

The Application of Storytelling Techniques for Increasing Speaking Interest in Children with Speech Delay at TK Santhi Yasa Kumara Gianyar

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate how storytelling techniques can be used to help children with speech delays at TK Santhi Yasa Kumara in Gianyar improve their speech abilities. Speech delay is a common issue affecting children's communication development, often leading to difficulties in social interactions, academic performance, and overall language acquisition. The study aims to explore how storytelling can be integrated into early childhood education practices to address this issue. The research employs a qualitative phenomenological approach to gain in-depth insights into the experiences of children, teachers, and parents in using storytelling to improve speech development. Data was collected through direct observations of storytelling sessions, semi-structured interviews with teachers and parents, and analysis of curriculum documents. Storytelling was chosen due to its potential to engage children, promote active listening, and encourage verbal expression through interactive narratives. The findings indicate that storytelling techniques, when used consistently and with strong support from both families and the school community, significantly enhance the speech abilities of children with speech delays. Specifically, children showed improvements in vocabulary, sentence structure, and overall communication skills. The research concludes that storytelling is an effective tool for supporting children with speech delays, and recommends its integration into daily teaching practices, with ongoing involvement from families, to maximize its impact on speech development.

Keywords: Storytelling Techniques; Speech Delay

Introduction

Children are valuable assets for a nation, shaping its future. Therefore, early childhood education is crucial as a foundation for their development. According to the Indonesian Health Organization, children aged 0–6 years are considered the most vulnerable in their daily lives. Early life has a highly significant influence on determining an individual's quality of life (Rijkiyani et al., 2022). During this stage, physical, intellectual, emotional, linguistic, and social development are all accelerating. In today's era, education is essential, whether formal, informal, or non-formal. According to Watini (2019) Kindergarten is an educational institution for children aged 4–6 years to help them develop their potential from birth so they can grow and thrive healthily.

Kindergarten aims to help children develop their full physical and psychological potential, including religious and moral beliefs, motor skills, cognitive abilities, language skills, and artistic talents (Haryani et al., 2019). According to numerous studies, there is growth in various abilities within this society, including physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, discipline, independence, art, morality, ethics, appreciation, and religious beliefs. To provide optimal stimulation in supporting a child's growth and development, an appropriate parenting style is required. A child's development is significantly influenced by their environment and the caregiving patterns of others, which can shape their character and personality (Suwika, 2023).

Optimal parenting strategies emphasize three pillars of child development nurturing cognitive abilities (*mengasah*), providing affection (*mengasih*), and caregiving (*mengasuh*) to ensure that children grow and develop well. The parenting style adopted by adults impacts a child's religious beliefs and morals, depending on how well the child understands these values and how adults apply various parenting techniques (Rahmatia, 2023). From this, it can be concluded that different parenting approaches will influence how children behave as they grow into adulthood. One of the most critical aspects of a child's development is their ability to communicate through language. Humans use a system of symbols known as language to communicate. People of all ages, from children to the elderly, use language to convey and receive information.

As children communicate and adapt to their surroundings, they develop ideas, emotions, and thoughts. Language can be expressed through verbal symbols, writing, gestures, and music. Nonverbal cues, such as gestures, are also essential components of communication. The development of speech and language skills depends on factors related to cognition, motor skills, psychology, emotions, and the environment. Generally, language proficiency encompasses expressive quality (speaking) and receptive quality (listening and understanding). Since speaking skills are easier to learn, discussions about language development often focus on speaking abilities. However, this development can be significantly hindered by intrinsic factors within the child and environmental influences.

Effective communication is crucial in fostering a child's development, making the role of parents and caregivers vital in assessing the child's ability to interact within a social environment. Children who lack adult attention or proper caregiving often experience communication disorders, such as speech delays or developmental speech issues. Speech delay is a serious problem that requires prompt intervention, as it can negatively impact various aspects of a child's growth and development. Children with speech delays typically struggle to express their thoughts and feelings, even though they are capable of understanding them.

