's developmental characteristics and/or developmental deficiencies from this perspective. These indicators may have educational implications and provide a basis for corrective interventions in children's speech-related developmental processes.

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Introduction

Child development is a dynamic and multidimensional concept influenced by biological, psychological, and social factors (Saracho, 2023). Systematic studies in this area began in the early twentieth century, with the primary objective of these investigations being to collect descriptive information on normative development (Mussen et al., 2001, p. 138). Researchers develop their scientific topics and approaches based on their perspectives toward phenomena in the world. Accordingly, the researcher's worldview plays a foundational and guiding role in studies within the human and social sciences (Mesbah et al., 1995). In other words, the concept of development is among those concepts that reflect the ontological and epistemological perspective of each school of thought toward human beings. From the perspective of religious schools of thought, the conventional concept of development differs in certain respects from the concept presented in the Qur'an. Unless these differences are taken into consideration, it is not possible to draw upon the Qur'an and narrations regarded as one of the most comprehensive intellectual traditions worthy of consideration in the examination and study of human development in addressing this important and fundamental subject (Okhovat, 2014).

Several studies have been conducted on development and education based on Islamic teachings. The Qur'anic Development System was derived through a collection of methods for contemplating the Qur'an and was subsequently elaborated through the use

of concordant narrations and compiled into more than 34 volumes (Shirvan, 2021). In developmental psychology, development refers to any form of progress without necessarily implying whether its direction is divine or non-divine. In contrast, development in the Qur'an and narrations is not only consistently associated with a positive connotation but is also regarded as the ultimate goal of guidance (Okhovat, 2015b). Based on the foundations of the Qur'anic Development System, the individual and social life span can be divided into four periods, of which the present article examines the first. The first period encompasses the first seven years of life and the emergence of sensory, imaginative, and illusory experiences (Okhovat & Ghasemi, 2017).

From infancy, human beings are exposed to various forms of behavior and speech. Although many of the experiences encountered by a child do not appear, on the surface, to be verbal in nature, they nevertheless place the child, in a formative sense, in contact with a particular form of speech (Okhovat & Ghasemi, 2021). Accordingly, the development and cultivation of *Tayyib Speech* and its components constitute the most important developmental perspective that, from the standpoint of the Qur'anic Development System, should be considered during the first period (Okhovat & Ghasemi, 2017). Children's speech can follow multiple patterns. The Arabic nature of the Qur'an, which is intrinsically associated with the natural and innate character of this speech, enhances the effectiveness and influence of speech. Accordingly, based on

the literary structures of the Qur'an, methods for teaching words and speech to children can be derived (*Okhovat, 2017*).

Thus, within the foundations of the Qur'anic Development System, the definition of speech and the components constituting its structure are based on the Qur'an's rhetorical structure. This construct plays a fundamental role in children's growth and development and is therefore regarded as an indicator of development during the first period. Arabic speech undergoes several stages in its formation. These stages can be illustrated according to the developmental process as follows: speech begins with the speaker's intentions, proceeds in the form of induction, and is expressed through a particular tone. Induction refers to directing the audience toward a specific intention or set of intentions. Tone refers to the manner in which an intention or intentions are conveyed and may take an encouraging, stimulating, threatening, or other form. In its initial state, speech is constructed from nouns; subsequently, with the advancement of an individual's verbal capacity, speech in its more developed state is constructed from nouns, verbs, and particles. The content of speech is conveyed to the audience through these elements. Every utterance can acquire various modifiers through the use of particles. The fundamental structure of speech is manifested through nominal and verbal sentences, and the overall configuration of speech becomes evident according to the extent to which these sentences are employed. Every utterance can be expanded through coordination with another utterance, thereby creating the

possibility of segmentation within speech. Every utterance has a positive or negative direction, and its positive or negative character may be subject to specific conditions. Every utterance can reach full maturity and be accompanied by various forms of emphasis, different means of arousing attention, as well as the transfer of attention from one object to another; in this case, it achieves completeness in its inductive function (*Okhovat, 2017*).

Given the extensive and detailed role of each component of the structure of speech in the developmental process of children, the present study focuses solely on introducing the types of modifiers, their specific functions, and the manner in which they affect children. Ultimately, developmental indicators are presented for identifying children's development or developmental deficiencies in understanding this component.

One of the characteristics that God has bestowed upon created beings is the capacity for expression. God has granted created beings permission to manifest themselves and has made this manifestation a source of generating dispositions, exerting effects, and being affected by others (*Okhovat, 2015a*). For educational planning during the first developmental period, it is necessary to examine the three forms of human expression speech (nutq), utterance (qawl), and verbal expression (kalam) separately and then in relation to one another, while also being aware of the limitations and harms affecting each of them. A child's speech, utterance, and verbal expression constitute the primary factors in organizing the educational

principles and skills of the first developmental period and are among the child's tools and resources that should be shaped by placing *Tayyibat* (that which is good and wholesome) at the center (*Okhovat & Fayyaz, 2016*). During this period, because the child lacks a developed reservoir of cognitive experience, he or she pays particular attention to the behaviors and speech of parents and other people in the surrounding environment and uses them as models (*Okhovat & Ghasemi, 2017*). One of these sources of modeling concerns children's exposure to their parents' speech. This general and environmental speech, which derives from the reactions of those around the child (speech/nutq), their beliefs and convictions (utterance/qawl), and their conversations with the child (verbal expression/kalam), may be true, false, or a mixture of both. In all cases, however, it is dependent on and influenced by the child's interaction with others and with the surrounding environment (*Okhovat & Ghasemi, 2021*).

Modifiers (Quyud) emerge through the relational meanings conveyed by particles in speech, and without particles, the use of modifiers in this form would not be possible. The relational meanings conveyed by particles gradually emerge in the form of modifiers and thereby reach their full development. These relational concepts specify the relationships among objects, persons, phenomena, and events. Concepts associated with particles are innate concepts that become manifest to human beings through their attention to their origin. These modifiers include causality modifiers,

possession modifiers, situational modifiers, and distinction modifiers. The concept of causality originates from the principle and essence of truth. The concept of dependence and possession arises from the observation of objects. The concept of situation emerges through observation within different contexts, while the concept of distinction results from perceiving the diversity of objects (*Okhovat, 2017*).

Accordingly, the formation of cognitive structure in human beings occurs through the existence of modifiers that define and distinguish the events being recognized as phenomena situated within time and space. Through the determination and differentiation produced by modifiers, the possibility of cognition becomes accessible to human beings. If an understanding of these modifiers did not exist within the scope of human cognitive capacity, no knowledge could be acquired, because human beings would be unable to elaborate and differentiate information or determine the specific and distinctive characteristics of something (*Okhovat, 2021*). The following section explains the different types of modifiers and their relationships within the developmental structure of the child:

Causality Modifier (the use of the words "with" and "to"; understanding one's own effectiveness in matters): From the very beginning of life, human beings become, in a formative sense, aware that God has established a cause for everything. Gradually, through observing events, they are guided toward discovering the system of causes and understanding their mediating role in the

occurrence of events. The child lacks self-awareness and, therefore, does not regard himself or herself as the cause of anything, instead attributing causality to other objects. When the child becomes capable of attributing causality to himself or herself, a certain level of developmental maturity has been attained. At this point, the child acquires full speech ability, and this full development of verbal expression serves as an indicator of the child's intellectual development.

Possession Modifier (the use of the words “for” and “what”; understanding and expressing dependence and ownership for oneself): Another fundamental relational concept conveyed by particles is the possession modifier, which human beings recognize from the very beginning of life. This concept underlies the child's sense of attachment to and dependence on the family and parents. Without such an understanding, it would make little difference to the child with whom he or she is or who takes care of the child. Following the development of an understanding of dependence, the child can progress to understanding the definitions of objects, phenomena, and events. Through this understanding, the child becomes capable of accurately recognizing objects and events.

Situational Modifier (the use of the words “in,” “where,” and “when”; understanding and expressing conditional wants): In worldly life, situation refers to the spatial and temporal conditions and the limitations that arise for matters of life as a result of these two dimensions. From the outset, the child, in some manner, becomes attentive to being situated in a particular place and time and to

having certain conditions. Through this understanding, the child experiences a sense of security or insecurity in particular places or at particular times, tolerates certain conditions, while finding other conditions intolerable.

