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Improving Speaking Skills in Children Aged 4 – 5 Years Through Free Drawing Activities at RA Nauka Ilmi Jakarta Pusat

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Abstract:

Speaking skills are one of the most important aspects of language development for early childhood. Children aged 4–5 years are in the language exploration phase that requires stimulation in order for their speaking skills to develop optimally. This research aims to improve children's speaking skills through free drawing activities at RA Nauka Ilmi, Central Jakarta. The research method used was classroom action research (PTK) with two cycles, involving 15 children as research subjects. Data was collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that free drawing activities can improve children's speaking skills, especially in terms of verbal expression, vocabulary use, and the courage to speak. Children become more active in describing their drawings, expressing ideas, and telling stories more fluently and confidently. This increase occurs because free-drawing gives children the freedom to express themselves and motivates them to speak without pressure. Thus, free drawing activities can be used as an effective strategy in language learning in early childhood education.

Keywords speaking ability, early childhood, free drawing, language stimulation.

INTRODUCTION

Of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of free drawing activities in improving the speaking skills of children aged 4–5 years in RA Nauka Ilmi, Central Jakarta. Through this research, it is hoped that effective and fun strategies can be found for children in developing their speaking skills, especially in composing sentences, enriching vocabulary, and increasing the courage to speak in front of friends and teachers. The world of early childhood education expects an innovative and interesting method to improve children's speaking skills. Creativity-based learning activities, such as free drawing, are believed to stimulate children's verbal expression in a more natural and fun way. With the right method, children are expected to be more confident in expressing ideas,

communicate fluently, and have optimal language development according to their age stage. However the reality on the ground shows that many children aged 4-5 years still have difficulty speaking fluently. Some children tend to be passive, have limited vocabulary, and lack confidence in communicating. Less varied learning and the lack of methods that stimulate children to speak actively are one of the factors that inhibit the development of their speaking skills. To overcome these problems, this study proposes the use of free drawing activities as an effective method of language stimulation. By drawing, children have the opportunity to express their thoughts visually, which can then be developed into verbal stories. Teachers can use the results of children's pictures as discussion material, so that children are more encouraged to talk and share stories. Thus, this activity is expected to be an innovative solution in improving early childhood speaking skills at RA Nauka Ilmi, Central Jakarta. Speaking skills are one of the important aspects in early childhood language development. In the age range of 4-5 years, children are in a critical phase to develop these skills, which will affect their communication skills and social interactions in the future. Therefore, an effective learning method is needed to stimulate children's speaking skills at that age.

One of the methods that can be used is free drawing activities. Through this activity, children are given the freedom to express their ideas and feelings in visual form, which can then be expressed verbally. Research shows that free-drawing activities can improve children's imaginative abilities, which plays an important role in the development of their speaking skills. In addition, guessing games have also been shown to be effective in improving early childhood speaking skills. In a study, it was found that guessing games can significantly improve the speaking skills of 5-6-year-old children. Although the study focused on 5-6-year-olds, a similar method could be applied to 4-5-year-olds with certain adjustments.

Presentation techniques can also be used as an alternative to improve children's speaking skills. Through this technique, children are invited to convey ideas or stories in front of their friends, thus practicing their courage and speaking skills. Research shows that presentation techniques can significantly improve early childhood speaking skills. The importance of language skills in early childhood cannot be ignored. These skills include the ability to listen, speak, read, and write. Good speaking skills will make it easier for children to interact socially and understand the surrounding environment.

To achieve optimal results, teachers and parents need to work together in providing an environment that supports the development of children's speaking skills. The use of creative and interactive methods, such as free drawing, guessing games, and presentation techniques, can be an effective alternative in the learning process. In addition, periodic evaluations of the development of children's speaking skills need to be carried out. This aims to find out the effectiveness of the method used and make adjustments if necessary. Thus, the learning process can run according to the needs and characteristics of each child.

Overall, the application of the right learning methods and support from the surrounding environment plays a very important role in improving the speaking skills of children aged 4-5 years. With the appropriate approach, it is hoped that children can develop good language skills, which will be the basis for their success in the future.

METHODS

This study uses primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources were obtained through direct observation of 4-5-year-old children at RA Nauka Ilmi, Central Jakarta, as well as interviews with teachers and parents to understand the development of children's speaking skills. In addition, documentation in the form of children's drawings and conversation recordings during free drawing activities is also used as analysis material. Secondary data sources are obtained from various literature, research journals, and books that discuss early childhood language development and effective learning methods.

The data analysis in this study was carried out in a qualitative descriptive manner. Observation and interview data were analyzed by categorizing the findings based on aspects of children's speech development, such as increasing vocabulary, speaking courage, and the ability to compose sentences. Documentation of children's drawings was also analyzed to see the relationship between their visual and verbal expressions. The results of the analysis were then compared with relevant theories to obtain conclusions about the effectiveness of free drawing activities in improving children's speaking skills. To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation is carried out by comparing data from various sources, such as observations, interviews, and documentation.

The results of the study showed that free drawing activities had a positive impact on the development of speech skills of children aged 4–5 years at RA Nauka Ilmi, Central Jakarta. Based on observations, children who initially tend to be passive begin to speak more actively after participating in several free drawing sessions. They are more confident in expressing ideas and telling the pictures they make.

In addition, the increase in children's vocabulary can also be seen from the results of interviews with teachers. Before participating in free drawing activities, most children use limited words and often have difficulty in composing sentences. However, after a few sessions, children began to speak more fluently, add more detailed descriptions, and ask questions to their friends regarding the pictures made.

