



IMPROVING LANGUAGE SKILLS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

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ABSTRACT

Language skills are very important in early childhood development. This literature review aims to provide reinforcement to parents and teachers in order to stimulate language skills in children from an early age. It is necessary applied for children so that the opportunity to make the children's golden age of 0 to 4 can be realized on both aspects of development, especially in the language improvement. Language improvement in early childhood is not only oriented to the ability to speak alone but also a process that successively starts from listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This is important for children to be improved and optimized since kindergarten, subsequently when taking formal education in elementary, junior, senior high school, and college, children's language skills are in a good category. Meanwhile, these skills are also essential for a career in the future. Parents as the child's closest environment must stimulate and adjust children to speak properly so that language development can be optimal. In addition, teachers also have a very big role in stimulating children through storytelling, question and answer methods, dialogue methods, and many more methods that can be used in stimulating the language development of their students at school.

Keywords: *development, language, early childhood*

MENINGKATKAN KEMAMPUAN BERBAHASA PADA ANAK USIA DINI

ABSTRAK

Kemampuan berbahasa merupakan hal sangat penting dalam perkembangan anak usia dini. Kajian literatur ini bertujuan untuk memberikan penguatan kepada orang tua dan guru dalam rangka memberikan stimulasi keterampilan berbahasa pada anak sejak dini. Hal ini perlu dilakukan agar kesempatan untuk memanfaatkan masa *golden age* pada usia 0-6 tahun dapat terealisasi dengan baik terutama dalam aspek perkembangan berbahasa. Perkembangan bahasa pada anak usia dini tidak hanya berorientasi pada kemampuan berbicara saja. Akan tetapi, keterampilan perkembangan kemampuan berbahasa anak merupakan suatu proses yang secara berturut-turut dimulai dari mendengar, selanjutnya, berbicara, membaca dan menulis. Hal ini penting untuk ditingkatkan dan dioptimalkan sejak sekolah di Taman Kanak-kanak agar kelak saat menempuh pendidikan formal di SD, SMP, SMA, Perguruan Tinggi dengan baik. Selain itu juga, aspek kemampuan bahasa ini juga penting untuk berkarir di masa yang akan datang. Orang tua sebagai lingkungan terdekat anak harus merangsang dan membiasakan anak berbicara dengan baik agar perkembangan bahasanya dapat optimal. Selain itu, guru juga memiliki peran yang sangat besar dalam merangsang anak melalui bercerita, metode tanya jawab, metode dialog, dan masih banyak lagi metode yang dapat digunakan dalam merangsang perkembangan bahasa siswanya di sekolah.

Kata Kunci: *perkembangan, bahasa, anak usia dini*

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INTRODUCTION

Development is a change in a lifetime. This is indicated by the increase in the structure and function of the body which is more complex in the ability of rough motion, smooth motion, speech and language as well as socialization and independence. The characteristics of growth and development of children include causing changes, correlating with growth, having sequential stages and having a fixed pattern (Marliany, 2014).

The development of children's language skills is a process that successively starts from

listening, speaking, reading and writing. The development of the ability of children aged 4-6 years is the ability to listen. Children's listening skills must be developed because of their efforts to understand their environment. For them to learn to develop these abilities, they must receive information input and process it. According to Istiqomah (2004) listening and understanding information is a core step in gaining knowledge.

To learn languages, Pidarta (2013) state that children need opportunities to talk and be

heard. The experience of witnessing, listening to, and engaging in conversation with family members is very valuable because children can learn that the situation they face is a factor considered in speaking.

Formally, learning to read has not been carried out in kindergarten. What is done in these educational institutions is the development of skills so that children are ready to learn to read. The child is increasingly familiar with the word he hears and knows the word for the word (Petersen, 2015). Every time the child sees a letter and series of letters which then arouses curiosity about how to pronounce it.

Formal writing learning is also not carried out in kindergarten. What is done in kindergarten concerning writing skills is the development of abilities so that children are ready to learn to write. And for this reason, efforts to develop fine motor must be done intensively (Silahudin, 2017). The development of children in fine motor skills is increasingly making children able to draw straight lines, vertical lines, curved lines, circles which are the basis for developing writing skills.