Distinction Modifier (the use of the words “from” and “why”; understanding the capacity of contexts and times, and understanding differentiation and separation): The understanding of distinction, following attention to the gender and nature of objects and persons, emerges in human beings from the very beginning of life. Every child distinguishes his or her mother from other people and gradually begins to differentiate between animate and inanimate objects, through which knowledge begins to develop. Accordingly, the greater the individual's understanding of relationships and connections, the greater the possibility of understanding distinctions.

Thus, the more familiar a child becomes with different modifiers, the greater his or her capacity for knowledge and comprehension becomes, and the more developed the child's analysis of events will be. Conversely, deprivation of an understanding of modifiers reduces the child's capacity to analyze events. Naturally, this developmental trajectory may be directed toward a positive outcome or may be disrupted by inappropriate upbringing. If some of these modifiers fail to develop in the child, or if the child is exposed to their inappropriate use, his or her freedoms may be restricted, causing the child to manifest an undesirable form of being constrained by modifiers. Alternatively, some modifiers may

develop while others fail to emerge, resulting in an imbalance in the child's use of modifiers. Consequently, when the child fails to benefit appropriately from modifiers, his or her overall developmental structure moves away from an intellectually cultivated state, and the child may come to resemble an individual who has been humiliated and psychologically diminished. Children learn the appropriate and inappropriate use of modifiers which may result in greater or lesser understanding and in a more difficult or easier life from their parents. When parents inappropriately use modifiers for themselves or for the child, the child also attempts to behave in the same manner (*Okhovat, 2017*).

In recent years, studies on human development from an Islamic perspective have become more in-depth and extensive. The foundational and multidisciplinary study by *Alamolhoda (2019)* on Islamic theories of development, the study by *Azerbaijani and Shojaei (2014)* on developmental psychology from the perspective of *Nahj al-Balagha*, the study by *Kaviani (2021)* on human development from the Qur'anic perspective, and the study by *Ghaseminaei et al. (2022)* on the development of a developmental counseling model based on the views of Islamic thinkers all underscore the importance of examining human development from religious and Islamic perspectives throughout the life course. Alongside these studies, the research conducted by *Shirvan (2021)*, who developed and validated a child development assessment scale; *Abdollahzadeh (2020)*, who developed and examined the effectiveness of a parent

education program; and *Dehghan-Nayeri (2021)*, who developed an educational package for affective education based on speech, likewise adopted the Qur'anic Development System as the theoretical foundation of their studies. Despite differences in their perspectives and in the specific issues addressed compared with the present study, these investigations have produced findings that are broadly consistent with the field of child development.

A review of international studies likewise revealed that the majority of the identified research has focused either on individual and environmental factors affecting child development (*Maitre et al., 2021; Tomlinson et al., 2021*) or on cognitive domains and the processes involved in language acquisition during childhood (*Pu et al., 2025; Rose et al., 2009, 2015*). This, in turn, highlights the novelty of the present study, particularly in terms of its specific focus on speech and its role in shaping and directing the developmental structure of human beings. Therefore, the present study aims to reinterpret child development based on the role of modifiers within the structure of speech, drawing on the Qur'anic Development System. By adopting a novel and innovative perspective on this domain and examining the role of modifiers in the developmental structure of human beings, the study seeks to provide a foundation for preventive planning aimed at reducing the occurrence of developmental deficiencies in children, drawing upon the holistic, development-oriented understanding of the human being articulated in religious sources.

Research Method

The present study is classified as basic research and falls within the category of qualitative research. One of the primary objectives of qualitative research is to achieve a meaningful understanding of a phenomenon, with emphasis placed on descriptive richness and interpretive validity (Silverman, 2024). Basic research, on the other hand, contributes to a deeper theoretical understanding of such phenomena (Snell-Rood, 2025). In pursuit of these objectives, the present study was conducted in three stages and four steps, which are described below.

Since one of the most common research approaches in the humanities, social sciences, and religious studies, particularly for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting theoretical data and scientific documentation, is the examination of written sources in order to develop a deeper understanding of the topic under investigation (Cherry, 2022), the first stage of the present study consisted of: (1) an in-depth examination of the theoretical foundations of the research (the books comprising the Qur'anic Development System), and (2) the description, analysis, and inference of the contents to initially extract indicators and items of child development and developmental deficiency.

In the first step, the books examined and reviewed included: *Semantics of Development* (Okhovat, 2014); *Contemplation in Existence: Contemplation in Speech* (Okhovat, 2015a); *Process ology of Development* (Okhovat, 2015b); *Let Us Speak*

Tayyib Words to Our Children (Okhovat, 2017); *Stages of the Development of Social Thought The Emergence of Guardianship and Discipline* (Okhovat, 2018); *Need in the Human Structure Based on the Gharra Sermon* (Okhovat, 2021); *Invitation to Goodness Based on the Tayyib Speech Model* (Okhovat, 2022); *Requirements for the Education of a Tayyib Child* (Okhovat & Adib, 2019); *Semantics of Tayyib and Khabith* (Okhovat & Chitchian, 2014); *Principles and Skills for Educating Children Aged 2–7 Years with an Orientation toward Choosing Tayyib* (Okhovat & Fayyaz, 2016); *Process ology of Tayyib* (Okhovat & Ghasemi, 2014); *The Document of Education and Purification* (Okhovat & Ghasemi, 2017); and *Analysis of the Position of Speech in the Human Structure* (Okhovat & Ghasemi, 2021).

In the second step, a combination of three approaches description, analysis, and inference was employed to initially extract indicators and items from the aforementioned contents. Within this framework, consistent with the theoretical and methodological foundations of such research (Aytun et al., 2024), the collected data were initially presented descriptively so that the observed realities could be articulated through the language of experience. Subsequently, through conceptual analysis and contextualization, the meaningful dimensions of the phenomenon were examined, and, at the inference stage, theoretical interpretations and structural explanations were derived from the data. This process did not proceed through coding techniques or theme extraction; rather, it was based on interpretive approaches and

conceptual reflection (Gray, 2021; Pilcher & Cortazzi, 2024).

Accordingly, the unit of analysis in interpreting the relevant concepts consisted of passages from the aforementioned books that were in some way related to the components of the structure of speech based on the Qur’anic Development System. Through implementation of this stage, the researchers extracted indicators and items pertaining to child development and developmental deficiency based on the structure of speech modifiers within the Qur’anic Development System.

In the second stage, given the need for expert judgment in the field of child developmental studies and the insufficiency of available qualitative and quantitative data in this area, the expert panel method was employed as a complementary and primary research approach. An expert panel is a recognized method in qualitative and theoretical research that is used for conceptual validation, expert consensus, and

multidimensional analysis of complex issues (Huang et al., 2024). The expert panel in the present study consisted of seven psychologists and counselors who were university faculty members and three specialists in Qur’anic sciences with expertise in the foundations of the Qur’anic Development System.

During these interactive sessions, the extracted items were examined and critically evaluated by the panel members, and their various dimensions were discussed across the sessions until the necessary level of consensus was reached. Finally, following completion of the two aforementioned initial stages and taking into account the findings and results obtained, diagrams and a model of the components of child development and developmental deficiency, centered on the position of modifiers within the structure of children’s speech, were developed. The sequence of these stages is presented in Figure 1.