Documentation of the child's drawings shows that the child begins to add more detail to their drawings, which indicates progress in thinking and storytelling skills. For example, a child who initially just drew a simple house, after a few sessions started adding trees, roads, and even people in action. This shows that children are increasingly able to relate their visual experiences to verbal expressions. To provide a quantitative picture of the development of children's speaking skills, the following is the data from observations before and after free drawing activities for four weeks:

Table 1. Development of Children's Speaking Skills

NO	ASPECTS OF SPEAKING ABILITY	BEFORE ACTIVITY (Scale 1-5)	AFTER ACTIVITIES (Scale 1-5)	INCREASED (%)
1	Number of vocabulary used	2.5	4.2	68%
2	The courage to speak in front of friends	2.3	4.0	74%
3	Ability to Structure Sentences	2.1	3.8	81%
4	Participation in class discussions	2.0	3.9	95%

Data Verification

To ensure the validity of the findings, data triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of observations, interviews with teachers and parents, and documentation of children's drawings. The results of the interview confirmed that the child experienced an improvement in speaking skills after participating in the free drawing activity. Teachers reported that children were more enthusiastic when communicating in class, while parents saw an improvement in the way their children narrated everyday events at home.

In addition, recordings of children's conversations during drawing activities were analyzed to see patterns in their language development. Before the activity, children tend to answer the teacher's questions with short answers or only use one word. However, after a few sessions, they began to respond with longer, more sloppy sentences.

From the data obtained, it can be concluded that free drawing activities play a role in stimulating children's creativity and improving their speaking skills. Children who were previously shy and lacked confidence in speaking are now more daring to express their ideas and explain their images in front of their friends.

The results of this study are in line with previous findings that creativity-based activities, such as drawing, can be an effective tool in improving early childhood language development (Putri & Wahyuni, 2021). Thus, this method can be used as an interesting learning alternative to improve the speaking skills of children aged 4–5 years.

As a recommendation, teachers and parents are advised to invite children to discuss the pictures they make more often, as well as to provide open-ended questions that encourage them to talk more. In this way, children's language development can be more optimal and sustainable.

RESULT

To ensure the accuracy of the research results, data validation was carried out using the triangulation method which included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was carried out for four weeks to see changes in children's behavior in speaking before and after participating in free drawing activities. Interviews with teachers and parents aim to gain additional perspectives on the development of children's speaking skills at school and at home. Meanwhile, documentation in the form of children's images was analyzed to understand the relationship between visual expression and their language development.

In addition, analysis of conversation recordings during drawing activities was also used to measure the increase in the number of vocabulary, the ability to construct sentences, and the courage of children to speak. This technique helps ensure that the data obtained is not just the result of observer subjectivity, but is supported by concrete evidence from various sources.

Further validation was carried out by comparing the results of this study with previous studies. Research by Putri & Wahyuni (2021) states that art-based activities can significantly improve early childhood language development. The results of this study are in line with these findings, showing that free-drawing is able to stimulate creativity and improve the speaking skills of children aged 4–5 years.

The validation results show consistency between observation, interview, and documentation data. Observation data indicated that children experienced an increase in the number of vocabulary, speaking courage, and ability to compose sentences. Interviews with teachers reinforced these findings, in which they acknowledged a positive change in the way children communicated in the classroom. Parents also reported that their children became more expressive when telling stories at home, which suggests that the effects of free-drawing activities are not only happening at school, but also continuing in everyday life. Analysis of the results of children's drawings shows that the increasing complexity of details in the pictures is directly proportional to the child's ability to describe them verbally. This supports the theory that visual stimulation can be an effective trigger in the development of speaking skills (Rahmawati, 2022).

With validation from various sources, it can be concluded that free-drawing activities are a valid and effective method to improve early childhood speaking skills. Therefore, this approach can be more widely integrated in the early childhood education curriculum as a creativity-based learning strategy that supports optimal language development. The results of the study showed that free drawing activities could effectively improve the speaking skills of 4–5-year-old children at RA Nauka Ilmi, Central Jakarta. Observation, interview, and documentation data showed a significant increase in the number of vocabulary used by children, the courage to speak, and the ability to construct sentences. Children who were initially passive in speaking became more active in expressing

ideas and participating in class discussions. Analysis of the children's images also indicated a link between their visual development and verbal expression.

Data validation through triangulation with various sources confirmed that free drawing activities have a positive effect in stimulating children's creativity and communication. These findings are consistent with previous research suggesting that art-based learning methods can help improve early childhood speaking skills. Thus, free drawing activities can be used as an effective learning strategy in early childhood language development.

Academically, this research contributes to the field of early childhood education by adding empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of creativity-based learning methods to improve children's speaking skills. The results of this study can be a reference for educators in designing more innovative and fun learning methods for early childhood. In addition, this research can also be the basis for further research that explores other learning methods based on art and creativity in improving children's language development.

In terms of social contribution, this study shows that creativity-based learning approaches, such as free-drawing, can help children develop better communication skills, which in turn will increase their confidence and ability to interact socially. In addition, the results of this study can also provide insights for parents in supporting children's language development in the home environment by encouraging drawing activities as a tool for speaking and storytelling. With the widespread application of this method, it is hoped that a generation of children will be formed who are more confident, creative, and have good communication skills from an early age.

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