Definition of Language

A language is a tool of communication. Through language, humans can interact and communicate their thoughts and express their feelings (Kurnia, 2009). Besides, people can open the horizons of thinking and developing their insights. Children learn languages through interactions with their environment both home, school, or community. At school, children learn languages through the interaction of teachers, peers, and other adults. The teacher needs to understand the development and development of children's language.

Language for early childhood is related to the development of their activities so that children can express feelings and thoughts creatively through their language. Kurnia (2009) says the ability to convey thoughts to others can be seen every day through a) Talking by using pictures or objects and the environment, b) Storytelling, c) Stories using books that meet the child's visual comprehension, and d) Performing free dramatization or movement.

Language Function For Early Childhood

Speaking is one of the most effective communication tools. Since babies, children often use body language to meet their needs. But this is not understood by adults about what is meant by children (Rustini, 2012). Therefore, babies and young children always try to make others understand their meaning. This is what drives people to learn to speak and proves that speaking is the most effective communication tool compared to other forms of communication that children use before they are good at speaking. For children, talking is not just an achievement but also serves to achieve its goals, for example as satisfaction of needs and desires. By talking, children are easy to explain their needs and desires without having to wait for others to understand the crying, gestures or facial expressions. Thus the ability to speak can reduce the frustration of children caused by parents or the environment who do not understand what is meant by children.

As a tool to attract the attention of others. In general, every child feels happy to be the centre of attention of others. Through speaking skills, children think that other people's attention to them will be easily obtained through a variety of questions asked to parents or example if a child is forbidden from saying inappropriate words.

As a tool to foster social relations. The ability of children to communicate with others is an important requirement to be part of a group in their environment. With communication skills, children are more easily accepted by peer groups and can get more opportunities to get roles as leaders of a group when compared to children who are less skilled or cannot communicate well.

As a tool for evaluating yourself. From other people's statements, the child can find out how that person feels and thinks about something he has said. Besides the child also gets an impression of how the environment assesses themselves. In other words, children can evaluate themselves through other people.

To be able to influence the thoughts and feelings of others. Children who like to comment, hurt or say something unpleasant can cause children to be unpopular or disliked by their

environment. Conversely, children who like to say pleasant words can be the main capital for children to be accepted and get sympathy from their environment.

To influence other people's behaviour. With the ability to speak well and full of confidence, children can influence other people or peers who behave badly to be polite friends. Good speaking skills can also be a major asset for children to be leaders in the environment because their peers trust and are sympathetic to them.

The Role of Language for Early Childhood

Summarizing experiences is an example of learning through language. The teacher provides a social and intellectual context that supports the learning and use of language. In this connection, the teacher plans literacy events that make students familiar to participate independently. Strictly speaking, on various occasions, formal or informal, the teacher creates the atmosphere and students are given language learning experiences (Chairilsyah, 2016). They build an understanding of their world through listening and reading and presenting it through speaking and writing.

Regarding writing activities, he has his position concerning helping students develop thinking activities and deepening teaching materials. Based on his investigation of the teacher, learning and writing activities, according to Sousa (2012), aims: a) provide reinforcement, b) provide training, c) guide students to imitate or imitate, d) train students to communicate, e) make students more fluent in language, and f) make students more active in learning.

Factors that Influence Early Childhood Language Development

Sudarna (2014) believes that humans are biologically bound to study a language at a certain time. Furthermore, Chomsky states that language is the things that cannot be denied in biological evolution from humans into linguistic creatures. He stated that children are born into the world with Language Acquisition Device (LAD), which is a biological attachment that makes it easy for children to detect certain language categories, such as phonology, syntax, and

semantics. LAD is a default grammatical ability that underlies all languages.

Children's language development is also influenced by intellectual factors. Children who have intellectual or high cognition are very influential in the development of language skills. Sunaryo and Agung (2000: 137) states that language development is related to cognitive development, which means that intellectual/cognitive factors greatly influence the development of language skills. Babies, for example, their intellectual level has not yet developed and is still very simple. As the baby grows and develops and begins to be able to understand the environment, language starts to develop from a very simple level to a complex language.