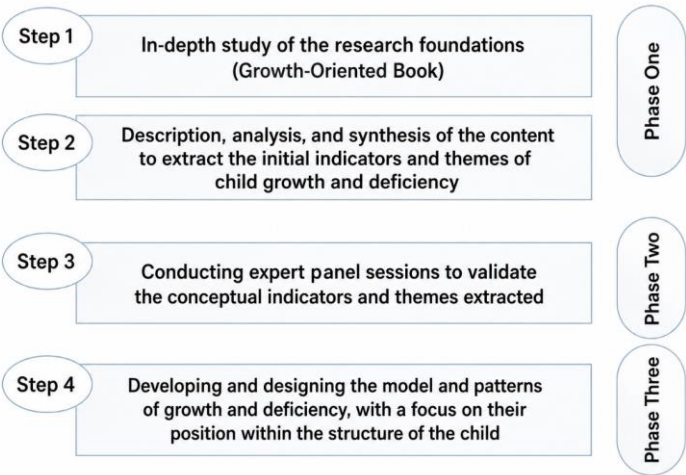


Figure 1. Stages of the Research Proces

Research Findings

In order to elucidate the findings of the present study, a summary of the results of the in-depth study, analysis, and inference of the books comprising the Qur'anic Development System in the first stage, which also provided the conceptual basis for the findings of the other two stages, is presented below:

According to the Qur'anic Development System, human beings undergo six developmental periods, during each of which certain capacities become activated, and failure to activate these capacities may constitute a serious obstacle to the developmental process. During the first developmental period, because children lack a reservoir of cognitive experience, they pay particular attention to the behaviors and speech of their parents and other people around them and model themselves on them (Okhovat & Ghasemi, 2017). The child's senses, particularly his or her observations and auditory experiences, play a fundamental role in development, given that thinking and reasoning are not yet fully active. Thus, from infancy, human beings are exposed to various forms of behavior and speech. Although many of the things a person encounters do not appear, on the surface, to be verbal in nature, they nevertheless, in a formative sense, place the child in contact with a form of speech (Okhovat & Ghasemi, 2021). From this perspective, the development and cultivation of *Tayyib Speech* and its components constitute the most important perspective that should be taken into consideration during the first developmental period from the standpoint of the Qur'anic Development

System (Okhovat & Ghasemi, 2017). The definition of *kalam* and the components constituting its structure within the foundations of the Qur'anic Development System are based on the rhetorical structure of the Qur'an. This construct plays a fundamental role in the growth and development of the child and is therefore regarded as a developmental indicator during the first period. Accordingly, developmental deficiencies in children can be investigated, examined, and identified by examining the manner in which the components of this structure develop in the child and the psychological effect of each component on his or her psychological structure.

The domains that need to be considered during the first developmental period are *nutq*, *kalam*, and the senses. Accordingly, the following processes need to be realized during this period: the senses should be strengthened in such a way that the individual can benefit from other forms of God-given perception through sensory perception; *kalam* should be taught in a manner that enables it to exert an appropriate influence on the individual's inner states and give rise to a part of *nutq*; and *nutq* should not exceed its innate boundaries but should manifest itself within the prescribed limits (Okhovat, 2018). Accordingly, the child's *nutq*, *kalam*, and *qawl* constitute the primary factors in organizing the educational principles and skills of the first developmental period and are among the child's tools and resources that should be formed with *Tayyibat* as their central orientation (Okhovat & Fayyaz, 2016). A brief introduction to each of these

three indicators of the child's verbal development is provided below:

Nutq: One of the most important characteristics of human beings is the capacity they possess to reveal their inner states. Through this capacity, an individual's needs and beliefs are expressed, whether intentionally or unintentionally, and, in this process, the individual becomes knowable (Okhovat & Ghasemi, 2021). At the beginning of life, *nutq* is not conscious; with the passage of time and the development of knowledge, however, it gradually becomes conscious. The greater the individual's awareness of the surrounding environment, the more extensively his or her *nutq* develops (Okhovat, 2014).

Qawl: *Qawl* refers to any intention or will that is expressed and is also based on a belief. Among the three capacities mentioned above, *qawl* serves an intermediary function, such that, on the one hand, it can reveal *nutq* and, on the other hand, can be transformed into *kalam* (Okhovat, 2015a).

Kalam: *Kalam* is regarded as a means of *nutq*, through which an intention can be

conveyed and, through the composition of words, a message can be communicated to an addressee (Okhovat, 2014). *Kalam* becomes established in the human being in the form of a proposition and, in fact, can be recorded and preserved through the removal of the speaker and the addressee. In this case, however, it is no longer referred to as *kalam* and can instead be termed *qawl*. *Qawl* consists of those messages that have been recorded within the individual and manifest themselves through the expression of beliefs; they exert an influence on the individual and may reveal themselves at times in the form of behavior, at times in the form of traits, and even in the form of speech and verbal expression (Okhovat & Ghasemi, 2021).

Figure 2 represents the Qur'anic equivalents of the terms discussed in relation to these subjects (hearing and sight, knowledge, remembrance, and action) and demonstrates how parents' speech affects children's senses, perceptions, and emotions and shapes their *nutq*, *qawl*, and *kalam*. These effects begin with the formation of *Tayyib Speech* in the child and culminate in *Tayyib outcomes* or righteous action in the child.

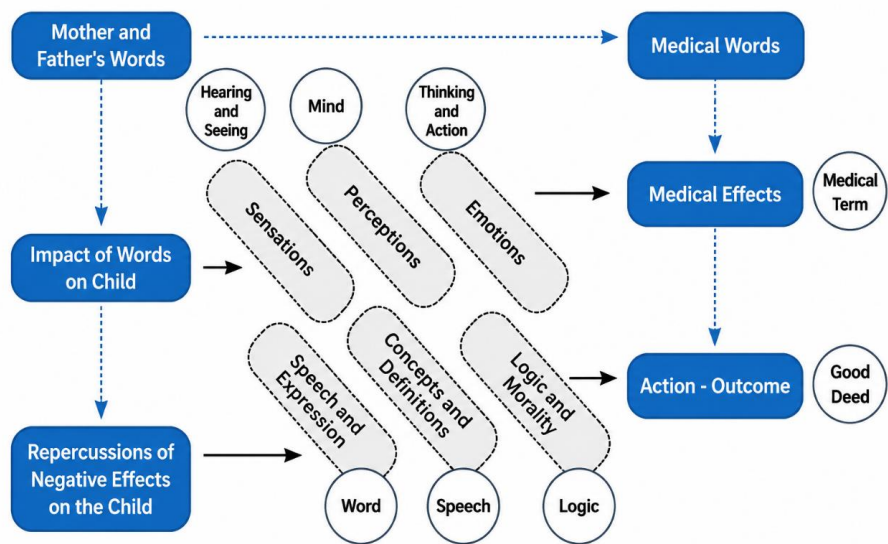


Figure 2. The Process of the Formation of Speech, Utterance, and Verbal Expression in Children (Okhovat, 2017, p. 27)

The diagram above can be explained as follows: In general, propositions are formed and manifested in human beings in the following ways:

First state: Propositions that are consciously or unconsciously registered within the individual and shape their beliefs in various ways (speech).

Second state: Propositions that become the focus of the individual’s attention during various events and encounters and that the individual adopts as the basis for their behavior and reactions (utterance).

Third state: Propositions selected from the foregoing propositions over which the individual has complete awareness and mastery, consciously believes in them on the basis of conviction, and communicates them to others (verbal expression).

In children, the first state develops initially, followed by the second and then the third. Gradually, the first state should come under the control and dominance of the second and third states. Accordingly, and based on the foregoing discussion, the most important thing that children learn during the first seven years of life is verbal expression. It also becomes evident that verbal expression serves as a factor in the flourishing of thought in children; therefore, there is a relationship between children’s verbal expression and their thinking (Okhovat & Adib, 2019).

In light of the foregoing discussion, the ultimate goal of development during the first seven years of life is to guide *nutq* and teach *kalam* in a manner that provides the foundation for more optimal development in subsequent developmental stages. As Islamic philosophers, including Avicenna, have explained in their accounts of the rational soul (*nafs al-nāṭiqah*) in human beings, the rational soul is dependent on the body for

some of its functions and properties, performing them through its interaction with the body; these include human actions and affective states. In other functions and activities, however, it does not require the participation of the body, as these arise from its immaterial essence; among these is the apprehension of meanings (*Ibn Sina, 1954*). In other words, describing the human being as a rational or *nāṭiq* being refers to the capacity to apprehend universals rather than necessarily to the outward act of speaking. Therefore, during this developmental period, the child needs the activation of *nutq* in a way that enables detailed thinking and the ability to perceive things distinctly, as well as the development of *kalam* in a manner that enables the expression of inner states and provides a foundation for the formation of beautiful and monotheistic beliefs (*Okhovat & Fayyaz, 2016*). Accordingly, during the first developmental stage, *kalam*, which constitutes the central axis of human interaction with others and serves as a precondition for entering subsequent developmental stages, is cultivated in the individual in a constructive and desirable manner (*Okhovat & Ghasemi, 2017*).

