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ACHIEVEMENT ANALYSIS LANGUANGE DEVELOPMENT OF 3-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the achievement of language development in a three-year-old child in relation to the family and social environment. This research employed a qualitative method using a case study approach, focusing on a child identified by the initial N, who lives in Dayah Baro Village, Syamtalira Bayu District, North Aceh Regency. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews with parents, and documentation analysis. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was ensured through source triangulation. The findings showed that the child's language development had begun to emerge but had not yet reached the optimal stage according to the developmental indicators for three-year-old children. The child demonstrated receptive language abilities, such as understanding simple instructions and recognizing basic vocabulary. However, the child's expressive language ability was still limited, as the child was not yet able to pronounce basic words clearly and relied more on nonverbal communication to express needs. Bilingual environmental conditions involving the Acehnese and Indonesian languages, limited social interaction with peers, and restricted communication stimulation were considered factors influencing the child's language development. Nevertheless, parents had provided language stimulation through daily activities such as talking with the child, singing songs, and engaging in active communication. This study indicates that early childhood language development requires a multifaceted approach

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Introduction

Early childhood is a period of rapid and significant growth that significantly influences later life, therefore requiring appropriate stimulation to maximize potential (Suyanto, 2005). Children's language development is greatly influenced by social interaction. Language acquisition occurs through interactions between children, parents, and peers; therefore, the social environment plays an important role in improving children's vocabulary and verbal abilities (Vygotsky, 1978).

Language development is an important component of child development, especially during early childhood. Language development throughout early life includes changes in phonetic symbol configurations that affect children's ability to communicate verbally and interact socially (N. Anggraini, 2020; Wiyani, 2014). Language enables humans to communicate, express emotions, and understand the perspectives of others. Language development includes the ability to articulate, understand meaning, and use words appropriately in social situations. Consequently, language development serves as an important indicator of children's overall growth and maturity.

Language development includes four competencies: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four abilities can be developed and nurtured. To improve children's linguistic and cognitive development, verbal stimulation should be introduced as early as possible. Children begin to understand language in the womb through continuous exposure to their mothers' voices (N. Anggraini, 2020). Parental involvement is very important in facilitating children's language development and should not be neglected. Their role is essential in supporting children's language development at every stage. Parents can engage with their children from infancy (N. Anggraini, 2020).

Language development is an important component of early childhood development because it underlies children's communication, cognition, and social interaction with their environment. Language abilities develop from infancy through hearing, imitation, understanding, and the use of linguistic symbols in everyday life. Early childhood is often referred to as the age due to accelerated brain growth during this phase; therefore, proper language stimulation is crucial for developing effective communication skills (Montessori, 1967).

Children's language development is influenced by biological characteristics, family environment, parenting approaches, and the frequency of social interactions they experience. The family environment is the primary context in which children acquire language skills through interactions with parents and other relatives. Children who are exposed to active speech stimulation often demonstrate better language development than those with limited verbal engagement (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). At the age of three, toddlers generally understand basic instructions, identify objects around them, and begin to formulate basic words to express their desires and emotions. These abilities develop progressively alongside children's cognitive development and linguistic experiences. Language development during this period forms an important foundation for children's future social, emotional, and intellectual growth (Santrock, 2007).

In addition, early childhood language development is closely related to children's ability to articulate thoughts, ideas, and emotions through verbal and nonverbal communication. Children with language development challenges often experience difficulties with social interaction and expressing their needs to others. Therefore, adequate attention and stimulation from.

Language development is one of the most important factors in a child's growth and development. Language has a broad scope, as it can be interpreted as the expression of feelings and emotions, and an individual's expression toward the surrounding environment. Speaking ability in children is a fundamental need and an essential part of their lives; therefore, the role of parents, family, and the surrounding environment greatly influences the provision of stimulation for children so that they do not experience language or speech delays. In its development, language can be influenced by many factors, both from the internal environment (family) and the external environment (society/environment). Differences in children's language development, both in form and structure, are strongly influenced by particular cultural and social backgrounds.

Children are individuals who have not yet reached adulthood, both physically and mentally. Society generally refers to children as people under the age of 18 years. In general, children are viewed as individuals who are still in the process of growth and, therefore, require guidance, protection, and education from adults. In Islam, children are regarded as one of the blessings bestowed by Allah SWT upon parents. Having children can be a source of happiness and fulfillment, but it also comes with great responsibility.

