

# Language development in preschool children

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**Abstract.** One area of development in the growth of basic skills in kindergarten is language development. Language development is a person's ability to communicate with others. Language development in Preschool Children is a change in the sound-symbol system that affects the ability to speak. Early childhood can identify themselves and interact and work together with others. Language allows children to translate experiences into symbols that can be used to communicate and think. Language skills in kindergarten age children are divided into five aspects of development: phonetic, semantic, syntactic, morphemic, pragmatic. With language, children can communicate their intentions, goals, thoughts, and feelings to others. Kindergarten age children are school-aged children who are at a vulnerable age of 4-6 years, where during this time, the child develops very rapidly.

Keywords: language development and Preschool children

## 1. Introduction

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is part of preschool education. This education specifically has been regulated in Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 the Year 2003 article 28 article I, which states that PAUD is held before the level of basic education. Furthermore, it is stated in paragraph 3 that PAUD in the formal line is in the form of a Kindergarten (TK), Roudatul Atfal (RA), or another equivalent form (Depdiknas: 2003).

PAUD aims to develop children's potential optimally so that basic behaviors and abilities are formed by their level and development (MONE, 2003). The children's potential can be developed through learning activities as outlined in the Teaching and Assessment Program Lines in the Kindergarten Education System Semester, a set of teaching and learning activities planned to be carried out in preparing and laying the foundation for the development of students Furthermore. The activity is an effort to develop the formation of behavior and the development of basic skills adapted to the stages of child development (Ministry of National Education, '2003). Development of these basic abilities, including the development of language skills.

Language development allows children to learn to understand and control themselves. When children learn to speak, they unintentionally develop phonological, syntactic, semantic, morphemic, and pragmatic systems (Tompkins, 1991: 8; Jalongo, 1992: 12). That knowledge, Ellis (1989: 79) calls it an element of language. Children can develop this knowledge in life in their environment, both at home, in play life, and at school. in school life, teacher knowledge about children's language is useful for planning, implementing, and evaluating learning. Thus the teacher should have extensive knowledge about children's language development and how to develop it so that later they have the right language skills and good, both in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

## 2. Materials And Methods

Based on the study of literature in the literature review formed research questions, namely 1) what is meant by language development and 2). What is the process of language development in kindergarten age children? The type of data used is secondary data; the method of data collection is a literature study. The method used for this study is the study of literature. The data obtained are compiled, analyzed, and concluded to get conclusions about language development in kindergarten age children.

### 3. Discussion

#### A. Language Development

Development is a change that lasts a lifetime and is influenced by various interacting factors, such as biological, cognitive, socio-emotional. At the same time, Language Development One of the basic abilities of an individual/child who develops gradually according to his age level, Each level of age has developmental tasks separate, the stimulation provided is adjusted to the task of development at every age level.

The language development of early childhood, especially kindergarten children, has its characteristics. Jamaris divides language development into early childhood into 2, namely:

1. Characteristics of language skills of 4-year-old children
  - a. There is rapid development in children's language skills.
  - b. Children can use sentences properly and correctly.
  - c. Children have mastered 90% of the phonemes and syntax of the language used.
  - d. Children can participate in a conversation. The child has got it to listen to other people talk and respond to the conversation.
2. Characteristics of the language skills of children aged 5-6 years
  - a. They can already reveal more than 2500 vocabulary words.
  - b. The vocabulary that can be expressed by children involves color, size, shape, taste, smell, beauty, speed, temperature, difference, distance, and surface comparison (rough-smooth).
  - c. Children aged 5-6 years can perform the role of a good listener.
  - d. Children can participate in a conversation; children can already listen to other people talk and respond to these conversations.
  - e. The conversation carried out by children aged 5-6 years has involved many comments on what is done by themselves and others and what they see. Children at the age of 5-6 years can do self-expression, writing, reading, and even poetry.

#### 3. Development Aspect Of Children's Gardening Age

Language is one of the symbols for communication, which includes aspects of language development, phonetic, semantic, syntactic, morphemic, pragmatic.

##### a. Development of Phonetic Knowledge

Children are more easily understood by parents at the age of kindergarten, after mastering how to produce several phonemes. (Allen & Marotz, 1994). The scope of successful phonetic production, however, is still indicated in the classroom. You can find a clear difference in the production of specific utterances for children.

##### 1) Phonetic Knowledge in Oral Language

Children's understanding of similarities and differences in sound and their ability to focus on similarities and differences are seen in their verbal play. Children can be suddenly focused on rhymes and oral rhythms when they play with blocks, art objects, and various toys for children. songs, rhymes, poetry readings, and word games are fun sources of play and increase children's awareness of sound patterns and sound differences. (Buchoof, 1994; Colgin, 1991).