Another issue addressed in the present study, in addition to the concept of the developmental process during early childhood, is the process through which developmental deficiencies may emerge. In this study, *developmental deficiencies* do not refer to psychological disorders; rather, they denote a form of insufficiency, deficiency, or shortcoming in the developmental trajectory, as defined from the Qur'anic perspective and

within the specific framework and conceptualization derived from the theoretical foundations of the Qur'anic Developmental Model. These deficiencies emerge interactively through the parent–child relationship and are rooted in parenting practices and the family environment. Deviation or incomplete understanding of any component of *kalam* may likewise contribute to developmental deficiencies in the child. From both scientific and practical perspectives, the objective identification and delineation of developmental-deficiency components based on the Qur'anic Developmental Model are therefore of considerable importance. Scientifically, developing a model of these deficiencies at a detailed and observable level makes it possible to explicate the domains of developmental vulnerability and deficiency associated with each component of *kalam*, in accordance with its specific function. Practically, identifying and detecting these areas of vulnerability can substantially help prevent developmental deficiencies from becoming more extensive in subsequent stages of development. Addressing and correcting these deficiencies at an early stage may, to a considerable extent, interrupt this maladaptive developmental chain and prevent its continuation into later stages.

In accordance with the foregoing explanations, the trajectory of guidance or misguidance in understanding each component of the structure of *kalam* and, more specifically in the present context, the structure of its adverbial constraints can be examined at three stages. At the first stage, the

effects of this trajectory, depending on whether it is directed toward a correct or incorrect orientation, can be observed in the child’s *nutq*. This *nutq*, or the expression of the child’s inner states, initially emerges unconsciously. Gradually, as the child accumulates more experiences and encounters various situations throughout life, *qawl* also develops alongside *nutq* at the second stage. Subsequently, the child’s *nutq* becomes an expression of *qawl* and gradually moves beyond an unconscious state, manifesting itself in some instances voluntarily and intentionally. The outcome of this trajectory emerges as *kalam* at the third stage; *kalam* thus serves, in a sense, as a manifestation of the child’s *nutq* and is formed on the basis of *qawl*. Each component of the structure of *kalam*, according to its specific function, follows these three stages. Accordingly, to identify the degree of development or developmental deficiency in

children at these ages, and within the framework of the formation of the four adverbial constraints causality, possession, situation, and distinction a set of diagnostic indicators has been developed in Tables 4–1, with each indicator centered on one of the developmental domains relevant to this age period: *nutq*, *qawl*, and *kalam*.

Developmental Trajectory of the Causality Constraint

Stage 1: The child’s natural and normative responses to the use of means and causes.

Stage 2: The unconscious and habitual use of means and causes, resulting from the formation of beliefs concerning means that can satisfy or relieve needs.

Stage 3: The voluntary and conscious use of means and causes to an adequate extent and in proportion to the child’s needs.

Table 1. Indicators of Development and Developmental Deficiency in the Causality Constraint Component

Stages	Indicator Type	Development	Developmental Deficit
First	Speech Indicator	Ability to identify and follow up on the child’s concerns; showing a positive response to discovering the cause of distress; becoming calm after needs are met; turning to relevant people/objects to fulfill needs	Showing vague and untraceable restlessness; inappropriate dependence on objects/people accompanied by restlessness; persistent restlessness after the cause has been resolved; turning to irrelevant sources to fulfill needs
Second	Speech Indicator	Tolerating delays in having needs met without severe restlessness; reduced agitation through conversation or shifting the focus of attention; cheerful and contented mood; curiosity about the causes of simple events; trying alternative ways to fulfill needs; ease of sleeping and feeding; remaining calm in new environments	Being soothed through inappropriate means; expressing impatience and aggression when needs are being met; resisting calming after needs have been fulfilled; harming people/objects when frustrated; damaging objects when they fail to function; displaying an irritable and demanding mood; disturbed sleep and feeding; showing distress and restlessness in new environments
Second	Verbal Indicator	Correct use of names to express and fulfill needs; turning to parents as a source of need	Incorrect use of names to express or fulfill needs; confusion in using objects to meet

		fulfillment; appropriate use of available objects; recognizing ways of fulfilling basic needs; ability to express the causes of distress	needs; destructive use of objects; inability to identify and articulate needs
Third	Speech Indicator	Proper use of and care for personal belongings; demonstrating rational and polite behavior; becoming convinced and accepting deprivation	Neglecting the care of personal belongings; irrational and impolite behavior; excessive dependence on imaginary play; strong protest against deprivation
Third	Verbal Indicator	Employing abilities to achieve desired goals; recognizing the causes of surrounding events; awareness of the functions of familiar objects; understanding the function of unfamiliar objects upon first encounter; creativity in suggesting new uses for objects; appreciation of the resources and opportunities received; avoiding repetition of recognized mistakes; beginning activities by saying <i>Bismillah</i> ; creativity in suggesting new uses for objects	Passivity in pursuing desired goals; inability to discover cause-and-effect relationships; fantasizing about the causes of events; misuse of available resources; lack of appreciation; denying the role of others' assistance in one's successes
Third	Linguistic Indicator	Suggesting uses for objects to others; discussing the causes of experienced phenomena; accepting responsibility for mistakes and apologizing; describing personal achievements and efforts; seeking God's help in activities; expressing gratitude in response to others' kindness	Repeatedly making the same mistakes; attributing events to random factors (luck); verbal fantasizing; projection and blaming others; making false claims about achievements; indifference to others' help; excessive insistence on having inappropriate demands fulfilled

In continuation of the points presented in the above table, and in order to clarify the components that indicate developmental deficiencies in children, each constraint has been presented separately in two diagrams: one depicting development and the other developmental deficiency. Each diagram consists of three oblique axes representing *nutq*, *qawl*, and *kalam*. Across the three stages, the components associated with development or developmental deficiency within each of these three domains are illustrated. At the first stage, only *nutq* is represented in the diagram, through which the child manifests responses based on what is received from the surrounding environment through the senses. At the second stage, in addition to these manifestations, cognitive perceptions gradually develop in the child,

which are identified as *qawl* in each diagram. Finally, by the end of the first developmental period, the child's *kalam* has become fully developed, serving as a means through which *nutq* and *qawl* are expressed and thereby encompassing the third stage.

In this regard, Figure 3 illustrates the developmental trajectory of the components of the causality constraint across the three stages. It demonstrates how, at each of these three stages, a developmental process unfolds in the child through an understanding of the constraint-based structure of *kalam*. The same process is presented inversely in Figure 4, with the absence of developmental attainment serving as the organizing principle for illustrating how developmental deficiencies emerge and develop.