The statement implies that language development is in line with the intellectual development of children. In other words, there is a positive correlation between intellectual development and language development. However, it cannot be said that children who experience delays in language development are children who experience intellectual development impediments. This is consistent with Lindgren's opinion in Syamsu Yusuf (2005: 121), that not all children who experience language development delays at an early age are categorized as stupid children. Besides, according to the results of Elizabeth Hurlock's research on children who experience mental retardation proves that one-third of them can speak normally and children who are at the lowest intellectual level so they are very poor in language.

Besides being influenced by biological and intellectual factors, children's language development is also influenced by environmental factors. The environment that plays a major role in the early development of children's language is the social environment. Adam Son and Schegloff in Santrock (1995:182) state that the importance of the social environment in influencing the early development of children's language, namely "... we do not study language in a social vacuum". Most children are taught languages from a very young age. We need an introduction to language early to get good language skills. Thus, the first and foremost social environment that influences

children's language development is the family, which consists of mothers, fathers and adults in the family.

Early Childhood Language Skills

The development of children's language skills is a process that successively starts from listening, speaking, reading and writing. The development of each ability of children aged 4-6 years is as follows listening ability. Children's listening skills must be developed because of their efforts to understand their environment (Muslich, 2011). For them to learn to develop these abilities, they must receive information input and process it. According to Susanto (2017) listening and understanding information is a core step in gaining knowledge. Kindergarten children develop the ability to remember something to be heard. Children may not always be good listeners. This can happen because most of the time he has is used for playing activities so that he is not listening to something, for example, what is conveyed by his parents. In general, children listen to long stories, with an interesting plot and in the story, there are characters with various characters. things like that can be useful to awaken the child's imagination.

Speech development to learn languages, according to Suyadi (2013) children need opportunities to talk and be listened to. The experience of witnessing, listening to, and engaging in conversation with family members is very valuable because children can learn that the situation they face is a factor considered in speaking. At the age of 4-6 years, children begin to be able to participate in long conversations. Some of the children can dominate the conversation. At this age, children learn to be creative language users. Children can make or name something with their language, especially for animals or their favourite toys.

Reading development learning to read has not been carried out in kindergarten. What is done in these educational institutions is the development of skills so that children are ready to learn to read. The pictures of animals posted on the classroom wall are accompanied by writing explaining what animals are a stimulus for the development of reading skills. The child is

increasingly familiar with the words he often hears and recognizes the writing for that word, for example, the word shop, television and others. Every time the child sees a letter and series of letters which then arouses curiosity about how to pronounce it.

Development of writing similar to formal reading, formal writing learning is not carried out in kindergarten. What is done in kindergarten concerning the ability to write is the development of abilities so that children are ready to learn to write, for this reason, the efforts of developing fine motor are done intensively. Children's progress in increasing the fine motor makes the child can draw a line straight, straight lines, curved lines, and circles which are the basis for developing writing skills.

Language is a communication system that uses vowels (speech sounds) that can be strengthened by gestures. Language is a tool to express one's thoughts and feelings. Sudaryanti (2012) explains that the concept of communication in the most common form is the process by which information is created and delivered. Children sometimes experience conflicts resulting from lack of language skills, both active and passive language skills. Language for young children is related to the development of their activities so that children can express feelings and thoughts creatively through their language. Language skills are very important to be developed in the context of the development of reading because children's efforts to convey the stories they have heard and the teacher is an exercise to express their ideas in their language (Wibowo, 2012).

The development of speaking and writing is a process that uses expressive language in forming meaning. The development of speech at the beginning of the child is muttering. A baby from day to day will experience the development of language and speaking skills, but of course, every child is not the same achievement, there are fast-talking and some that require a little time. To help its development, parents and teachers can help provide stimulation tailored to the uniqueness of each child.

REASERCH METHOD

Literature study or known as a literature review is a description of the theory, findings, and other research materials that are used as a basis for research activities in preparing the framework of the problem formulation. Another source said that the notion of literature review includes analysis in the form of both constructive and dropping criticism from research being carried out on specific topics. The contents of the review literature include summaries, reviews, and the writer's thoughts derived from library sources such as slides, articles, information from the internet. Good review literature is relevant and the most up to date. This is useful to support the topics discussed in the research. It also helps in limiting the problem (Sugiyono, 2015).

