



Teaching Strategies for Children with Expressive Language Disorder

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Abstrak

Siswa yang mengalami gangguan komunikasi akan membutuhkan bantuan khusus dari guru di lingkungan pendidikan reguler. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan strategi dan kegiatan pengajaran bahasa Inggris untuk siswa dengan gangguan bahasa, khususnya gangguan bahasa ekspresif. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif deskriptif yang berfokus pada studi literatur dari referensi yang relevan. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis secara deskriptif, sehingga strategi pengajaran bahasa Inggris dan pengelolaan kelas untuk siswa dengan gangguan bahasa ekspresif dapat dirumuskan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi pengajaran yang dapat meningkatkan bahasa ekspresif adalah *Modeling, Expansion, Choices, Waiting or Withholding, Imitation, Parallel Talk, Picture Communication, Paraphrase, dan Place Things Out of the Child's Reach*. Sementara itu, kegiatan yang cocok diterapkan adalah; buku tanpa kata, buku teks sederhana, bubble, playdough, mainan hewan, set kereta api atau mobil, dan mainan makanan. Dengan demikian, diharapkan siswa dengan gangguan bahasa ekspresif dapat meningkatkan kompetensi bahasanya baik dalam penggunaan reseptif maupun produktif.

Kata kunci: Strategi Pembelajaran, Anak-anak, Gangguan Bahasa Ekspresif

Abstract

Students who have communication disorders will need special help from teachers in the regular education environments. This research aims to investigate the English teaching strategies and activities for students with language impairment, especially expressive language disorder. This research used descriptive qualitative research design which focus on literature study from relevance references. The collected data were analysed descriptively, thus the English teaching strategies and classroom management for students with expressive language disorder could be formulated. The result of the study showed that teaching strategies that could improve expressive language are *Modelling, Expansion, Choices, Waiting or Withholding, Imitation, Parallel Talk, Picture Communication, Paraphrase, and Place Things Out of the Child's Reach*. Meanwhile, the activities that is suitable to be applied for students with expressive language disorder during instruction through which those activities are also applicable at home practice; wordless books, books with simple text, bubbles, play dough, toy animals, trains sets or car, and play food. Therefore, by implementing those strategies and activities, it is expected the students with expressive language disorder could improve their language competency either in receptive or productive use.

Keywords: Teaching Strategies, Children, Expressive Language Disorder

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language becomes a natural basic need for human to acquire since it is used by one to convey ideas and thoughts during communication and any kinds of interaction with others. Children are born ready to learn and acquire a language, but they need to learn the language or languages that their family and environment use (Dunst et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2020). Learning a language takes time, and children vary in how quickly they master milestones in language and speech development. Typically developing children may have trouble with some sounds, words, and sentences while they are learning. However, most children can use language easily around 5 years of age (Licata-Dandel et al., 2021; Van Lith et al., 2021; Wildová & Kropáčková, 2015).

There are different periods in reaching each milestone in the language development, many experts agree that all children would get through certain stages when acquiring

language (Birgisdottir et al., 2020; Pransiska, 2017). Base on previous study state that normal child will cry a moment after the birth, and continue to develop their language ability (Phillips et al., 2021; Sproston et al., 2017). They start cooing at 6 weeks old and babbling at 6 months old. One-word utterances and two-word utterances are usually gained at the age of 1-1.5 years old. When they reach two years old, they will begin to inflect the words, question, and form negative sentences. The complex sentences generally appear at five years old and the mature speech is at the age of ten. Moreover other study state that children would begin to produce their first word at the age of 1-1.4 years old and expand the numbers of vocabularies each and every day starting at 18 months old even until 18 years old and more (Grady, 2006).

Meanwhile, there is a psychological condition of an individual which results in phenomenon of language impairment and impacts on their inability to convey verbal or written messages, it is amongst the definitions of expressive language disorder (Indah, 2017; Sandra & Kurniawati, 2020). This type of disorder involves the difficulty in expressing thoughts and ideas. The children with expressive language disorder have difficulty in conveying or expressing information in speech, writing, sign language or gesture. For preschool children, the difficulty in expressing themselves in writing skills is not evident, as they have not started their formal education. Some children are late in reaching typical language milestones in the first three years, but eventually catch up to their peers. These children are commonly referred to as “late talkers” (Elmahallawi & Gabr, 2021; Fitriyani et al., 2019; Fox et al., 2002). The children who continue to have difficulty with verbal expression may be diagnosed with expressive language disorder or language impairment.

A language disorder is an impairment that makes it hard for someone to find the right words and form clear sentences when speaking. It can also make it difficult to understand what another person says (Rosmala et al., 2021; Torres et al., 2020). A language disorder can cause issues with the comprehension and/or use of spoken, written, and other forms of language. Students with a language disorder may struggle with the form, content, or function of language (Ashman & Snow, 2019; Sheppard et al., 2021). Language disorders or language impairments are disorders that involve the processing of linguistic information the main problems which may be experienced by a learner can involve grammar (syntax or morphology), semantics or other aspects of language. Language disorders can affect both spoken and written language among the learners (Arnold & Reed, 2019; Paul et al., 2018).