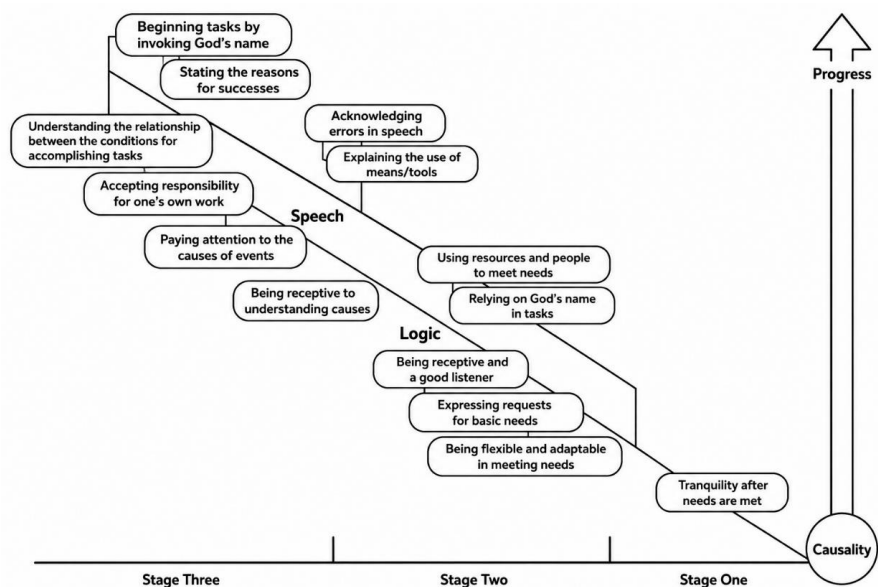


Figure 3. Components of Development in the Causality Constraint

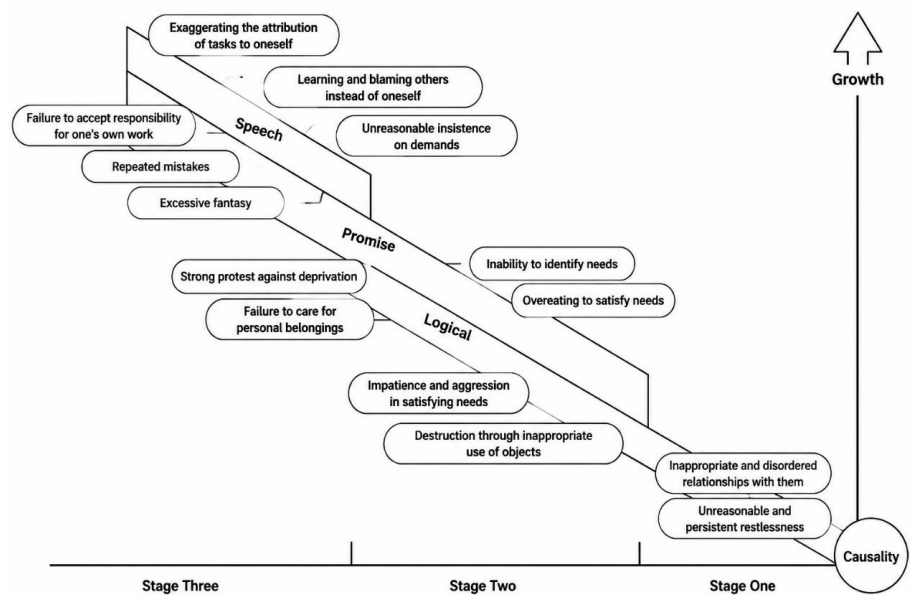


Figure 4. Components of Developmental Deficiency in the Causality Constraint

The second modifier is the possessive modifier, and all the stages described for the causative modifier namely, the identification of developmental deficiency through statements across the three stages from articulation (or intellective speech) to verbal

expression are likewise represented here as developmental indicators.

Developmental Progression of the Possessive Modifier

Stage One: The child’s natural and normative responses to understanding possession and ownership.

Stage Two: The development of a sense of ownership toward whatever is desirable to the child.

Stage Three: The emergence and development of the child’s capacity for relinquishment

Table 2. Growth and Developmental Deficiency Indicators of the Possessive Modifier Component

Stage	Indicator Type	Development	Developmental Deficit
First	Speech Indicator	Expressing attachment to and belongingness to parents (particularly the mother); expressing distress and restlessness when separated from parents; reacting when personal belongings are taken away and expressing the need for a replacement	Expressing anxious and excessive attachment to the mother; showing intense reactions (clinging/restlessness) following separation from the mother; reduced sense of attachment to the mother; showing a neutral reaction to the mother’s presence and preferring an alternative caregiver
Second	Speech Indicator	Expressing a sense of belonging to family members; expressing sensitivity toward preserving personal belongings; reacting when others take possession of one’s belongings (with the possibility of logical reassurance); showing sensitivity to others using family belongings	Expressing indifference or weak attachment to family members; expressing a strong preference for individuals outside the family; asserting absolute ownership over preferred objects; showing strong resistance and tantrums when belongings are taken away; persistently insisting on having one’s wishes fulfilled
Second	Verbal Indicator	Missing family members during their absence and perceiving their absence as difficult; distinguishing family members’ personal belongings from other objects; distinguishing personal belongings from other objects; recognizing and reviewing one’s own possessions; experiencing satisfaction when recalling one’s possessions (objects and people); recognizing objects used by family members	Showing indifference to separation from family; disregarding others’ ownership (taking others’ belongings without permission); experiencing difficulty in relinquishing one’s desires; demonstrating an excessive sense of ownership over objects (more than peers)
Third	Speech Indicator	Expressing acceptance of limitations with parental guidance; demonstrating adaptation when desires are not fulfilled; expressing willingness to temporarily share belongings with others; showing a mild reaction when seeing one’s belongings in another person’s possession	Showing aggression when desires are not fulfilled; showing strong resistance to sharing personal belongings; taking back belongings through force
Third	Verbal Indicator	Recognizing others’ ownership of belongings; understanding others’ wishes and accommodating them; demonstrating the ability to forgive and show forbearance on some occasions; being satisfied with what one possesses and paying less attention to what one lacks; demonstrating age-appropriate relative	Inability to empathize (inability to put oneself in another person’s position); excessive demands and inability to be content with one’s rightful share; dissatisfaction with what one possesses and focusing on what one lacks; abnormal attachment to particular objects/individuals; excessive dependence on

		independence; experiencing a sense of belonging and trust in God (optimism); offering personal belongings to others	others to perform tasks; experiencing distrust and negative feelings toward God
Third	Linguistic Indicator	Encouraging others to participate and share; expressing satisfaction with one’s possessions; recognizing and articulating one’s abilities and limitations; attributing successes to personal abilities and expressing satisfaction	Frequent use of the phrase “for me” in speech; encouraging others not to share; boasting about possessions in speech; expressing helplessness and inability when faced with failures or frustrations

In Figure 5, the developmental progression of the components of the possessive modifier across the three stages is illustrated, demonstrating how a developmental trajectory unfolds in the child through an understanding of the modifier structure of

speech at each of these three stages. The same progression is presented inversely in Figure 6, focusing on the absence of developmental emergence as a process underlying the formation of developmental deficiencies.

