

IDENTIFICATION OF EARLY CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE SKILLS IN RA RUMAH KREATIF WADAS KELIR

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Abstract. Language is a symbol system that is used by a person in conveying ideas, ideas and information to others so as to create interaction and communication activities. In the process of growth and development, children use language as a tool to understand their surroundings and convey their wishes and ideas. Children's language skills can be identified based on aspects of language skills. The purpose of this study was to analyze and identify the language skills of children at RA Wadas Kelir Creative House in terms of its aspects. This research is a type of field qualitative research, namely data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. The objects in this study were children at RA Wadas Kelir Creative House. The results of the study explained that there were 4 children at RA Wadas Kelir Creative House who already had good language skills in terms of four aspects of language skills: 1) listening skills; 2) speaking skills; 3) reading skills; and 4) writing skills.

Keywords: language skills, early childhood, RA Rumah Kreatif Wadas Kelir

INTRODUCTION

Reporting to Dream.co.id, the disorder that most often affects children but is rarely realized by parents is Developmental Language Disorder (DLD), which is a language development disorder. In a survey conducted by a study in the Journal of Communication Disorders by European Co-operation in Science and Technology Action IS1406, only 60% know or have heard of the term language development disorder (DLD). That means awareness about the potential for language delays in children is still minimal.

Meanwhile, several surveys state that there is around 5-10 per cent of children in schools experience language disorders, both spoken and written language. This is certainly a worrying issue in the world of children's education. This is because children's language disorders can affect other aspects of children's development, such as cognitive, motor, and social-emotional development, such as religion and morals. Unfortunately, parents are often not aware of language disorders in children. In fact, parents think that a child's language delay is not important and will be resolved as the child gets older. In fact, this is actually the beginning of other child development disorders.

Disorders of children's language development can be recognized if parents or educators have knowledge of the criteria or aspects of language skills. By comparing the child's actual situation with these aspects, it can be seen to what extent the child's language skills are.

As is well known, language is a tool for communicating between humans with one another, including in early childhood. Language has its own important meaning for early childhood. First, early childhood knows the world around them through language. The mechanism for knowing the world around us starts with the performance of the five senses and then proceeds to the central nervous system. Second, early childhood needs language to express their desires. That way, a process of communication and interaction is created between the child and the people around him. Third, through language, aspects of child development will be well achieved starting from the aspects of religion and morals, physical-motor, cognitive, social-emotional, language, and art.

Judging from its elements, human language consists of aspects of sound (phonetics), words (morphology), sentences (syntax), meaning (semantics), and ways of pronunciation (pragmatics). Children who begin to know the language will first make a sound. For example, infants who are still growing, begin to learn how to sound to call their father or mother, based on their hearing and visual experience of the surrounding language. When they can speak, slowly they will automatically learn vocabulary to simple grammar. Children will also understand the meaning of each syllable. Children's meanings of a language can be different depending on their experience. In addition, the way children's language is pronounced also varies depending on the parenting pattern of the immediate environment and differences in domicile. Therefore (Kholilullah et al., 2020).

Early childhood has language skills in the scope of language reception, expression of ideas, and literacy (Amalia & Hasana, 2020). Referring to this, children's language skills can be identified based on physiological, cognitive, and motor abilities. This physiological ability is described as the ability of the child's senses to capture and receive language. For example, children hear and see people around them talking. Their ears hear the sound of a word, while their eyes see the movement of the lips that pronounce the syllables. This sensory ability is then passed on to the central nervous system which is the main point of children's cognitive abilities, namely children understand language and can express language. In addition, children will also be able to express language in the form of letters as part of their motor development. That way, children already have skills in the language.

There is previous research that examines a similar matter, namely research entitled "Improving Language Skills in Early Childhood Through the Storytelling Method". In this study, Sriyono concluded that the storytelling method is one of the most effective methods in improving children's language skills (Sriyono, n.d.). This research is more specific on methods of improving language skills. Meanwhile, the research conducted by the authors is more likely to focus on aspects of language skills as a whole. In line with this, there is also research entitled "Language Development for Early Childhood and Its Development Techniques in Schools", which concludes that early childhood language development is more directed at the ability to convey thoughts to others, develop vocabulary, catch other people's conversations, and courage. express opinion (Zubaidah, 2004).