Moreover, Students who have communication disorders will need special help from teachers in the regular education environments. When a child has a communication disorder, it can adversely impact both speech and language development, resulting in the student falling behind both socially and academically (Lisa et al., 2019; Sandra & Kurniawati, 2020). Teachers can help by first understanding what type of communication disorder the student has. Students with speech impairments may be difficult to understand and experience problems expressing ideas. These students may be reluctant to answer questions in class, and in particular, give presentations individually or in a group (Arnold & Reed, 2019; Rosmala et al., 2021). Educators must be patient and encourage the student to participate in classroom activities, giving them adequate time to speak. Educators should create an environment of acceptance and understanding in the classroom, and encourage peers to accept the student with speech impairment (Faruq et al., 2021; Hambly & Fombonne, 2012). Practice and maintain easy and effective communication skills by modelling good listening skills and by facilitating participation of all students in classroom discussions and activities.

The awareness of basic child language development, delay, deviance, and disorder are crucial for the teaching and learning strategies and classroom management during the process of instruction. When a student has a communication disorder, teachers can be immensely helpful by learning about the particular speech and language disorder afflicting the student, following a few straightforward teaching strategies, and working cooperatively either within

the classroom setting or externally. Base on those problem the researcher are interesting in conducting the study with aims to investigate the English teaching strategies and activities for students with language impairment, especially expressive language disorder.

2. METHOD

This study used descriptive qualitative research method. Descriptive qualitative method is concerned on the analysis of the relationships between non-manipulated variables and the development of generalizations (Riduwan, 2008). This study used literature study techniques from the relevance sources. This research conducted by searching information relating to teaching strategies for children with expressive language disorder. This information can be obtained from scientific books, research reports, scientific essays, theses and dissertations, regulations, regulations, yearbooks, encyclopedias, and other written sources both printed and electronic (Nimehchisalem & Bhatti, 2019). Data collection is done by using documentation techniques, namely by reading, reviewing, studying, and noting the essence of the literature. This writing is descriptive in nature and describes systematically. Therefore, the teaching strategies that suit the needs of children with expressive language disorder could be formulated.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Language Development Period

Language development of children is divided in three periods, including prelingual period, early lingual period, and differentiation period. The explanation of those period can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Three Periods of Children Language Development

No.	Kind of Period	Description
1.	Prelingual (age 0-1 years)	At this period children cannot pronounce 'spoken language' as spoken of adults, in the sense of not following the rules of the applicable language. In this period the child has a language of its own, such as babbling instead of communication with others. For example baba, mama, tata, which may be a reaction to a particular situation or a particular person as a symbol for the beginning of a mental process maturity at the age of 9-10 months.
	Early Lingual (1 to 3 years)	In this period, children began to speak the first words, though not yet complete. At this time some combination of letters is still difficult to say, and few letters still difficult to pronounce like r, s, k, j, and t.
	Differentiation Period (3 – 6 years)	In this period children's skills in organizing the differentiation of words and sentences are more appropriate. This period there may still be difficulty in pronouncing pluralistic and complex consonants. Nouns and verbs are more differentiated in its use, it is characterized by the use of prepositions, pronouns and auxiliary verbs. Language for communication functions properly - really starts to work.

Speech and Language Disorder

Speech and language are central to the human experience, and their acquisition is a seemingly automatic process that continues from birth through adolescence. The development of language and speech is one dimension that is very vulnerable to a bad environment. The identification of speech and language disorders often occurs when a child does not achieve expected or normative developmental milestones. Speech and language disorders refer to problems in communication and related areas such as oral motor function. Speech and language disorders can have a devastating impact on children's health and development. These disorders can profoundly affect children's ability to communicate; learn; and establish and maintain strong family, peer, and community relationships. They elevate risk for a wide variety of adverse outcomes, including social isolation and mental health disorders, learning disabilities, behavior disorders, poor academic achievement, long-term placement in special education, and lifetime unemployment. When combined with other risks, such as poverty, severe speech and language disorders can increase risk for a wide variety of adverse outcomes, including social isolation and mental health disorders, learning disabilities, behavior disorders, poor academic achievement, and chronic underemployment.

Some characteristics of language disorders include improper use of words and their meanings, inability to express ideas, inappropriate grammatical patterns, reduced vocabulary and inability to follow directions. Language disorder affects receptive language, expressive language, or both. Receptive language relates to an individual's ability to comprehend linguistic information, whereas expressive language relates to an individual's ability to formulate and produce linguistic information. To be diagnosed with a language disorder, the child's language performance must be shown to be significantly below age expectations to the extent that it would be likely to interfere with communicative, social, academic, and/or vocational functioning.