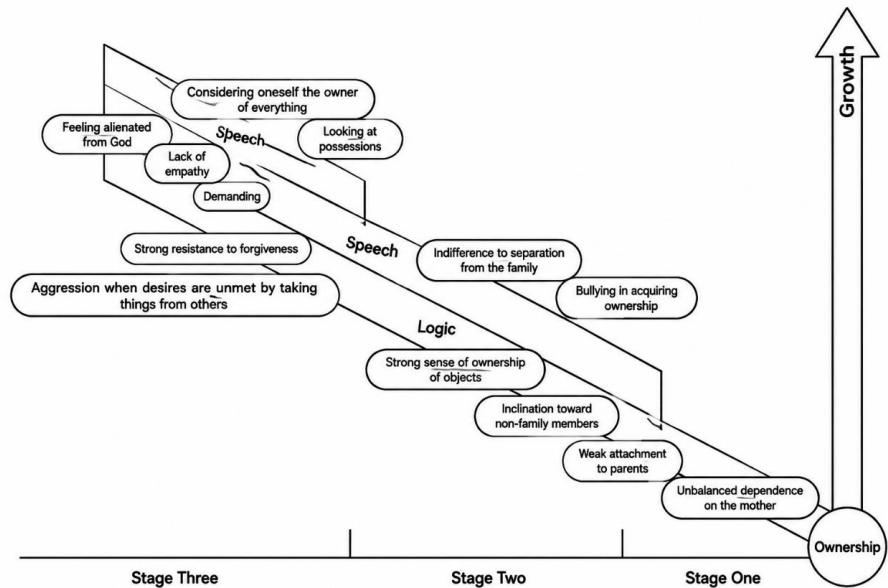


Figure 5. Growth Components of the Possessive Modifier

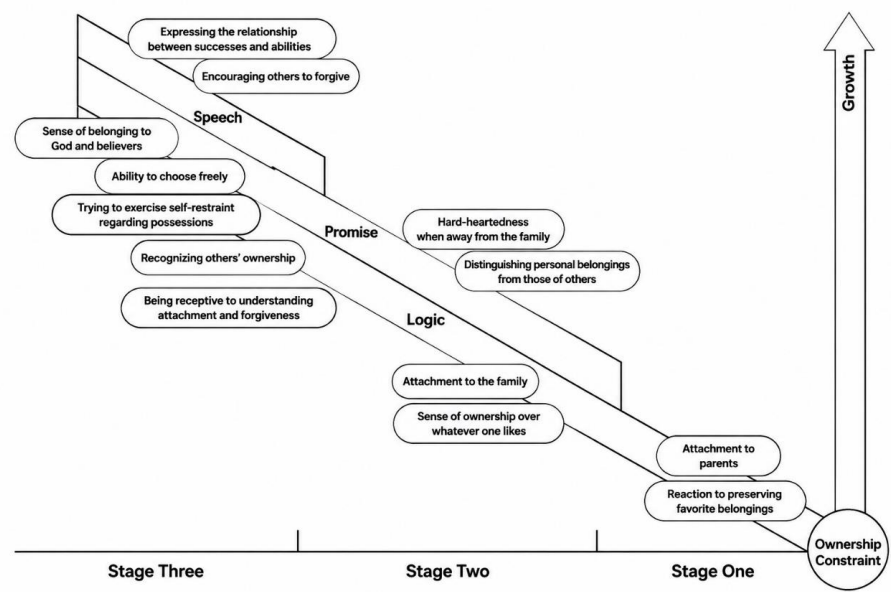


Figure 6. Components of Developmental Deficits in the Ownership Modifier

The third modifier is the situational modifier, and all the stages described for the other modifiers, including the presentation of statements for identifying development or the absence of development across the three stages from speech (Nutq) to utterance (Qawl) to speech/discourse (Kalam), are likewise reflected here as developmental indicators.

- Stages of the Developmental Progression of the Situational Modifier Component
- Stage 1: Encountering spatial and temporal situations
- Stage 2: Developing an initial understanding of spatial and temporal situations
- Stage 3: Accepting spatial and temporal limitations and adapting to them

Table 3. Indicators of Development and Developmental Deficits in the Situational Constraint Component

Stage	Indicator Type	Development	Developmental Deficit
First	Preverbal Indicator	Manifestation of differentiated responses to changes in situations; being active and curious	Indifference to changes in situations; being passive, lethargic, and irritable under situational constraints
	Preverbal Indicator	Sustained activity and liveliness in new situations; expressing a desire to remain in sacred places; manageable differences between behaviors at home and outside the home	Expressing discomfort and passivity in new situations; expressing reluctance or distress in new/sacred places; displaying inappropriate and uncontrollable behaviors outside the home
Second	Verbal Indicator	Pleasant memories and a desire to visit sacred places; positive memories and interest in religious occasions; tolerating restrictions through dialogue and	Unpleasant memories of sacred places and reluctance to revisit them; lack of interest in or negative memories of religious occasions; pleasant memories of and a desire to visit

		appropriate strategies; adapting and seeking solutions under constraints	inappropriate places; impatience and inability to tolerate restrictions
	Preverbal Indicator	Demonstrating creativity in new and constrained situations; demonstrating compromise and flexibility when dissatisfied with restrictions; expressing discomfort in unhealthy places; exercising caution and consideration of situational conditions in behavior	Rigid adaptation to new situations and attempts to escape from them; inability to tolerate the rules of different environments; engaging in self-directed behaviors without permission; carelessness and engagement in risky behaviors
Third	Verbal Indicator	Attempting to understand situational behaviors; accepting the rules of places other than home; understanding the temporal appropriateness of activities	Strongly protesting situational restrictions; failing to understand appropriate situational behaviors; evading the rules of public places; pressuring parents to fulfill one's desires
	Verbal Indicator	Talking about temporal and spatial restrictions; making requests appropriate to different situations; asking for permission before engaging in activities; recounting positive memories of religious places and occasions; attempting to use polite and situation-appropriate language	Failing to mention temporal/spatial restrictions in conversations; making requests inappropriate to the situation; making excessive demands and engaging in bargaining; insisting more strongly on one's demands when faced with parental restrictions; using inappropriate and impolite language

In Figure 7, the developmental trajectory of the components of the situational constraint is depicted across each of the three stages, illustrating how a developmental progression occurs in the child through an understanding of the adverbial structure of speech at each of

these three stages. The same process is presented inversely in Figure 8, with a focus on the absence of development as the process through which developmental deficits are formed.

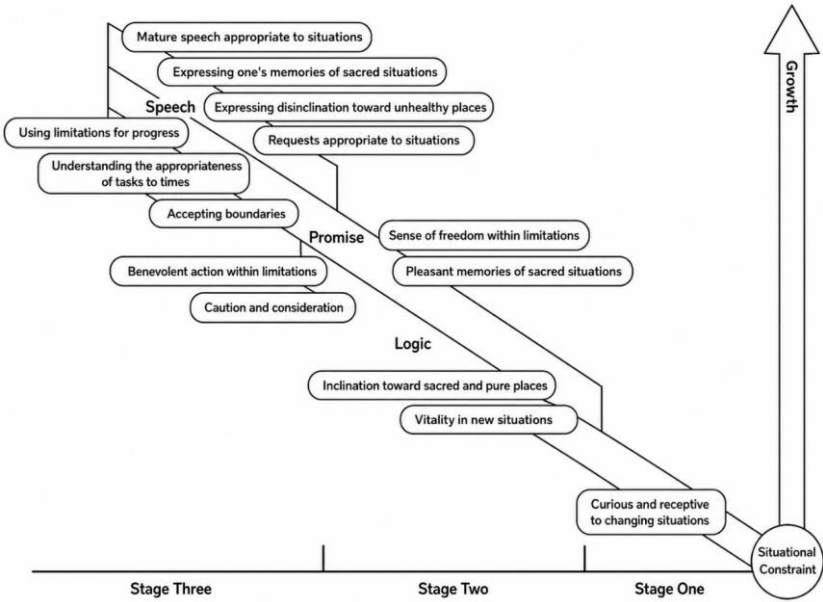


Figure 7. Developmental Components of the Situational Constraint

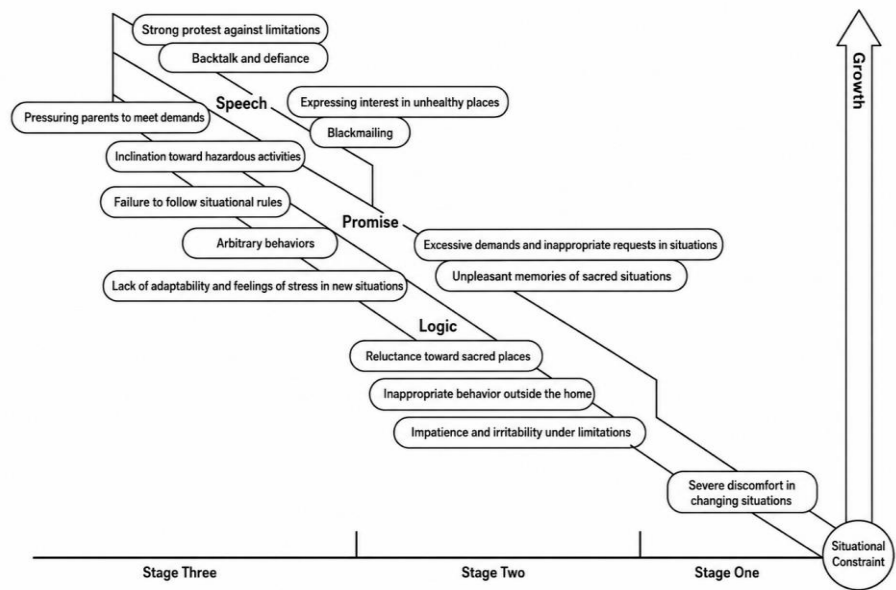


Figure 8. Developmental Deficit Components of the Situational Constraint

Stage 1: Encountering differences among people and objects.