Early childhood is considered a golden age because during this period, children experience extraordinary growth and development. At this stage, children have not yet been greatly influenced by negative factors from outside or from their environment. In other words, parents and educators can more easily guide children toward becoming better individuals. Early childhood children are unique individuals with all the potential they possess. When a child is born, they are not yet social beings; this means that they do not yet have the ability to interact with others. Therefore, they need guidance and education from other people, especially parents, as the closest individuals to them (Suyanto, 2005; Hurlock, 1978).

Language is the primary communication tool used by children to interact with their surrounding environment, especially through spoken language. Language enables children to express their intentions, desires, or needs to others by using word arrangements that are easily understood. Language ability plays an important role in ensuring that the messages conveyed can be clearly understood by the listener. Therefore, children's language development greatly influences their ability to interact socially, learn, and grow (Abdul, 2009).

Language development in children occurs gradually from an early age, especially at the age of 3–4 years. At this stage, children begin learning language through the processes of listening, observing, and imitating the people around them. Factors such as environment, verbal stimulation, and social interaction also influence children's language development. Therefore, providing appropriate stimulation is very important to support children's language development according to their age stage. At this age, children begin to recognize and use more complex words and sentences in their communication (Ahmad, 2012).

Language development can be observed from infancy, early childhood, middle childhood, late childhood, and adolescence. Parenting patterns and the environment greatly influence children's language development. For example, in families that frequently interact with children, provide good verbal stimulation, and create a supportive environment, children tend to show faster and better language development. On the other hand, an unsupportive environment or lack of verbal stimulation can hinder children's language development (Dyah, 1989).

At the age of 3–4 years, children's language development enters the sentence acquisition stage. Children begin to recognize dialogue patterns and already understand when it is their turn to speak and when it is the turn of their speaking partner. During this period, the development of phonemes, semantics, syntax, and morphemes begins to emerge. Therefore, in analyzing the language development of children aged 3–4 years, various aspects such as phonetics, semantics, and syntax will be observed. Children at this stage begin to use simple sentences and significantly expand their vocabulary (Ida, 2018).

Methods

This study used a qualitative methodology through a case study approach to comprehensively examine the language development achievements of a three-year-old child based on the realities of the child's everyday environment. Qualitative research aims to understand social processes through direct observation and descriptive data (John W. Creswell, 1994). The case study approach was chosen because it focused on a specific subject: a child identified by the initial N in Dayah Baro Village, Syamtalira Bayu District, North Aceh Regency. Case studies aim to investigate a case in detail within a real-life context (Robert K. Yin, 1984).

The data collection approach is the most strategic phase in research because its primary objective is to obtain data. Inadequate data collection methods will result in research that fails to meet established requirements (Sugiyono, 2015). This study used data collection procedures including observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to evaluate children's linguistic competencies, including verbal expression, understanding of instructions, and communication skills.

Interviews were conducted with parents to obtain additional information about children's language development in the home environment. Observations were carried out to directly assess the stages of children's language development. The use of several data collection methods can provide more comprehensive and accurate data (Sugiyono, 2015).

The data obtained were analyzed using the descriptive qualitative method of Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. To maintain data validity, this study used triangulation techniques by comparing interview results and observation findings to obtain valid data consistent with the field conditions.

Result

Language development is related to children's linguistic abilities that develop through social contact and communication with their surrounding environment (Vygotsky, 1978). Children develop linguistic skills with support and encouragement from adults and peers. Language development is a consequence of children's cognitive progress. Language develops alongside children's cognitive development and their understanding of the surrounding environment (Piaget, 1952).

Language development refers to children's ability to understand speech and use words to communicate, both verbally and through gestures (Hurlock, 1978). Early childhood language development refers to children's ability to listen, articulate, understand, and convey ideas and emotions using basic language (Suhartono, 2005). Language development remains an interesting topic to study, as evidenced by the large number of scientific publications related to this issue that are still being published. This is in line with the condition of our society after facing the pandemic period, which required restrictions on social interaction and consequently played a role in changes in children's language development. Children's language development is a complex process in which children understand, use, and develop language abilities. This includes understanding words, grammatical structures, clear pronunciation, and the ability to communicate with others. Social intelligence is a person's ability to understand and interact effectively with others. It involves empathy, understanding social norms, the ability to play with peers, and communicating positively. These two aspects, language development and social intelligence, complement each other and enable children to communicate well, understand the feelings of others, and build healthy relationships.