This research was conducted at Raudhatul Athfal (RA) Wadas Kelir Creative House, which is located on Jalan Wadas Kelir, RT 05 RW 07, Karangklesem, Purwokerto Selatan. RA Rumah Kreatif Wadas Kelir is an institution that was founded in 2019, as a result of collaboration between the Rumah Kreatif Wadas Kelir community and local residents. The hallmark of learning at RA Wadas Kelir Creative House is the introduction and improvement of literacy culture from an early age through the role of Community Reading Gardens. From here, researchers are interested in identifying the level of language skills in early childhood at RA Wadas Kelir Creative House.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is qualitative field research, namely research data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were made at RA Wadas Kelir Creative House with the object of research being the children of RA Wadas Kelir Creative House, a total of 34 children. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted with several parents and teachers. The data analysis was carried out using a descriptive method, namely presenting the results of the research linked to reference sources such as books, previous research journals, and other sources.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research that has been done, the researchers found that the children of RA Wadas Kelir Creative House have good language skills, in terms of four aspects of language skills, namely: 1) listening skills; 2) speaking skills; 3) reading skills; and 4) writing skills.

1. Listening Skills

Since in the womb, children have acquired the ability to listen. Listening ability begins with listening carefully and ends with understanding what he is listening to (Hijriyah, 2016). So, the ability to listen is not only being able to hear but also to understand carefully what he hears. Listening skill is a form of receptive language skill, which means not only listening to the sounds of language but simultaneously understanding them (Iskandarwassid & Sunendar, 2018). From the description above, it can be concluded that the essence of listening is a series of processes, starting from the process of identifying sounds, compiling interpretations, utilizing the results of interpretation, and the process of storing them, as well as the process of linking the results of the interpretation with overall knowledge and experience (Sukma & Saifudin, 2021).

There are 3 important aspects of listening skills, among others (Kurniawan & Kasmiati, 2020):

- 1) Understanding Speech Units of Language.
Referring to the definition of language, which is a unit of sound symbols, the listening skills possessed by early childhood is to understand the unit of sound symbols heard. For example, the sentence "does not exist" is a unit of a series of letters /t/i/d/a/k/a/d/a/, /ti/dak/a/da, /no//there/ and becomes a sentence /no there is/. These language units are listened to by children carefully and understood by children well so that children also have an understanding of speech sound units.
- 2) Identify Meaning and Purpose
When a child hears the sentence "nothing", then the child doesn't just hear it as a mere sentence. But they will be able to understand the meaning that "nothing" means something that is not tangible, for example. Or it could also be interpreted as something that cannot be found. So, by understanding the meaning of a sentence, the child will know the meaning of the sentence.
- 3) Get information
After the child hears and understands a sentence, then from there there is information that will be absorbed by the child related to language, purpose and expression in the communication process. When a child is able to get the right information, it means that the child has good listening skills, and then the information will be processed in the child's mind.

The children at RA Wadas Kelir Creative House have souls that are responsive to

sounds that come out of human mouths, in this case, parents and teachers at school. In this case, the researcher found 4 children with good listening skills, which will be presented in the following table:

Name	Understanding Speech Units of Language	Identify Meaning and Purpose	Get information
Amel	√	√	√
Dafa	√	√	√
Anam	√	√	√
Nabila	√	√	√

Table 1. Listening Ability of RA Rumah Kreatif Wadas Kelir

The data the researchers obtained from the results of observations made when the teacher was carrying out reading-aloud activities (read aloud) in front of the children. When the teacher reads word for word, sentence by sentence, these four children are responsive, have body language that is in harmony with the activities carried out by the teacher, and are able to respond to every storyline that is read. This is of course related to the aspects of listening skills that have been described above. Amel, Dafa, Anam, and Nabila were able to understand speech units of language, identify meanings, and obtain information from stories read by the teacher. So, when the teacher recalls the story, the four children can follow it well. There are many uses for listening skills, if listening skills are good then some developmental achievements can be achieved well. In the 2014 Permendikbud concerning PAUD National Standards, the level of achievement of language development for children aged 5-6 years in listening ability has been regulated, namely: 1) Answering more complex questions. 2) Name a group of images that have the same sound. 3) Communicate orally, have the vocabulary, and recognize symbols for preparation for reading, writing and arithmetic. 4) Compose simple sentences in complete structures (main sentence predicate skills). 5) Have more words to express ideas to others. 6) Continuing part of the story/fairy tale that has been heard. 7) Demonstrate an understanding of the concepts in storybooks.