Stage 2: Using people and objects based on an initial understanding of their differences and adapting oneself accordingly.

Stage 3: Purposefully using objects and interacting with people based on the differences that have been recognized and an understanding of the boundaries and specific functions of each.

Finally, the fourth constraint is the constraint of differentiation. All the stages described for the preceding constraints, including the formulation of propositions indicating the presence or absence of development across the three stages from pre-speech to speech, are likewise reflected here as developmental indicators.

Developmental Trajectory of the Differentiation Constraint

Table 4. Indicators of Development and Developmental Deficits in the Differentiation Constraint Component

Stage	Indicator Type	Development	Developmental Deficit
First	Preverbal Indicator	Displaying differentiated responses to familiar sounds; showing sensitivity to environmental changes; responding to new or altered tastes; displaying differentiated responses to familiar smells	Showing indifference to familiar sounds; limited responses to environmental changes; lack of sensitivity to changes in light; showing indifference to new/altered tastes; failure to differentiate familiar smells (e.g., the smell of the mother or new foods)
Second	Preverbal Indicator	Expressing satisfaction when using objects appropriately; expressing different emotions toward family members; displaying appropriate responses to people's moods; demonstrating adaptive behaviors in new	Showing confusion when using objects to meet needs; showing indifference toward family members; failing to attend to differences in people's moods; displaying passivity or inappropriate behaviors in new

		situations; differentiating between personal belongings and others' belongings; responding to and exploring new objects	situations; showing disregard for others' use of personal/family belongings; lacking curiosity about new objects or the environment
	Verbal Indicator	Using objects purposefully to meet needs; prioritizing parents as the primary source of meeting needs; turning to trusted alternative caregivers in the absence of parents; regulating behavior based on recognition of individual family members; understanding the hierarchy of respect; distinguishing familiar objects from unfamiliar ones; recognizing the specific characteristics of objects	Failing to recognize the appropriate use of objects for basic needs; distrust of and failure to turn to parents to meet needs; failing to understand the distinctive status of important individuals (e.g., parents); failure to differentiate strategies for achieving desired outcomes; inability to gain parental approval and unreasonable persistence; behavioral uniformity across different situations (lack of adaptation); impatience or recklessness in pursuing desires; intense reactions (aggression/self-injury) to frustration; unrestricted desire to engage in risky experiences or resistance to limitations; carelessness in handling dangerous objects
	Preverbal Indicator	Displaying differentiated behaviors when interacting with different people; demonstrating a variety of strategies for achieving desired outcomes; controlled curiosity while respecting limitations; exercising caution when using dangerous objects	Behavioral uniformity across different situations (lack of adaptation); impatience or recklessness in pursuing desires; intense reactions (aggression/self-injury) to frustration; unrestricted desire to engage in risky experiences or resistance to limitations; carelessness in using dangerous objects
Third	Verbal Indicator	Recognizing and selecting appropriate solutions; recognizing and prioritizing important versus less important matters; regulating behavior based on others' emotional states; demonstrating flexibility in methods of achieving desired outcomes; ability to plan for simple goals; ability to gradually modify habits; distinguishing between purity/impurity and cleanliness/dirtiness	Inability to select appropriate methods for achieving goals; weakness in prioritizing tasks; failure to adapt behavior to others' emotional states; inflexible and irrational habits; inability to distinguish between purity/impurity or cleanliness/dirtiness
	Verbal Indicator	Describing the benefits of objects or activities; identifying and describing differences among objects; recounting the steps of multi-step tasks; identifying the unique characteristics of individuals; understanding relative relationships among individuals; varying conversational tone according to the interlocutor; expressing requests politely and gently; asking for permission in potentially dangerous situations	Inability to describe the benefits of objects or events; difficulty describing differences among objects; errors in recounting the steps of tasks or events; inability to describe the unique characteristics of individuals; impolite speech and failure to understand social relationships; failing to ask for permission before engaging in dangerous activities; excessive demands and entitled behavior

In Figure 9, the developmental trajectory of the components of the differentiation constraint is depicted across each of the three

stages, illustrating how a developmental progression occurs in the child through an understanding of the adverbial structure of

speech at each of these three stages. The same process is presented inversely in Figure 10, with a focus on the absence of development

as the process through which developmental deficits are formed.

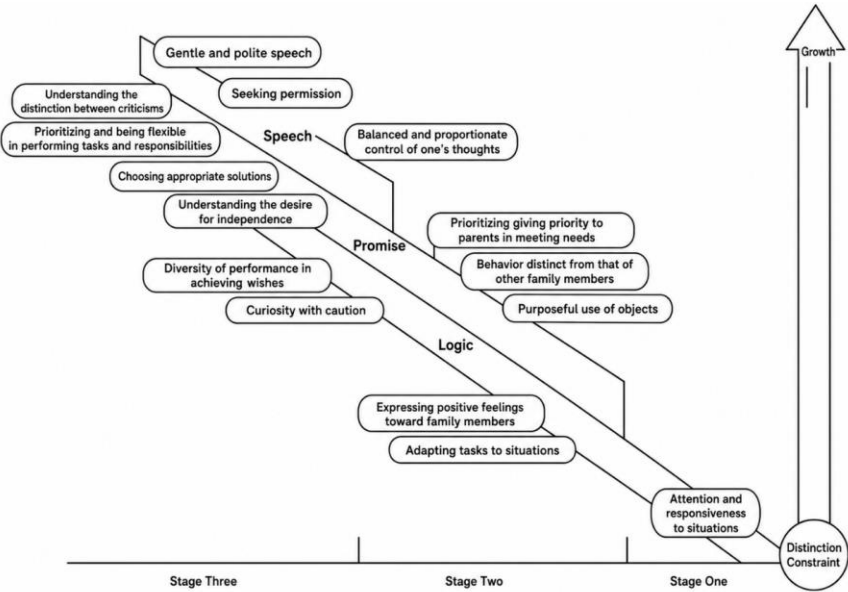


Figure 9. Developmental Components of the Differentiation Constraint

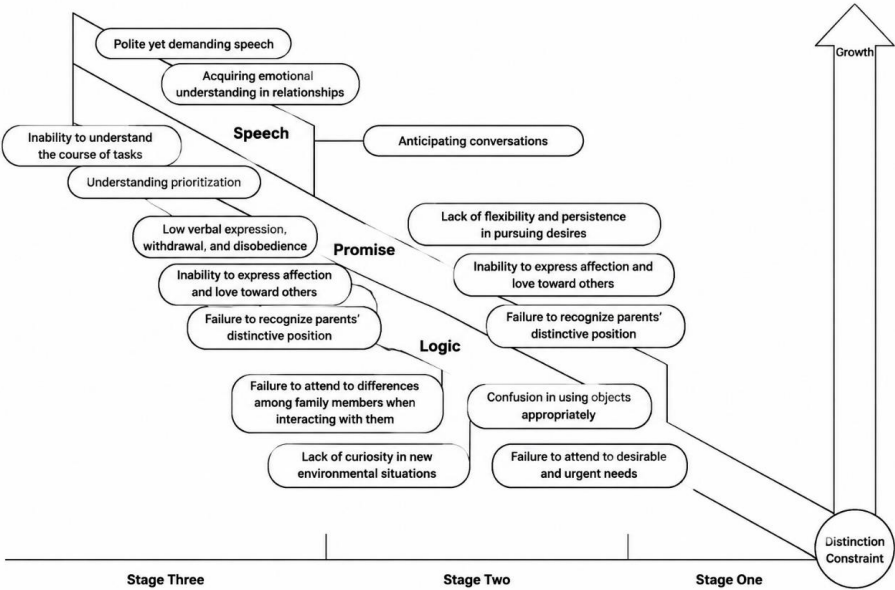


Figure 10. Developmental Deficit Components of the Differentiation Constraint

In summary, the trajectory of learning and understanding speech varies among children according to their individual capacities and abilities in receptive and expressive language, yet it follows an overall upward developmental pattern. As children progress from the initial emergence of speech toward the preschool period, their ability to produce and comprehend language increases, and the indicators of development and developmental deficits become more precise and observable, thereby providing greater opportunities for their assessment and measurement. In essence, the emergence of developmental gains or deficits and delays in the child's developmental process occurs gradually. If, due to being exposed to an unfavorable educational environment and parents' lack of attention to their manner of speech at home and in interactions with the child, a child follows a developmental trajectory in which any of the components of speech structure is incompletely understood, developmental deficits tend to expand with increasing age. These deficits may also interact with and compound other developmental deficits in the remaining components of the speech structure, resulting in greater complexity and, consequently, making their remediation and compensation more difficult.