The literature review itself can be classified into primary literature and secondary literature, and tertiary literature. The sharpness of the analysis of each literature is different. Primary literature is the original written work which contains a theory or an idea in various fields, such as research reports, patents, dissertations, seminar papers and others. Meanwhile, secondary literature is literature that summarizes, or indexes primary literature, so it does not contain new literature. Tertiary literature contains instructions for obtaining secondary literature, such as directory bibliography (Sugiyono, 2015).

In this literature, study research uses primary and secondary sources on the topic of language skills problems in early childhood. The author tries to provide an understanding of the importance of language skills that can have a positive effect on early childhood development. Besides, researchers are also trying to provide opinions and suggestions for teachers and parents in educating children whose language skills are lacking so that they become individuals who have good language skills at school and home.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Indeed, the role of parents is very large in improving their baby's language skills. Language skills are obtained from social interactions between babies and parents. Children aged 5 years whose parents do not stimulate the language of their children can say up to 1000

words per day. Over the age of 5 years, that number will rise to nearly two million words. Imagine if parents have started to stimulate their babies from birth with thousands of words per day, of course, the results will be more fantastic. This gives the view that one of the children's language successes is in the hands of their parents, not from a TV or DVD program (Kurnia, 2009). Research conducted in 2008 by Chonchaiya and Pruksananonda from Chulalongkorn University said that babies who watch TV more than 2 hours a day tend to be 6 times more likely to experience obstacles in language development. Though language is an important factor for babies to support other aspects of development, especially for academic success.

Based on the results of these studies, do not let the good intentions of parents to improve children's language skills backfire for themselves and their families (Suwartini, 2018). The main thing parents must do is communicate with your baby a lot and create an environment that is rich in literacy stimulation. To anticipate this, the following are tips that can be used by parents to be able to improve children's language skills well since babies:

1. Communicate a lot with your baby.
 - a. Treat children as *partners* when communicating.

When communicating, give *feedback* and wait for a response from the baby. Parents must be responsive to what is conveyed by the child, whether in the form of a smile, *cooing* (making sounds like vocals, for example, aaaaah or oooooh) and *babbling* (repeating consonant-vocal patterns like ma-ma-ma-ma).

- b. Have the initiative to start a conversation with children.

The conversation is the basis for children's language development. Caring parents are a good stimulus for babies.

- c. Talk to your baby in a calming, pleasant voice, make eye contact even if they are not conversing on you.
 - d. Talking to babies using a simple language, good and right but not the language of babies that most people do, like "Grand children's expression" to

drink milk, "di-di" for *diapers*, and others. Make sentences as simple as possible like "Let's wear clothes!". To change the intention of parents asking their children to dress neatly to prepare for going outside the house.

- e. Mention the child's name when interacting with children.

The goal is to make the conversation feel more familiar and help children to identify themselves.

- f. Use a variety of stimulation variations for baby language development such as singing, rhyming, and reading books. One thing not to forget is to allow the baby to repeat according to his ability.
- g. Take your baby to various places so that he has the opportunity to interact with many different people. This gives children the experience to use language in different situations.
- h. Support children to share information with others so that their communication skills are more honed.
- i. Allow children to express their desires in various ways. Children must know how to use language to ask questions, explain their feelings, tell what they have done and explain it well.
- j. Give your child experience to use language as a hint of command. This is important, especially for school-aged children.
- k. Talk to children about what they have done and how they have done it. Children learn languages through feedback and question and answer with others. Thus making the child feel the attention of his parents.
- l. Talk to children using adult language, including grammatically. Even so, it must be adjusted to the age of the child.
- m. Help your child get to know the names of people and things. Learning to recognize names is an important part of language development.
- n. Provide a variety of experiences so that children have the opportunity to talk

about many things.

- o. Create an environment that is rich in *literacy* stimulation
2. Provides various types of books with various themes such as cloth books/pillow books, waterproof books, thick books anti-tear, wooden picture books, and others.
 3. Read poems, stories with loud and enthusiastic reading.
 4. Sing with a variety of musical variations.