Observations and interviews with parents revealed that the language development of the 3-year-old child identified by the initial N had begun but was not yet optimal according to the stages of early childhood language development. The child was able to understand basic instructions, use basic terminology, and express needs through simple verbal and nonverbal means. This indicates that the child's receptive language abilities were more developed than expressive language abilities.

Children aged between 2 and 7 years are in the preoperational stage, in which they begin to use symbols and words to represent objects or experiences (Jean Piaget, 1952). At this stage, children begin to label objects, imitate speech, and use basic language for communication. This development is strongly influenced by cognitive maturity and external stimulation. N's difficulty in forming basic phrases indicates that expressive language development is still in the early stage and requires more stimulation. Children possess an innate capacity for language acquisition known as the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) (Noam Chomsky, 1957). This ability enables children to understand language from an early age. This can be seen in Child N, who was able to understand basic instructions even though verbal abilities had not fully developed.

1. The Influence of Family Environment on Children's Language Development

The family environment has a major influence on children's language development. Based on interview results, communication within the family used two languages, namely Acehnese and Indonesian. The use of two languages in daily life can affect children's language development, especially in sentence construction and vocabulary mastery.

Children's language development is highly influenced by social interaction with the surrounding environment (Vygotsky, 1934). Children learn language through communication with adults, imitation, and habituation in daily life. Parents act as providers of language stimulation through conversation, pronunciation examples, and responses to children's speech.

In this study, parents had provided language stimulation such as talking with the child during bathing, before bedtime, and singing together. These activities are forms of scaffolding or adult assistance to support children's language development. The more frequently children receive communication stimulation, the more their language abilities will develop.

2. The Influence of Bilingualism on Children's Language Development

Bilingualism is the ability to use two languages like a native speaker (Bloomfield, 1933). Bilingualism occurs when a person can produce meaningful speech in a second language (Haugen, 1953). Bilingualism is the ability to use two languages according to situations and communication needs, not necessarily with equal proficiency in both languages (Grosjean, 1982).

Child N grew up in a bilingual environment using both Acehnese and Indonesian simultaneously. Bilingual conditions can influence children's language development. Bilingual children generally require more time to understand and use language because they must learn two language systems at once.

According to bilingualism theory, the use of two languages in early childhood can enrich vocabulary and improve cognitive flexibility. However, in some children, bilingualism may also cause temporary delays in sentence construction because children are still adapting to two languages.

In this study, the child was already able to understand several words and simple instructions, but the ability to form simple sentences had not yet developed optimally. This was suspected to be influenced by the child's adaptation process to the use of two languages in the family environment.

3. Children's Receptive Language Ability

Children's language development is strongly influenced by social interaction and the environment. Children acquire language comprehension abilities through communication with parents, teachers, and peers. Language develops through social processes that later become internal abilities. The more frequently children receive stimulation through conversations, stories, and instructions from the environment, the better their receptive language abilities will develop (Vygotsky, 1978).

The child's receptive language ability appeared to develop quite well. The child was able to understand several simple commands such as "close the door" or retrieve certain objects. This shows that the child was able to understand language received from the surrounding environment. In early childhood language development theory, receptive language develops earlier than expressive language. Children generally find it easier to understand others' speech before being able to express it clearly themselves.

Environmental support in the form of active communication from parents helps children understand the meaning of language heard every day. Child N's ability to understand simple instructions indicates positive development in receptive language despite limited speaking ability.

4. Children's Expressive Language Ability

Children's language development can be facilitated through communication in the languages used both in educational settings and in the surrounding environment. It is important for all children to articulate their ideas and emotions through language, facilitating expression and reciprocal sharing. This is expected to improve children's storytelling skills and expressive language abilities (Husnah & Eliza, 2021).

Child N's expressive language ability had not yet fully developed. The child could only articulate a limited number of basic words such as "run," "escape," and "drink," but had not yet achieved the ability to form simple sentences consisting of 2–4 syllables, as expected in the developmental stage of a 3-year-old child.

