

ENHANCING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: HOW STORYTELLING HELPS CHILDREN WITH SPEECH DELAYS

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Abstract

Speech delay is a condition where a child's speech development does not match the developmental stages at his age. This research aims to determine the application of the storytelling method for children with speech delay disorders and to find the factors that cause children with speech delay disorders at Langsa City. The method used in this study is a qualitative approach. This data was obtained through in-depth interviews with one teacher and two students who experienced speech delay. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained from books, scientific works, and other documents to answer all the problems in this thesis. The data analysis techniques used are data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The findings of the study demonstrate that children with speech delay issues benefit significantly from the storytelling technique used in the Kindergarten. With the storytelling method, children feel interested in learning and understand what they are learning based on the stories told by their teacher, so children become active in everything. Here, they are trained to dare to express opinions, answer questions, and tell whatever they know without any restrictions. It can be seen from the learning progress of students that initially, they wanted to be more confident to interact and communicate with their classmates and teachers. After conducting research, they dare to express their opinions or talk to friends and teachers in their language, and they also dare to play together. The factor that causes speech delay disorders is that children are often allowed to play with cell phones and watch television without being accompanied by questions and answers. The conclusion is that the storytelling method applied by Kindergarten for students, especially children with speech delay disorders, is working well.

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Abstrak

Speech delay adalah sebuah kondisi dimana perkembangan bicara anak tidak sesuai dengan tahapan perkembangan di tahap usianya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui penerapan metode bercerita bagi anak dengan gangguan *speech delay* dan untuk menemukan faktor yang menyebabkan anak dengan gangguan *speech delay* di Kota Langsa. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pendekatan kualitatif. Data ini di dapat melalui hasil wawancara mendalam bersama satu orang guru dan dua anak didik yang mengalami *speech delay* yang ditentukan berdasarkan indikator khusus. Sedangkan data skunder didapat dari buku, karya ilmiah dan dokumen lainnya untuk menjawab semua permasalahan yang ada di skripsi ini. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan yaitu reduksi data, penyajian data dan penarikan kesimpulan. Dari hasil penelitian di tunjukkan bahwa penerapan metode bercerita dapat dikatakan sangat baik bagi anak-anak dengan gangguan *speech delay*. Setelah dilakukan penelitian mereka sudah berani mengungkapkan pendapatnya atau berbicara kepada teman-teman dan guru dengan bahasa mereka, serta mereka juga sudah berani untuk bermain bersama. Faktor yang menyebabkan gangguan *speech delay* yaitu seringkali anak dibiarkan untuk bermain handphone dan menonton televisi, tanpa disertai dengan tanya jawab. Kesimpulannya bahwa metode bercerita yang diterapkan untuk peserta didik terkhusus anak dengan gangguan *speech delay* berjalan dengan baik

Kata Kunci : anak usia dini, metode bercerita, *speech delay*

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Introduction

One of the abilities that children possess is language ability. Language is a form of rules or a system of symbols used by children to interact, adapt, and understand each other's ideas and feelings. Language can be expressed verbally, in writing, and through body movements. However, to utilize language, a child must first be able to speak according to their developmental stage (Ika et al., 2021). Language ability demonstrates the complex and fantastic capabilities of humans, allowing language to develop rapidly from early childhood (Veryawan & Jellysha, 2020).

The aspect of language development is a very important thing that must be owned by humans, especially children (M. Rahmah et al., 2021). Early children's language skills often help them convey their thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Children may also enthrall others and communicate what they understand, including singing, asking questions, conversing, telling stories based on their experiences, and listening to stories. Therefore, children can be taught grammar and vocabulary by developing the ability to articulate their ideas and thoughts (Kusbudiyah, 2020). However, some kids must still build their language skills to the required level. Language is also an expression that contains the intention of conveying something to another person. Something that is intended by the speaker can be understood and understood by the listener or interlocutor through the language expressed (Mahriza et al., 2021).