Method

This study used a qualitative phenomenological approach to understand the experiences of children with speech delays, teachers, and parents regarding the use of storytelling techniques in early childhood education. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it allowed the researcher to explore in depth the participants' perspectives on their experiences with storytelling as an intervention for speech development. The study participants consisted of children with speech delays at Santhi Yasa Kumara Kindergarten in Gianyar, teachers involved in the storytelling sessions, and parents who provided insights into their children's speech development. Data were collected through direct observation of the storytelling sessions, semi-structured interviews with teachers and parents, and analysis of curriculum documents used in the school. Observations aimed to document the storytelling techniques applied and interactions between children and teachers, while interviews explored parents' and teachers' views on the effectiveness of storytelling in helping children's speech development. The collected data will be analyzed thematically using a qualitative coding process, which involves transcribing interviews and organizing observational data to identify recurring themes related to storytelling techniques, speech improvement, and the roles of teachers and parents. Phenomenological analysis will be used to interpret the data, focusing on the essence of participants' experiences in the context of storytelling and speech development. The study will also take into account ethical considerations, including obtaining informed consent from parents and teachers, and maintaining

participant confidentiality. Although this study is limited to one school and a small sample size, the results are expected to provide useful insights into the application of storytelling techniques to support the speech development of children with speech delays, as well as provide recommendations for better educational practices in the future.

Results and Discussion

1. Speech Delay at TK Santhi Yasa Kumara

Speech delay is a term often used by paediatricians to describe children who experience delays in speaking. However, this term is not a definitive diagnosis but rather indicates the presence of speech development issues that could be symptoms of other conditions. For this reason, it is challenging to determine the appropriate speech therapy based solely on this term. An incorrect approach may lead to trauma for the child. Children with speech delay typically have difficulty expressing their thoughts in clear sentences or structuring a coherent narrative. Nevertheless, they usually do not struggle with language comprehension or using language symbols.

In children under five years old, speech delay issues are often caused by a limited vocabulary, making it difficult for them to understand language or find the right words to say (word-finding difficulty) (Tandri, 2011). In neurology, speech delay is occasionally referred to as developmental dysphasia, which is characterized by the absence of visible brain abnormalities. This issue is more related to developmental delays rather than disabilities, making intervention aimed at stimulating speech and language development crucial in helping children reach their full potential. According to experts from Purdue University, speech and language problems arise due to developmental factors in the environment, which eventually lead to academic difficulties for these children.

Children experiencing speech delay, also known as speech delay, are categorized as children with special needs (Sunderajan, 2019). Compared to their peers, children with special needs exhibit distinct physical, psychological, cognitive, and/or social characteristics. The specific issues these children face often relate to mental and emotional health, as well as difficulties with speech, vision, and hearing (Riarki, 2017). Children who lack a strong understanding of speech and its associated risks may face challenges in learning, writing, and academic performance, often resulting in poor outcomes. These issues can persist over time, affecting daily life and psychological well-being (Sunanik, 2013). Children with speech delays require specialized services to maximize their abilities. Detecting speech delays early is essential so that children can receive support tailored to their needs (Astriani, 2021). Children with speech delay need ongoing stimulation to train their communication abilities. These children must accomplish four key tasks in communication, understanding the meaning of conversations, expanding their vocabulary, arranging words into sentences, and pronouncing words clearly. A child's language skills will develop in line with the stimulation provided by parents or teachers (Azizah, 2017). There are two children with speech delays compared to their peers at TK Santhi Yasa Kumara. Special approaches are provided to ensure these children do not fall behind. Group storytelling methods are employed, but special attention is given to the children with speech delays, such as placing them in the front row and encouraging them to speak. Engaging stories can stimulate these children to become more active in speaking.