The acquisition of phonetic knowledge is also evidenced by the ability of kindergarten children to distinguish similarities in early and final sounds. (Kirtley, Bryant, MacLean, & Bradley, 1989). Children's understanding of alliteration (similarity of initial sounds) and rhyme contributes to reading acquisition in two ways (Bryant, MacLean, Bradley, & Crossland, 1990): (1) insight into rhyme and alliteration is a sign that children can distinguish phonemes, and (2) insight into rhymes helps children to be able to see similarities in speech patterns.

Kindergarten children can understand differences in pronunciation and may ridicule their friends who speak with different pronunciation as well; children who have difficulty will be quiet, do not want to risk being wrong or embarrassed. The teacher must be aware of this kind of situation and encourage acceptance and communication among all children.

##### 2) Phonetic Knowledge in Writing Language

Significant evidence of the acquisition of children's phonetic knowledge of written language occurred during kindergarten. For more than 20 years, researchers on the

emergence of reading and writing skills have documented the acquisition of kindergarten children in receptive and expressive knowledge in written language through close observation of early reading and writing attempts. (Clay, 1982; McGee & Richgels, 1990; Sulzby, 1981, 1985a, 1986b; Temple, Nathan, Burris & Temple, 1999). Overall research focuses on what children do when they try to read and write and what they say about what they are doing, that is, when kindergartners make their storybooks, they can comment on the process and their expectations in writing them.

- Evidence of phonetic knowledge in reading efforts  
Kindergarten children can show evidence of phonetic knowledge in their efforts to read when they focus on sound-letters. When asked to "read" a familiar storybook, some children try very hard to "spell it out" with a focus on the book. When they experience difficulties, some children then refuse to read, indicating that even though they know that the book is the source of the story, they cannot spell it: "I don't know how to read the word" or "I don't know this word." Rejection like this indicates an understanding of the importance of spelling in reading "the truth." (Sulzby, 1983). Other kids when they don't manage to spell the storybook. Will often look at parents to confirm whether the spelling is "correct" (Otto, 1984)
- Evidence of phonetic knowledge in writing efforts  
Kindergarten children exhibit a variety of behaviors in the emergence of writing abilities that indicate that they are beginning to focus on how the writing represents certain utterances' sounds. Early attempts at spelling in children provided rich evidence regarding the acquisition of phonetic knowledge about written language. Children's initial attempts to write in English are complicated by a variety of ways how sounds are spelled in English spelling patterns.

Children's initial attempts at spelling have been classified in the following categories:

- Premonemic spelling, characterized by the use of letters in writing, does not seem to have a relationship with specific sounds that are usually associated with the letters. The relationship between sound and writing is represented inconsistently, with the child trying to choose letters randomly without considering the specific sounds that are specifically represented by the letters. Children may connect a series of letters together or groups of letters consisting of three or four letters into units that are similar to a word.
- In phonemic spelling is characterized by evidence that children try to spell phonemes. There are three categories of phonemic spelling: (1) initial phonemic spelling, referring to examples where only one or two speech sounds are represented. For example, a snow princess will be represented only as "PS," and large will be represented as "BSR." (2) letter-name spelling, each letter name used to represent a sound; without additional letters entered. For example, when LADE is written for the word lady, each letter name corresponds to the special sound the child represents, and (3) transitional spelling, characterized by words which, although not commonly read, have common features and consonant/vowel patterns.
- Conventional spelling/spelling is common; kindergarten children begin to develop a small amount of written vocabulary for commonly spoken words. In general, these words are often used, such as to, go, mine, me, dear, mama, papa, and the names of family members and names of pets and their own names.

b. Semantic Knowledge Development

Kindergarten children typically have a vocabulary for conversations of more than 1500 words or more (Allen & Marotz, 1994), and understand more words. (Piper, 1993). Different expressive vocabularies used in conversations between children can also be observed. The development of semantic knowledge during kindergarten includes the addition of new words and concepts and the development of an increasingly broad vocabulary or schemata network. Pre-existing concepts and vocabularies are increasingly

refined. Synonyms and antonyms added together with words that represent meanings that are almost similar but have different meanings (shades of meaning).

1) Semantic Experience and Development

For kindergarten children, vocabulary is obtained through direct and indirect experience. Some vocabulary is learned through direct planting, usually, because it is difficult to interpret orally.

It is shown by example, the color "red" is explained by showing a red rose. Direct planting is called ostensive naming. (Bloom, 2000). Vocabulary is also learned through the context of conversation as well as through reading and writing activities such as reading books together with children. The context of the conversation and reading together provide important supporting mediation in vocabulary acquisition. (Tabors, Beals & Weirzman, 2001).