One of the issues in children's language development is speech delay. Speech delay and language development in children and speaking are essential for humans; by speaking, we produce sounds that have meaning. Speaking is not just about producing sounds that carry meaning but also a manifestation of what is contained in feelings and thoughts. Speaking with well-structured, meaningful words indicates that the person has a clear mind. Speech delay is a disorder in producing speech appropriate to the child's age. In children whose speech development has progressed, it is understandable to others, although not yet very focused (Ratih & Nuryani, 2020).

A typical developmental problem that impacts a large number of children worldwide is speech delay in childhood. The term describes a lag in the development of speech and language abilities in comparison to peers of the same age. Limited vocabulary, trouble formulating phrases, or difficulties articulating words are some of the characteristics of speech delay that can affect social engagement and communication (Sharp & Hillenbrand, 2008). It is essential to comprehend its root causes and consequences in order to provide early intervention and support.

Speech delay is a delay in language or speech (McLaughlin, 2011; Qurotul Aini & Putri Alifia, 2022; Trisha Sunderajan, 2019). Language disorders are delays in the language sector experienced by a child (Kiogora, 2021). Speech delay occurred when a child has difficulty expressing or conveying their desires to others, like being unable to speak clearly and having a limited vocabulary compared to children of the same age (Khoiriyah et al., 2016). According to Mufidah (2024), Speech Delay in early childhood is influenced by several factors, namely Internal factors, including Genetics, Physical disabilities, Neurological dysfunction, Prematurity, and Gender. Meanwhile, external factors include Birth order, Physical disabilities, Parental education, Economic status, Family function, and Bilingualism (Zulkarnaini et al., 2023).

Stimulus to develop language in early childhood must be implemented so children's language development can be good during their growth and development stages. One is applying the storytelling method, a widely chosen method to stimulate this. Storytelling is a form of effort to communicate or convey events through improvisation of words, images, or sounds. Storytelling is also one way to provide children with learning experiences by delivering stories orally (Andi Kuswandi et al., 2022).

The purpose of developing language here is that through storytelling, children can listen well to help their speaking development, starting with increasing vocabulary and pronouncing words and sentences according to their development. In other words, storytelling can boost a child's speech development (Kusuma et al., 2021). Stories can stimulate a child's imagination, and in addition, stories can make children not only listen to and hear the story but also enjoy telling stories (Hadi, 2018). Then, storytelling is one way to provide learning experiences for early childhood through stories conveyed orally (Farantika et al., 2022). Furthermore, Nurahmawati et al. (Nurahmawati et al., 2023) also added that storytelling is narrating something that recounts actions or events and is delivered orally to share experiences and knowledge with others.

There are several benefits of storytelling, including helping in the formation of a child's personality and morals, channelling children's imagination, developing a child's language skills, increasing a child's interest in writing, and expanding a child's thinking and knowledge. Additionally, storytelling can broaden a child's understanding and way of thinking. Thus, children can gain new experiences (Arie Sanjaya, 2016).

This study aims to explore two key aspects. Firstly, it seeks to understand the application of storytelling methods for children with speech delay, focusing on how these methods can support their communication and language development. Storytelling as an educational approach is examined for its effectiveness in engaging children, encouraging them to express themselves, and building their

confidence in verbal interaction. Secondly, the study investigates the factors contributing to speech delay in early childhood. These factors include environmental influences such as frequent exposure to passive activities like excessive use of mobile phones or watching television without interactive communication. Such habits are identified as potential causes that hinder a child's motivation and ability to develop speech and interaction skills. This dual focus provides a comprehensive understanding of both the intervention strategies and the underlying causes of speech delay in young children.