2. Types of Speech Delay in Children at TK Santhi Yasa Kumara

Children's language skills can be divided into two categories: expressive (speaking) and receptive (hearing and understanding). A child with strong language proficiency may be able to explain words clearly, but might struggle to understand two

words at once. On the other hand, some children may have speech that is difficult to understand, but their sentences may still be correct. Although speech and language may differ, these disorders often occur together. Children frequently face challenges in expressing themselves and require stimulation from adults (Adawiyah et al., 2022). In general, types of speech delay in children are divided into two categories, Functional Speech Delay A mild disorder caused by a lack of appropriate stimulation or parenting patterns. Non-functional Speech Delay A condition caused by receptive language issues, such as autism.

According to theory, signs of children experiencing speech and language disorders include the following, (1) Their development is delayed compared to younger children. (2) This disorder can manifest in speech and language development issues, such as content and language use. (3) The problems that arise are not only related to language production but also language comprehension. (4) The severity of the disorder can vary in sensitivity. (5) The child's speech and language development are not only slower but also shows different developmental stages (Dhieni, 2013). The type of speech delay observed is more related to the interaction between children and their peers or teachers at TK Santhi Yasa Kumara. Children often appear reluctant and unfocused during learning activities. They tend to avoid speaking or interacting. Additionally, one of the children speaks with noticeable hesitation, unlike other children of the same age.

3. Factors Causing Speech Delay at TK Santhi Yasa Kumara, Gianyar

Several factors can contribute to speech delays in children, such as sensitivity levels, lack of motivation to speak, reluctance of parents to use baby talk, children's reluctance to speak, or the use of foreign languages at home. A lack of encouragement to speak soon after a baby begins babbling is one of the most common and serious causes. A child's understanding may decline if they are not ready to babble. There are many factors that can influence speech delay, as stated by Yulianda (2019), who mentioned that the causes of speech delay consist of both internal and external factors. Internal factors include genetics, physical traits, nerve function, premature birth, and gender. External factors include the number of children or parents, education levels, economic status, family roles, and the use of two languages.

According to Istiqlal (2021), some signs of speech delay in children include unclear pronunciation, resulting in messages that do not match what the child intends to express. According to Nurfadhillah's research (2020), speech delay is marked by unclear explanations and illustrations, including the use of words. Children with slow speech will struggle to describe words accurately. This condition can become more serious if teachers are not attentive to the expressions the child conveys (Anggraeni, 2024). Another factor that may cause speech delay is brain dysfunction, particularly in the areas responsible for motor skills related to mouth movements. Neurological disorders, such as dysphagia (difficulty swallowing), can also result in speech difficulties (Dhieni, 2013).

According to Hurlock (2003), based on child developmental psychology research, speech delay occurs when a child is below the threshold of speech development, which should always align with their needs. Additionally, children may feel more comfortable using simple language, like baby talk, which helps others outside their immediate group understand their meaning. Children with speech delay often struggle with unclear written language, which is one of the key symptoms of this condition. Speech delay is not limited to one region but is a global issue. These signs can serve as early indicators, and screening is necessary to determine if there are any accompanying physical issues. Watching TV excessively can also contribute to speech delay, as it involves minimal interaction.

The child merely receives information without engaging in two-way communication, making it harder for them to grasp the importance of such interactions. Moreover, children who are rarely spoken to by their parents tend to have delays in developing their vocabulary. Hearing impairments can also lead to speech delays, as children are unable to hear conversations around them. Causes of hearing disorders include trauma, infections, congenital abnormalities, or the effects of medication during pregnancy. Speech organ abnormalities, such as a short tongue or cleft lip, can also affect speaking abilities. Children with autism often experience speech delays as part of a broader developmental disorder that includes cognitive, behavioural, and communication difficulties.