The following are tips that can be used by teachers to be able to improve children's language skills well from an early age at school. The use of several methods for developing early childhood languages that teachers can do at school is storytelling method. Storytelling is one of the speaking skills that aims to provide information to others (Berg, 2012). Through storytelling, someone can convey a variety of stories, expressions of various feelings following what is experienced, seen, read, and expressions of will and desire to share the experiences gained. Storytelling is done verbally to others with props or without props.

The main purpose of storytelling is to communicate. Telling stories to children aged of 4-6 years is children can listen carefully to what is conveyed by others, can ask if they do not understand it, can answer questions, and can tell and express what he listens to and tells. This is in line with what Berg (2012) said that is language has a big influence on the development of a child's mind. Besides, it also helps the development of language in children. Telling stories to children can improve the hearing function of children well to help the ability to speak. this can increase vocabulary, the ability to say words, train to string sentences by the stage of development. Besides, children can also express through poetry, singing, writing or drawing. This ability is the result of the listening process in the child's language development stage. The sequence of abilities is listening, speaking, reading, writing and listening. This is by the stages of child development because each child has a different background and way of learning. Through storytelling, teachers are expected to be able to understand children's learning styles both individually and in groups by

developing integrated and thematic learning that is motor-centred.

Dialogue method of dialogue in developing language learning in early childhood is often equated with the question and answer method even though there are differences between the two namely method of dialogue the interaction that occurs between the teacher and students, or between children and children is fun or not rigid. In the dialogue, the teacher acts as a facilitator. It means that the teacher motivates more children with the hope that the child is more active in expressing their opinions or expressing them verbally. Meanwhile, in the question and answer method, the interaction between teacher and students, or between children and children are rigid, because it is bound to the subject. Dialogue occurs because someone has to ask and someone has to answer correctly.

The method of dialogue is a way of delivering language development material which is carried out through dialogue in the form of question and answer between children and teachers or children and children who are communicated orally. Besides, it is a form of interpersonal communication, where one another communicates thoughts and feelings verbally or the ability to realize receptive and expressive language in a dialogue that occurs in a situation (Kurnia, 2009).

By using the method of dialogue the objectives of language development to be achieved include:

1. To develop children's skills and courage in expressing their opinions to anyone.
2. To provide opportunities for children to express themselves verbally.
3. To improve pronunciation and speech of children.
4. To develop children's intelligence.
5. To add vocabulary
6. To train the children's comprehension ability
7. To train the children's thinking and fantasy.
8. To add knowledge and experience of children.
9. To give pleasure to children.

10. To stimulate children to read and write.

Question and answer method is a method used to develop early childhood language so that it can provide stimulation for active thinking. Through teacher questions, children will try to find and find questions or find questions to ask their teacher (Bimo, 2011). Question and answer method in early childhood aims to: a) train the child the courage to agree on his opinion, b) train the child the courage to ask questions about what he does not understand, c) train the child in speaking with good intonation, d) develop vocabulary and vocabulary said children, e) train children to ask for opinions of others, f) train children to want to talk or listen to questions or answers from others.

That is an explanation of the role of parents at home and teachers at school in activities to improve language skills in early childhood. Hopefully, it can be understood by parents and teachers to further improve language skills in early childhood.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that language development in early childhood is very important. Parents as the child's closest environment must know the development of children's language skills. Language in children has been started since he was born. Therefore, parents and the environment are very important in efforts to improve children's language skills. The factors that can affect children's language are biological, intellectual and environmental factors.

Language development is very important for children. This is because the child will carry out social interactions, both to the family, school and community environment. Children's language development requires special attention to develop according to standards and expectations. If parents or teachers cannot provide appropriate stimulation to improve children's language, then children can experience delays in speaking, as well as other social interactions. This is certainly not good for the stage of children's development in the future.

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, the authors provide advice on how to

improve children's language skills. Parents as the child's closest environment must stimulate and accustom children to speak properly so that language development can be optimal. Besides, teachers also have a very big role in stimulating children through storytelling, question and answer methods, dialogue methods, and many more methods that can be used in stimulating the language development of their students at school.

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