2. Speaking Skill

In the process of acquiring language skills, speaking skills are the second stage after listening skills. That means, listening and speaking are two things that are directly proportional, that is, when children have good listening skills, their speaking skills are also good (Ilham & Wijati, 2020). In line with this, there are two aspects that can be used as a reference in assessing children's speaking skills, namely (Kurniawan & Kasmiasi, 2020):

- 1) Pronouncing Language Units
 Children can say sentences such as, "I like to eat". The sentence is a series of letters, words, and sentences /I/like/eat, which means that the child likes eating. That means when a child is able to pronounce a series of letters, words, and sentences correctly, the child's speaking ability can be said to be good.
- 2) Expressing Desires and Ideas
 Children who have good speaking skills can usually tell or express their wishes to other people, including the things they like. The language units spoken by children are not just language units without meaning and purpose. So, language units that are able to be spoken by children with a specific purpose indicate that children have good speaking skills.

Most of the RA children at Wadas Keller Creative House have the ability to speak as

usual. However, not all children dare to speak in front of other people, including when they are asked questions, or just express their thoughts. Amel, Dafa, Anam, and Nabila are children who have good speaking skills, with the following identification:

Name	Pronouncing Language Units	Express wishes and ideas
Amel	√	√
Dafa	√	√
Anam	√	√
Nabila	√	√

Table 2. Identification of the speaking skills of children at the RA Rumah Kreatif Wadas kelir

This data researchers obtained by means communicate with the four children mentioned above, and several other children. The four children have a responsive attitude to the questions asked. The following is a snippet of the researcher's communication with the children:

Researcher: "Hello, Amel. What are you eating, Amelia?"
Amel: "Amel is eating noodles, sis. Amel really likes Mother's fried noodles,"

Amel's answer showed courage when answering questions and being able to express the things that were on her mind with proper grammar. Amel has also been able to tell about the things she likes. Besides Amel, Dafa, Anam, and Nabila also have the same abilities. Researchers asked similar questions, and the three children could understand them well and be able to answer them correctly.

3. Reading Skills

There is a definition that "reading by definition means gaining meaning for print, not just pronouncing the word", which means that the definition of reading is not just saying words but also understanding and getting meaning from a text (Brewer, 2007). In line with the opinion above, reading is a series of thinking activities which include activities to pronounce, understand, tell, and interpret sound-symbol units with the help of the senses of sight, eye movements, inner voice, and memory (Harianto, 2020).

Based on the opinions of some of the experts stated above, it can be concluded that reading is a receptive language skill which is a way of communicating that involves the ability to translate written verbal symbols (letters, words) into spoken language so that they become meaningful. The activity of translating written verbal symbols into spoken language involves sight, hearing, memory, imagination, observation, understanding and good speech skills (Herlina, 2019).

There are aspects that can be used as a reference for analyzing children's reading abilities, namely (Kurniawan & Kasmiati, 2020):

- 1) Reciting the Sound Symbol
The symbol of sound here is a unit of letters, words, and sentences, which form a reading. Children who have good reading skills will be able to pronounce this sound symbol unit correctly, namely intonation, word fragments, and the appropriate sentence harmonization.
- 2) Understanding the Meaning and Information of a Simple Text
Not only being able to recite, when a child reads they are actually learning the meaning of the words and sentences they read. Therefore, the understanding and

mastery of children in listening and reciting a passage will greatly assist children in understanding the meaning and information of the text.