The experience of reading books together shows children new concepts and vocabulary that they might not encounter in informal conversations. Children can then use this new knowledge in their creative writing, "try" the words they have heard used in books.

2) Interpret Words

The researchers focused on children's ability to interpret words as a way to explore semantic development. Kindergarten age children specifically emphasize the shape or function of things when interpreting them. (Allen & Marotz, 1994; Berko Gleason & Pan, 1989). For example, in interpreting the ball, the child will emphasize that the ball can "bounce," or other ball functions. These understandings seem to change from an understanding that was originally based on individual experiences to a more socially based understanding, even though children's understanding does not have the same elaboration as the understanding made by their parents.

3) Figurative Language

Understanding and using figurative languages in children, such as simile and metaphor, also provides evidence of semantic knowledge (Broderick, 1991; Waggoner & Palermo, 1989) when storybooks in which figurative language is shared and discussed, the child can develop an understanding of simile and metaphor. For example, in Eric Carle's storybook entitled *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (1969), a cocoon is shown as a small house. When reading this book with your child, you can mediate understanding of this figurative language by pausing to read a storybook and talking about the concept of "home."

4) Humor

The sense of humor in kindergarten children is an indication of the development of semantic knowledge. The puzzles and jokes they make are usually based on semantic comparisons or words that have many meanings.

The kindergarten-age humor also shows its understanding of non-compliance, funny situations because of the mismatch between what is expected to happen and what is happening. These discrepancies include excessive forms of crop sizes or improper planting. (Cornett, 1986). Encouraging a sense of humor in childhood planting can help the development of increasingly rich vocabulary.

5) Vocabulary in Kindergarten Children's Stories

The kindergarten-age monologue shows evidence of the acquisition of semantic knowledge.

6) Semantic Knowledge in Retelling

Children's efforts to retell familiar stories also indicate the development of semantic knowledge. In retelling these familiar stories, they usually use words that are always the same meaning that shows the development of their vocabulary. For example, substituting "place of residence" for "home," "food," for "vegetables" and "running" for "running," all of which indicate an understanding of the meaning of words and semantic similarities.

When children correct themselves in retelling their stories, they show their understanding of subtle differences in semantics and schema knowledge.

c. Development of Syntactic Knowledge

Kindergarten age children can arrange basic sentences with a little difficulty. The average sentence length of a five-year-old is 5 to 7 words. (Allen & Marots, 1994). Children can understand other people's speech, which is more syntactically complex than the utterances they produce. The acquisition of syntactic knowledge in kindergarteners continues as they begin to use more complex structures of noun phrases and verbs. (Owens, 1988, 2001). Increased syntactic knowledge helps children communicate complex ideas.

1) Use of Pronouns

Obtaining more complex noun phrase structures involves the use of clearer pronouns. Most kindergartners have mastered the use of pronouns to indicate subjects and objects, but in general, they have only begun to master the use of reflective pronouns.

2) The relationship between nouns and substitutes can also be shown more clearly during kindergarten. Not all uses of pronouns are clear, but this shows that some children are still trying to learn the relationship between nouns and pronouns. An unreferenced pronoun is a pronoun that does not refer to what nouns are and is not indicated by the substitute word or the sentence structure. In conversations, Unreferenced pronouns can be clarified in the context used or in body language; but in written language, the unreferenced pronoun disturbs our understanding.

3) Passive Sentences

Understanding passive sentences require children to use the way they make sentences. The syntax or structure of passive sentences varies from the structure of active sentences that are more commonly used. Passive sentences are arranged by the arrangement of object-predicate-actors (A cat is chased by a dog), which is different from the arrangement of the object-predicate-object, which is more often used in utterances (The dog chases the cat). During kindergarten, children especially begin to understand the structure of passive sentences, even though they can only make short sentences using passive sentence patterns.

d. Morphemic Knowledge Development

As the syntactical complexity of sentences in kindergarten children increases, these children also begin to show an increase in their understanding of morphemic knowledge, both inflectional and derivational morphemes. Inflationional morphemes are used to show verbs appropriate for the time, plural nouns, and ownership. Derivational morphemes are used to show comparisons and to change the grammatical categories of one word (for example, from verbs to nouns, as in teaching to Teacher = teaching, which is a verb to become a teacher which is a noun).

1) Verb Tenses

Kindergarten children develop their understanding of how to show time verbs (Verb tenses) using morphemes. In regular verbs, -ed is added at the end of the word as in wanted and jumped. The number of irregular verbs that are mastered is increasing, such as went, gone, and caught.