At the age of three, children commonly show language growth and can use short phrases to express their wishes (Hurlock, 1978). At this age, language development is marked by children's increasing ability to combine words into basic phrases and express concepts more clearly (Santrock, 2007). The limitations in Child N's expressive language ability indicate the need for increased communication stimulation. Limited opportunities for verbal communication and restricted social interaction were believed to affect the child's speaking ability development.

5. Use of Nonverbal Communication in Children

In expressing wishes, the child more frequently used nonverbal communication such as pulling parents' hands toward desired objects. The use of gestures indicates that the child understood what was desired but was not yet able to express it clearly through verbal sentences. Gestures are an early form of communication commonly used when children's verbal abilities have not yet fully developed (Goldin-Meadow, 2003).

Gestures help children communicate needs before being able to use language completely. The use of nonverbal communication by Child N indicates that communication abilities had actually begun to develop, although speaking abilities still required further practice and stimulation.

6. The Influence of Social Interaction on Children's Language Development

Interview results showed that the child rarely played and interacted with peers because other people often had difficulty understanding the child's speech. This condition limited opportunities for practicing speaking skills. Social interaction has an important role in children's language development (Vygotsky, 1978). The more frequently children communicate with others, the more their language abilities and speaking confidence will develop.

Social experiences help children improve vocabulary, communication abilities, and confidence in expressing opinions (Papalia, 2004). Limited social interaction can cause expressive language development to progress more slowly because children have fewer opportunities to use language actively.

7. The Role of Parents in Stimulating Children's Language Development

Parents have an important role in supporting children's language development through consistent stimulation. Forms of stimulation include talking with children, reading picture storybooks, singing together, role-playing, and giving positive responses to every communication attempt made by children.

Children learn language through processes of imitation and reinforcement from the environment (B.F. Skinner, 1957). When children receive positive responses to their speech, they become encouraged to repeat language use.

In this study, parental support was reflected in attention toward children's language development and expectations that children would be able to speak fluently according to their developmental stage. Emotional support and active communication from the family are important factors in helping children's language development progress optimally.

No	ACHIEVEMENT INDICATOR	BB	MB	BSH	BSB
1.	Pretending to read picture storybooks in storybooks using their own words	✓			
2.	Beginning to understand two instructions given simultaneously, e.g.: take the toy on the table then give it to the caregiver or teacher		✓		
3.	Beginning to express desires by uttering simple sentences (6 words)		✓		
4.	Beginning to retell experiences that have been experienced with simple stories	✓			

Notes:

BB = Not Yet Developed

MB = Beginning to Develop

BSH = Developing as Expected

BSB = Developing Very Well

Based on the indicators of language development achievement for 3-year-old children, the following results were obtained:

1. Pretending to read picture storybooks using their own words

The child was categorized as Not Yet Developed (BB). The child was not yet able to describe picture contents or pretend to read books using their own language. The child was also unable to verbally convey simple stories. This was evident from speaking abilities that were still limited to certain single words. This condition indicates that verbal imagination and language organization abilities still require further stimulation.

2. Beginning to understand two instructions given simultaneously

The child was categorized as Beginning to Develop (MB). The child had started to understand simple instructions given by parents, such as taking objects or closing doors. Although the child did not always respond perfectly to two instructions at once, language comprehension abilities had begun to emerge. This indicates that receptive language development had progressed according to the early stage of 3-year-old development.

3. Beginning to express wishes using simple sentences

The child was categorized as Beginning to Develop (MB). The child was not yet able to express wishes using complete simple sentences. The child more frequently used single words or nonverbal communication, such as pulling parents' hands toward desired objects. Nevertheless, this behavior indicates communication attempts by the child. The child understood what was wanted but did not yet possess sufficient verbal language ability to express it in sentence form.

4. Beginning to tell experiences using simple stories

The child was categorized as Not Yet Developed (BB). The child was not yet able to describe experiences using simple language. The child's ability to convey information was still very limited, so the child was unable to connect words into simple stories. This is related to limitations in vocabulary and sentence construction abilities.

Observation results showed that Child N's language development had begun to develop in the aspect of language comprehension but still experienced delays in expressive language aspects. The child was already able to understand several simple instructions and recognize certain words but was not yet able to form simple sentences and verbally express wishes clearly. Factors such as a mixed-language environment, limited social interaction, and restricted communication stimulation were suspected to influence the child's language development.