RA Rumah Kreatif Wadas kelir has a distinctive feature that prioritizes children's literacy skills from an early age. This can be seen from the habituation program that is applied every day to children and their parents, namely the obligation to borrow books at Community Reading Parks. Parents play a role in accompanying their children's reading activities every day, as well as reading aloud to their children while their children are listening. Therefore, the children's reading ability at RA Wadas Kelir Creative House is quite good. In this case, the researcher identified the reading skills of the children at RA Wadas Kelir Creative House in terms of reading aspects:

Name	Reciting the Sound Symbol	Understand the Meaning and Information of Simple Text
Amel	√	√
Dafa	√	√
Anam	√	√
Nabila	√	√

Table 3. Identification of children's reading skills at Rumah Kreatif Wadas Kelir.

This data the researcher obtained from observing the four children mentioned above and several other children, namely by reading books together. The children were asked to read short fairy tale books and read them in front of other friends. As a result, these four children have the most appropriate pronunciation of sound symbols starting from courage, intonation, and confidence, as well as a clear way of pronouncing sentences, so they can be understood properly. Then, the researcher asked several questions related to the contents of the fairy tales that had been read to recall the results of the reading. As a result, they were able to answer correctly, as evidence that these children were able to understand reading and remember it well.

4. Writing skills

Writing has a definition as the activity of pouring an idea into writing, both handwritten and with the help of digital media. In line with this, writing is also a process, namely the process of expressing an idea or ideas that are embodied in written language (Nafiah, 2017). The process of improving children's writing skills requires the attention of the teacher as a teacher and also the role of parents.

Writing is closely related to reading (Rinawati et al., 2020). Reading can affect a person's writing skills. This is because reading is an activity that can increase knowledge and insight even about things that cannot be seen or heard directly. So, the more a person reads, the more likely he is to have the ability to write.

There are aspects that lead to early childhood writing skills, namely (Kurniawan & Kasmiati, 2020):

1) Write down the Language Unit Symbol

For young children, writing is pouring sound-symbol units into writing in the form of letters, series of words, to simple sentences. This writing activity is fundamental before later developing into a more complex stage. When children listen or read a lot, the higher level of their ability to write.

2) Copying Posts

The initial stage of children learning to write begins with copying and imitating writing in simple books. The child will repeatedly read and repeat the contents of the reading in written form. From here, writing activities for children is not an activity of conveying ideas but development and practice for writing (Kurniawan & Kasmiasi, 2020).

3) Convey Experiences, Desires, and Ideas

Increasing to the next stage, after the child is able to write down a lot of vocabulary that he imitates from books, the child will begin to be able to write according to what is in his mind. For example, writing down ideas about everyday experiences, and future goals, or just writing down wishes and things they like. However, the writing written by children is of course still classified as simple writing, they are not yet able to write complex things.

The researcher conducted a simple test on the children at RA Wadas Kelir Creative House by asking the children to write down a unit of letters starting from A to Z. In addition, the researcher also asked the children to copy some simple sentences in the children's book. . And lastly, the children were asked to think of things they liked and then wrote them down in the written form. The result is as follows:

Name	Writing Letters	Copy Sentences	Writing Thoughts	Personal
Amel	√	√	√	
Dafa	√	√	√	
Anam	√	√	√	
Nabila	√	√	√	

Table 4. Identification of children's writing abilities at Rumah Kreatif Wadas Kelir

The four children who were the object of the study were able to write the letters A to Z properly and correctly. Based on interviews with parents, they have been able to write since before entering school because they were trained regularly from an early age without coercion. For example, the parents of Nabila and Dafa.

“Nabila has taught me to write since she was 3 years old. Actually, it is not taught, initially introduced first with books and how to hold a pencil. They will be attracted by themselves and start scribbling in the book.”

The researcher found that Amel, Dafa, Anam, and Nabila could follow orders well. They are able to copy simple writings in story books while reading them aloud. In addition, they are also able to write down the things they like in notebooks.

CONCLUSION

Language is a symbol system that is used by a person in conveying ideas, ideas and information to others so as to create interaction and communication activities. In the process of growth and development, children use language as a tool to understand their surroundings and convey their wishes and ideas. Children's language skills can be identified based on aspects of language skills. The results of the study explained that there were 4 children at RA Wadas Kelir Creative House who already had good language skills in terms of four aspects of language skills: 1) listening skills; 2) speaking skills; 3) reading skills; and 4) writing skills.

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