Discussion and Conclusion

Child development within the Islamic worldview, with its holistic perspective on the various dimensions of human existence, has profound implications at both the individual and social levels (*Chaer et al., 2021*). In this approach, in which reason and revelation are cultivated in a balanced manner, the one-

sided perspectives found in some Western theories of cognitive development are avoided (*Kamali, 2002*). The spiritual dimension of development, which has been overlooked in many theories of developmental psychology, occupies a distinctive position within the Islamic framework and contributes to the formation of a strong and stable identity in children (*Mutahhari et al., 1986*).

The social implications of this perspective on child development can be observed in increased social capital and reduced social abnormalities (*Al-Marzouqi, 1991*), which, at a broader societal level, contribute to the formation of a cohesive and less vulnerable society. Collectively, these findings indicate that integrating developmental psychology with Islamic principles can have valuable implications, both theoretically and practically, for improving the quality of individual and social life.

In this regard, the present study, drawing on the Qur'anic concept of development, sought to identify indicators of child development and developmental deficits during the first period of human life from the perspective of the structure of constraints in speech and, accordingly, to revisit child development from this perspective. This is because the attainment of the various levels of human life is dependent on speech, as God has assigned speech a specific position and role across all dimensions of the human structure. It is through speech that human inner potential unfolds and gives rise to movement and development (*Okhovat & Ghasemi, 2021*). Supporting this view, *Kian*

(2015) states that the first developmental period constitutes a unique and unrepeatable stage for learning speech. Children readily acquire and reproduce what they hear. Just as the language itself is learned, the content of speech whether beautiful or base is also registered in the child and leaves lasting effects on the expression of their inner states.

Accordingly, it was necessary to determine, based on the principles of the Qur'anic developmental framework, what capacities and requirements children possess during the first developmental period and, ultimately, what developmental end state they should attain. As discussed above, the most appropriate and precise indicator for assessing child development is the child's speech, which is conceptualized in a distinctive manner in the present study. Based on the literary structure of the Qur'an, speech consists of various components, and examining and introducing the function of each component within the structure of speech made it possible to elucidate indicators of child development. Accordingly, the component of constraints within the structure of speech was examined and subjected to rational analysis from two perspectives to determine the types of deviations that may arise in a child's correct understanding as a result of being raised in an unhealthy environment and caregivers' and family members' failure to attend to and regulate their direct and indirect behaviors and speech within the home and other environments to which the child is exposed. Such deviations may subsequently lead to the emergence of multiple difficulties and developmental

deficits in the child's expressions, perceptions, emotions, and relationships.

The recognition of constraints, or, in other words, the recognition of boundaries, serves as a foundation for the child's acquisition of knowledge. Each of the four constraints causality, ownership, situation, and differentiation can, within its specific domain in the structure of speech, play an effective role in shaping children's behaviors and beliefs. As demonstrated in the tables presenting the developmental and developmental-deficit indicators for each constraint, the findings of the present study showed that deviation from the developmental trajectory of the causality constraint is associated with restlessness, impatience, and aggression in children, while also contributing to excessive demands and a failure to accept responsibility for mistakes. Deviation from the correct understanding of the ownership constraint initially manifests itself in the child's attachment to the mother and subsequently to other family members, eventually resulting in an excessive sense of ownership and an inability to let go or show forgiveness. Misunderstanding the situational constraint, which begins with the formation of unpleasant memories in the child, gradually manifests itself in excessive demands and inappropriate requests. A tendency toward dangerous activities and expressions of interest in inappropriate places are also manifestations of developmental deficits in this component. Deviation in the differentiation constraint initially leads to a failure to recognize the parents' distinctive

status and gradually becomes evident in the child's difficulty in prioritizing.

As stated in the introduction to the article, the present study occupies a distinctive position in terms of originality and innovation. To date, child development has not been examined from the perspective of speech, except in studies related to the Qur'anic developmental framework itself. At the same time, recent research in developmental psychology supports the findings of the present study by demonstrating that learning boundaries during the early years of life has profound effects on children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. In this regard, longitudinal studies have shown that children who grow up in environments with clear, age-appropriate boundaries demonstrate higher levels of self-regulation during their school years. These children are better able to manage their emotions and display more adaptive behaviors in social situations (*Lunkenheimer et al., 2023*). Conversely, research has emphasized that failure to learn boundaries during the preschool years can lead to significant behavioral problems later in life. Researchers have also found that children raised with unclear or inconsistent boundaries face greater challenges in regulating their emotions and are more likely to exhibit aggressive or withdrawn behaviors in social situations (*Morris et al., 2007*). The quality of the parent-child relationship also plays a key role in the effectiveness of boundaries. According to these studies, when limits are established within the context of a warm and responsive relationship, children

not only accept them more readily but also demonstrate greater success in internalizing moral and social values (*Kochanska & Aksan, 2004*).

Overall, these studies emphasize the critical importance of learning boundaries during the early years of life and maintain that age-appropriate limits, when accompanied by relational warmth, can promote the development of self-regulatory abilities, improve social functioning, and prevent behavioral problems in children. They further suggest that these effects extend beyond childhood and persist throughout the individual's life. By drawing attention to the importance of frameworks and the types of limitations imposed in response to children's behaviors, as well as their potential effects on children's functioning, these findings provide support for the results of the present study. They also reinforce the proposition that children's understanding of constraints can, in the future, provide a valuable foundation for expanding their knowledge, learning, and skills, while creating opportunities for knowledge acquisition across different situations.

From another perspective, the thematic focus of the items presented under the development and developmental-deficit categories for each of the constraints indicates that the findings of the present study underscore the unique and far-reaching role of parental speech, particularly that of the mother, followed by that of other family members, in shaping the child's developmental trajectory. As the child's first learning environment, the family plays an

indispensable role in shaping cognitive and emotional development. Within this context, parental speech, particularly maternal speech, serves as one of the most powerful educational tools. Recent research in developmental psychology has shown that verbal interactions within the family influence children's neurocognitive structures through complex mechanisms. Recent neuroimaging studies have also demonstrated that maternal speech specifically activates language and emotional networks in the child's brain. Maternal affective speech can increase activity in the prefrontal cortex by up to 40%, a region responsible for executive functions and self-regulation. Thus, these findings confirm that the quality of early verbal interactions has a direct effect on children's neural development (*Uchida-Ota et al., 2019*).

Finally, extensive research in social psychology and the sociology of childhood has shown that children's speech is not merely a means of communication but also a determining factor in the structure of their social relationships (*Hoff, 2015*). Longitudinal studies conducted with diverse groups of children have demonstrated that the manner in which speech develops and the quality of children's speech during the early years of life have lasting effects on their social status during childhood and even adulthood (*Menting et al., 2011*). Importantly, these effects are not limited to childhood. Follow-up studies have shown that children who possess stronger verbal skills during the preschool years also have more successful social relationships and broader friendship

networks during adolescence (*Khurana et al., 2024*).

Accordingly, the findings of the present study are broadly consistent with the evidence and theories in this field. Examining the function of each component of the speech structure separately, while also considering its specific effects on the child's developmental and educational trajectory, demonstrates the extent to which each component, in its respective position, can influence the child's mind and psychological development and shape behavioral patterns. Furthermore, given that the present study has identified detailed and precise indicators for the constraints of speech, it provides a basis for developing a scale to assess child development and developmental deficits during the first developmental period from the perspective of these components. Developing such a scale could objectively determine the extent and quality of developmental progress or deficits during childhood and, given the fundamental importance of human development and education during childhood, could provide valuable guidance for future educational and developmental planning for children.

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