Method

This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, conducted in the natural conditions of the research object to systematically describe phenomena based on theories and relevant research findings (Sugiyono, 2015). The research location is at Langsa City, Aceh Province, with the research subject being one teacher who provides information about two children experiencing speech delays which chosen by using specific indicators. Primary data were obtained directly from interviews and observations with the teacher, while secondary data were sourced from scientific works, books, and news articles supporting the study. Data collection techniques include interviews, observations, and documentation, with data analysis conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

Result and Discussion

Factors Causing Speech Delay Disorders in Early Childhood

Speech delay is studied by many language experts, particularly in relation to the causes or contributing factors of speech delay in children. The experts agree that two factors influence this, namely internal and external factors. Internal factors can be found in a child's genetics, such as speech delay occurring in a child born into a family with a background of speech delay issues from their parents in the past, thus passing down the problem to their child. There are also issues with a child's brain not being stable enough to grasp new things encountered by the child, such as autism and others. The health of a baby while in the womb also plays a vital role in the occurrence of speech delay; babies born with low birth weight tend to have problems with their speech development.

According to Yulianda (2019), speech delay in early childhood is influenced by several factors, namely internal factors, including genetics, physical disabilities, neurological malfunctions, prematurity, and gender. External factors include birth order, physical disabilities, parental education, economic status, family function, and bilingualism. Factors affecting speech delay in early childhood include gender,

history of premature birth, mother's education level, and family economic status (Zulkarnaini et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, according to Angraeni et al., (2024), there are several factors contributing to speech delay in children that the author has divided into two parts: the first being internal and external factors, and the second being lack of nutrition for the child, lack of proper stimulation for the child, oral problems, hearing impairments, speech and language disorders, autism, neurological disorders, and intellectual disabilities.

In this study, speech delay is defined as difficulties speaking, difficulty interacting with people, being more passive than peers, difficulty reading, stuttering while expressing words, or being unclear when speaking, among other things. Even during class or recess, the child frequently daydreams and tends to be lonely. In a similar vein, the child is often quiet and preoccupied at home. When encouraged to communicate with others, the youngster also regularly employs non-verbal cues like nodding, shaking their head, or perhaps simply pointing at what they mean. Sometimes, he would tap his friend's shoulder instead of uttering his name when he called them.

Storytelling techniques are one strategy to encourage speech in young children. Children and instructors can communicate interactively using the storytelling method, which also helps to create an engaging learning environment. Children like to listen to stories as one of the storytelling techniques. The narrative should be relevant to children's lives in order to keep their attention throughout. The stories will then impact the child. Given that youngsters find storytelling to be more captivating and memorable, the moral lessons conveyed in the story will be more straightforward for them to internalize. It can be inferred from the observations that this narrative technique is highly successful in promoting early childhood language or cognitive abilities. Children become engaged in everything when their teacher uses the storytelling method because it piques their interest in learning and comprehension of the material.

A primary cause of speech delay in children is a parenting style in which the child needs more attention and is often left to watch television or play with electronics without time constraints. It may lead to a reduction in a child's IQ because language development requires much communication from young children. To ensure that a child's growth keeps getting better, parents and educators must work together to educate them.

Parental upbringing becomes crucial since it sets the standard for how well or poorly parents educate and raise their kids in the future. Since children can mimic their parents' actions, the family serves as the child's primary educational environment. Since a child learns at home as well as with teachers at school,

parents must focus more on and learn how to educate and care for their children because they spend more time with their parents than with teachers at school.

This is consistent with the study by Widayawan et al. (2024), which highlights the role parents play in using narrative techniques to foster language development in young children. In addition to encouraging children's language development, parents and other stakeholders are dedicated to promoting a healthy, empowering learning environment so that kids can flourish. Therefore, parents' participation in preventing speech delays is not only personal but also important for social and academic success, benefiting society as a whole.

Storytelling as a Technique for Children with Speech Delay Disorders

One practical approach to support children's language development is by using stories as a tool to enhance vocabulary, sentence structure, and speaking skills. The stories used are usually carefully selected to match the child's age and have moral values that can be derived from them. The storytelling method encourages children to listen to and understand the stories being told. Through these stories, they will learn about various new vocabulary used in the context of the story, and they will also learn about correct sentence structure because stories are usually arranged in a structured and easily understandable sentence order.

Beside, storytelling offers children a stimulating and encouraging setting where they can hone their language abilities at their speed. Children can start to imitate and incorporate new vocabulary, sentence structures, and correct pronunciation into their speech when instructors or other caregivers read stories to them. Children who are exposed to a rich linguistic environment are better able to establish a foundation for communication.