In early childhood language development theory, the age of 3 is an important period for the development of speaking, asking questions, and forming simple sentences. Therefore, children need consistent stimulation from their surrounding environment. Parents can provide stimulation through active communication, inviting children to speak, reading picture storybooks, inviting them to role-play, and giving children opportunities to interact with peers. Continuous stimulation can help improve vocabulary, speaking confidence, and the child's ability to construct simple sentences.

Observation results show that each child's language development has different stages. Child N shows fairly good potential in language development, particularly in the ability to understand language, so appropriate guidance and stimulation are needed so that the child's expressive language skills can develop optimally according to their developmental stage

Discussion

The research findings indicate that the language development of the 3-year-old child identified by the initial N has begun, particularly in receptive language abilities, including understanding basic instructions and recognizing certain vocabulary terms. However, the child's expressive language abilities remain inadequate, as the child experiences difficulty formulating basic words and relies heavily on nonverbal communication. These findings support Hurlock's (1978) theory, which states that children's language development begins with the ability to understand language before verbal expression emerges.

Children's linguistic development is shaped by social interaction and environmental context. Vygotsky (1978) states that toddlers acquire language through interactions with parents and their surrounding environment. This study created a multilingual environment for the child through the use of Acehnese and Indonesian languages. Bilingualism can enhance children's vocabulary; however, it may also result in temporary delays in speaking abilities due to the need to understand two linguistic systems simultaneously (Grosjean, 1982).

Limited social interaction with peers negatively affects children's language development. The child rarely interacted with peers, thereby limiting opportunities to develop verbal abilities. In addition, the child frequently used gestures, such as pulling a parent's hand, to express needs. Goldin-Meadow (2003) argues that nonverbal communication represents an early stage of children's communicative development before optimal verbal abilities emerge.

Parents greatly influence their children's language development by engaging in active conversations, singing, reading stories, and providing positive responses to children's speech. Regular stimulation helps improve children's vocabulary and verbal abilities. Therefore, family and social support are essential for children's expressive language development to progress appropriately according to their age.

Conclusion: Based on the results of observations and interviews with the parents of a 3-year-old child identified by the initial N in Dayah Baro Village, Syamtalira Bayu District, North Aceh Regency, it can be concluded that the child's language development has begun to progress but has not yet reached the optimal stage according to the language development indicators for 3-year-old children. The child has demonstrated fairly good receptive language abilities, such as understanding several simple instructions, recognizing basic vocabulary, and responding to simple questions. In addition, the child is able to pronounce several single words, such as "run," "escape," and "drink," indicating the early development of expressive language abilities. However, the child's expressive language abilities still show limitations. The child is not yet able to construct simple sentences, cannot verbally recount experiences, and still relies more frequently on nonverbal communication, such as pulling a parent's hand to express desires. Word pronunciation is also still unclear, so the child's communication with the surrounding environment has not developed optimally. Based on the indicators of language development achievement for 3-year-old children, the child falls into the Not Yet Developed (BB) category for the indicators of pretending to read picture storybooks and recounting simple experiences, and into the Beginning to Develop (MB) category for the indicators of understanding two instructions simultaneously and expressing desires using simple language. The research results also show that environmental factors influence children's language development. The use of two languages in the family, namely Acehnese and Indonesian, can enrich children's language experiences; however, under certain conditions, it may also affect children's ability to construct sentences because they are still adapting to understanding two different language systems. In addition, the lack of social interaction with peers limits children's opportunities to practice speaking abilities. Children interact more with family members and rarely communicate with the wider social environment. Nevertheless, the parents have provided language stimulation through daily activities such as talking with the child, singing, and communicating during bath time and before sleep. These forms of stimulation indicate positive family support for the child's development. Therefore, consistent stimulation through active communication, reading storybooks, role-playing, providing positive responses to children's communication efforts, and increasing social interaction with peers is highly necessary to support more optimal language development. This study demonstrates that early childhood language development progresses through different stages for each child. Child N has fairly good potential for language development, especially in receptive language abilities. Therefore, with proper guidance and stimulation, the child's expressive language abilities are expected to gradually develop according to the appropriate developmental stage.

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