4. The Application of Storytelling Techniques for Increasing Speech Ability in Children with Speech Delay at TK Santhi Yasa Kumara

The storytelling method is a systematic approach that uses narrative media to convey ideas and achieve desired outcomes. This method is highly effective in encouraging children with speech delays, as it provides them with interaction and stimulation that motivates them to engage in speaking. Through physical, language, growth, and developmental assessments, a teacher can identify speech delays. Once a child with a speech delay is identified, the teacher typically coordinates with others to understand the challenges the child is facing (Aabidarba, 2022). The use of media is one of the ways teachers enhance student interest and engagement in learning, as it helps them overcome time, space, and sensory limitations (Aprinawati, 2017). The application of the storytelling method at Santhi Yasa Kumara Kindergarten aims to improve language skills and child development, particularly in speech abilities.

This technique can guide, stimulate, and direct the potential and interests of the children. The success of storytelling depends on the level of the speech delay the child is experiencing. Teachers need to use various methods (redundancy) to deliver messages so that children can listen more actively (Anggraini, 2019). In this method, stories involving characters that children love, such as superheroes or animals, capture their attention and encourage communication, both verbal and non-verbal. The children's interest in the story and characters helps them focus better, which in turn stimulates communication. The storytelling technique at TK Santhi Yasa Kumara often involves visual media, such as pictures of beloved characters or Hindu gods and goddesses, which help children understand the story and motivate them to speak.

This approach is designed to engage children, particularly those with speech delays, in an interactive and creative way. Story-based learning is recognized as an effective method that not only provides knowledge but also emotionally engages children, making it easier for them to remember and comprehend the messages in the stories. The storytelling technique highlights characters that children enjoy, such as heroes, superheroes, animals, and more, which sparks their interest in listening and communicating. The children's fascination with these characters or the stories being told helps them focus and automatically stimulates both verbal and non-verbal communication. Storytelling is one of the most frequently used techniques with children in the kindergarten, especially for shy or non-verbal children.

Children learn through concrete and active processes, so interactive and creative teaching methods like storytelling with pictures, short play, or religious songs are more engaging for them. The use of visual media in teaching, such as images of temples and Hindu Gods, helps children better understand and connect with others. The teaching methods used at TK Santhi Yasa Kumara are diverse and aimed at increasing children's attention, especially those with speech delays. One of the most effective teaching methods

is story-based learning. Through stories, children not only gain knowledge but also experience emotional growth. Children who read stories become more attentive and capable of analysing the moral messages contained within them.



Figure 1. The Application of Storytelling Technique at TK Santhi Yasa Kumara Gianyar.

Source: Research Results (2024)

The purpose of the storytelling method for children with speech delays is to improve interaction skills, particularly language abilities. Additionally, therapy for children with speech delays aims to help them develop, grow, and enhance their abilities, potential, interests, and talents. These goals are achieved through a comprehensive and individualized therapy program, where speech therapy and special education are the main components. This program aims to improve education through focused and structured teaching, individual physical therapy with or without medication, and behavioural therapy with relevant modifications. Although some successes have been reported, this study also highlights the challenges in implementing the storytelling method with children at TK Santhi Yasa Kumara.

One of the main challenges is that the community is not always aware of how important it is to use evidence-based methods for teaching children in a balanced way. Therefore, a close relationship with the community is necessary to ensure effective learning. In terms of communication, teachers should be honest when conveying information to the community about the progress of children with speech delays (Taseman, 2020). To address these challenges, the school has conducted socialization and education for the general public on the importance of storytelling methods in helping children with speech delays. Additionally, the limited time in the formal education curriculum can be an obstacle. The amount of academic material that needs to be taught sometimes limits the time available for using storytelling methods. The solution proposed by the school is to integrate the information contained in the stories told into everyday lessons.

Conclusion

The application of the storytelling technique at TK Santhi Yasa Kumara in Gianyar has proven to be effective in improving children's communication skills, particularly in language abilities. Children with speech delay are not unable to speak, but they experience a delay in speech compared to their peers. The storytelling method serves as a teaching tool to encourage children to speak and interact with those around them. The success of therapy is influenced by factors such as the child's age when starting

therapy, family involvement, and the intensity of the method's application. With the right approach, storytelling can significantly stimulate children's language development, enabling them to communicate more effectively in their social environment.

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