One way to check children's understanding of using morphemes to show verb tense is by seeing how they rearrange stories from familiar storybooks.

2) Ownership

Monologues reading children's stories can contain evidence that they are learning how to use ownership markers.

3) Comparison and Superlative Forms

Increased morphemic knowledge is demonstrated in the use of comparisons and superlative forms by young children. Kindergarten-age children seem to begin to understand that there are two ways of making comparisons and superlative forms. One way to make a comparison is shown by adding the words 'more than' or 'less than' and the superlative form is usually indicated by the addition of the prefix 'ter' which shows the meaning of 'most' as in Jupiter is the largest planet in the solar system.

4) Nouns Ending in -er

By age 5, most children have receptive and productive knowledge about the suffix -er in nouns (Owens, 1988, 2001). Children know that by adding the -er suffix to English verbs, they can make a name to indicate the person doing the work.

e. Development of Pragmatic Knowledge

What about the continued development of knowledge of aspects of language: phonetic, semantic, syntactic, and morphemic, kindergarten age children also continue to learn how language is used differently in different situations and conditions.

1) Pragmatic Knowledge of Oral Language

In many ways, practical knowledge will determine a child's ability to communicate and participate in various social situations. Kindergarten children use language for a wide variety of purposes. They use language to tell stories, direct peers, express pride, play roles, invite others as sources of requests for help or information, and to get and attract other people's attention. (Owens, 1988, 2001). Bahasa is also used indirectly to ask for help or regulate the behavior of others. Teachers can expect to see the difference between children in understanding and using pragmatic knowledge in spoken and written languages. Pragmatic language knowledge in children is influenced not only by a variety of social situations and conditions but also by the frequency of their opportunities and interactions as listeners or speakers.

**Various Oral Language Contexts.** The various social situations and conditions encountered by children during childhood can broaden their acquisition of pragmatic knowledge. Children can learn how to respond during verbal interactions with their teacher and other school staff, such as school principals, vice-principals, messengers, secretaries, older children, assistant teachers, and guest speakers. Pragmatic knowledge includes knowing when someone can talk and to whom and the topics of the right conversation and cultural expectations for starting, maintaining, and ending a conversation.

**Improve Conversational Skills.** During kindergarten, children's abilities in conversation continue to develop. Childish children gradually begin to consider and respond to the listener's perspective and maintain the topic of conversation. Evidence of this development can be seen in the conversation that occurred during the reading of the book together as a group. In the early days of kindergarten, children's comments on the topic of the story might seem unrelated to the story; however, with supportive scaffolding from the teacher, the child can participate in a shared conversation about the topic of the story or event in the story.

2) Pragmatic Knowledge in Writing Language

The emergence of a kindergarten-aged reading or writing behavior or identification identifies an increased understanding of the pragmatic aspects of written language. Kindergarten children can identify a variety of writing functions, including writing activities to remember things, communicate with others, learn, and express their ideas and stories (Freeman & Sanders, 1989).

**Tell and dictate stories.** Pragmatic knowledge of kindergarten-age children towards written language is shown in the various ways they are used when telling a story and when dictating a story to be written by someone (usually a parent). In Silzby's (1982) research on storytelling and story dictation by kindergarten-age children, he notes that stories that are generally told are characterized by an atmosphere of conversation and intonation of sounds between sentences. In contrast, dictated stories are generally characterized by the arrangement of units per unit (words, phrases, short sentences) and segmented intonation patterns. Some children in the study closely observed those who wrote while dictating it.

**Genre understanding** can be seen when creating their stories and children's knowledge of specific texts such as fairy tales or alphabet books. When asked to make

a fairy tale, many children will begin the story with "at some point." Children also formally close the story by saying, "done."

The format chosen by the kindergarten children about the storybook indicates their understanding of how language is used.

#### 4. Conclusion

Kindergarten children continue to refine and expand their knowledge in every aspect of language, both receptive and expressive. Parents more easily understand kindergarten children; however, phonemic production still appears at this age. Children's comments when making their own stories indicate an understanding of the writing process and their hopes in using writing. The use of prephonetic, phonemic, transitional, and conventional spelling in children shows the development of phonetic knowledge.

The acquisition of semantic knowledge during kindergarten is included in learning new vocabulary and the continuous development of increasingly complex schemata. Kindergarten children use a more complex arrangement of nouns and verbs and understand the various syntactic arrangements they can produce. The increase in morphemic knowledge of kindergarten children is demonstrated in their use of inflectional morpheme to show verb tense, ownership, and comparison. Pragmatic knowledge of kindergarten children in spoken and written language is influenced by social situations and conditions and social interactions they experience.

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