Then, participatory aspects of storytelling frequently include asking questions, getting kids to guess what will happen next, or having them repeat the tale on their terms. Children with speech difficulties benefit significantly from these activities since they encourage active engagement and give them practice expressing themselves vocally. Story retelling also allows children to practice vocabulary and sentence structures, which increases their confidence in language use.

Storytelling can be beneficial for pinpointing problem areas in kids with speech problems. Teachers or other caregivers can evaluate children's articulation, vocabulary usage, and sentence construction when they try to retell the story or respond to questions about it. It allows for the early identification of any language development issues. Storytelling also encourages social engagement, which is crucial for language development. Children with speech impairments can develop their expressive and receptive language skills by engaging in and listening to tales.

Storytelling methods can also help children become more confident in speaking and expressing their ideas. Activities related to stories, such as role-playing, coloring pictures, or creating small dramas, can help children become more confident when speaking in front of others. In addition, they will find practical and easy ways to communicate their feelings and thoughts. The storytelling method is one of the valuable approaches used in language therapy for preschool children experiencing speech delay.

According to research findings, using storytelling techniques to help children with speech delay disorders understand language demonstrates that the child is interested in interacting with peers and teachers despite the fact that their language is still simple and challenging for others to understand. Children with speech delay issues also develop a fondness for freely recounting everything they have witnessed. In terms of literacy, children with speech delay disorders can already name a number of objects and recognize some letters, though occasionally, they can only understand the letter sounds from the teacher's instructions. They can also respond to the teacher's questions in simple sentences. This is consistent with studies by Suhirman et al. (2024) which showed that the proportion of speaking skills increased following intervention through the use of storytelling. Improvements of 20% from baseline-1 phase (A1) to intervention phase (B) and 90% from intervention phase (B) to baseline-2 phase (A2) demonstrate the rise. Therefore, using hand puppets has a significant impact on the speaking abilities of kids with speech delays.

Similarly, the research by Fikri (2023) shows that the storytelling method can detect children with speech delays and stimulate their language development. The steps taken are: first, the teacher reads a story, and second, the teacher gives the children the opportunity to retell the story. The ability to pronounce vocabulary and clarity of articulation are used as criteria to detect children. This storytelling activity also helps increase the child's vocabulary, making them more fluent in speaking or communicating with those around them.

Furthermore, this study also aligns with the research findings by Rahmah et al. (F. Rahmah et al., 2023) which state that speech delay disorders can be minimized through the application of storytelling methods. To instruct language development, it is essential to engage the child in communication in any situation frequently so their vocabulary can expand and they can correct unclear pronunciations. If a child shows signs of language development issues, it is advisable to consult a child psychologist for further actions tailored to their needs. Through storytelling, children's hearing can be optimized to support their language development by improving vocabulary, pronunciation, and speaking skills.

Essentially, Delays in language skills can signal problems in other developmental areas. Storytelling is an effective way to stimulate and support language development in children (Anggaraeningsih & Yulianti, 2023). Children with speech delays benefit from storytelling as a therapy technique because it provides an enjoyable and captivating means of improving their language development and laying the groundwork for future successful communication.

Conclusion

Children with speech delay exhibit varying characteristics influenced by their personality and environment. The contrasting developmental trajectories highlight the impact of individual personality traits on language development and social interaction. A shy and reserved child may struggle with communication, often experiencing regression in language skills. In contrast, a confident and bold child tends to show significant progress in language development and actively engages with both teachers and peers. This comparison emphasizes the importance of considering a child's temperament and personality when assessing language development and social interaction. It suggests that tailored support may be necessary to help children who are more reserved overcome communication barriers and improve their language abilities. The storytelling method proves highly effective for children with speech delays. Children are encouraged to express opinions, answer questions, and share their knowledge through engaging narratives, fostering confidence and communication. This approach has helped the speech delay children improve their ability to interact and communicate with their peers and teachers.

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