Defining Expressive Language Disorder

Expressive language is the use of words, sentences, gestures and writing to convey meaning and messages to others. In addition, Expressive language disorder means a child has difficulty conveying or expressing information in speech writing, sign language, and gesture. Expressive language skills include being able to express wants and needs, express thoughts and ideas, label objects in the environment, describe actions and events, put words together in sentences, use grammar correctly (e.g. "I had a drink" not "Me dranked"), retell a story and answer questions, and argue a point of view.

Furthermore, expressive language disorder is generally a childhood disorder. This type of disorder involves the difficulty in expressing thoughts and ideas. The children with expressive language disorder have difficulty in conveying or expressing information in speech, writing, sign language or gesture. For preschool children, the difficulty in expressing themselves in writing skills is not evident, as they have not started their formal education. Some children are late in reaching typical language milestones in the first three years, but eventually catch up to their peers. These children are commonly referred to as late talkers. The children who continue to have difficulty with verbal expression may be diagnosed with expressive language disorder or language impairment.

Symptoms of Expressive language disorder

The children with expressive language disorder might have difficulties in combining words to form accurate phrases and sentences. For example, a child may not use the correct form of the verb tense (they might say "I goed" when they mean "I went") or they might omit important grammatical words (they might say "I going" when they mean "I am going"). They typically produce much shorter phrases and sentences than other children of the same age,

and their vocabulary (the number of words they know and use) is smaller and more basic. The children with expressive language disorder are usually below the average level for their age in various following perspectives such as: (1) putting words and sentences together to express thoughts and ideas, (3) recalling the words when needed, (3) using language appropriately in a variety of settings with different people (for example, at home, in school, with parents and teachers).

There are symptoms of difficulty in expressive language such as children has difficulty naming items and objects, use sentences that are shorter than others of the same age, use 'jargon' (made-up words) in speech, produce sentences that are 'muddled' (e.g. words in wrong order, lots of stops and starts, a lack of flow), are not understood by unfamiliar people, have difficulty finding the right words to use in conversation or when describing or explaining something, and has trouble retelling a story.

Strategies to Improve Expressive Language

Based on the symptoms of difficulty in expressive language above, there are some strategies to Improve Expressive Language as show in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Strategies to Improve Expressive Language

No.	Strategies	Description
1.	Modeling	In this first strategy, Children need to hear speech in order to imitate speech. During play and daily routines always talk to child about what she/he is doing (e.g. "put your arms into your shirt" or "Mommy is cooking breakfast"). If child makes an attempt at a word, but it is not clear, remember that most young children cannot pronounce many words correctly and that is okay. If child says "ba" for "ball" consistently, this is his word for "ball". Be sure you always pronounce it correctly with the "l" sound on the end, so he/she hears it correctly.
2.	Expansion	In this strategy, when child labels or says a single word, always expand on that word so child hears it in a simple sentence. For example, if child says "baby", you can say "The baby is sleeping," or if child says "more" you can state: "You want more juice".
3.	Choices	In this strategy, child is always given choices during meal and play time when possible to encourage child to use a gesture/vocalization to communicate his wants or needs. Then, if child points toward the kitchen when he is hungry, give him a choice by holding up his cup and then showing him the milk and juice and asking "Are you thirsty? Do you want milk or juice?". Let child makes a choice by looking/ pointing/touching/vocalizing/using words.
4.	Waiting or Withholding	This strategy works by giving child time to respond before giving the desired object or food. Child may just need extra time to respond. Withhold the child's desired object/food until he uses or attempts to use a word/sign for it.
5.	Imitation	Young children love to imitate. It can be started by imitating something that child already does, especially something fun or silly like making faces or unusual sounds. Then, move to imitation of new actions by singing songs like "Wheels on the Bus" or imitation of environmental or animal sounds such as "whee, zoom, beepbeep, ding-dong, uh-oh, moo, woof, meow."
6.	Parallel Talk	Parallel Talk is a strategy in which the adult describes what the child

No.	Strategies	Description
		is doing or seeing. When parents are playing with their child or child is eating, bathing, etc. talk to him about what he is doing. For example: “You are building a big tower,” or, “You stacked five blocks! Uh oh, one fell down,” or, “You are eating a fruit.
7.	Picture Communication	Pictures of objects and activities are used in this strategy. By using pictures, child can point to objects he wants. For example: make child a communication book of daily routines by using pictures placed into a small photo album. Pictures of foods from a magazine can be cut out and stuck a Velcro on the back so he can make choices by handing the picture to you.
8.	Paraphrase	Simple Language with toddlers is used instead of lengthy explanations or directions. Do not say: “You need to put on your coat because it’s cold outside and we’re going to Grandma’s house”. Instead, say “Put on your coat.” Simpler language is used when asking children to complete a task or follow a direction works best.
9.	Place Things Out of the Child’s Reach	This strategy works by placing child’s things far from his reach. When he wants it, he will have to gesture or verbalize. The same can be done with his favorite toy.

Activities for Building Expressive Language

Expressive language can be elicited in a number of different ways. These are the activities for building expressing language that can be applied at home. The activities are show in [Table 3](#).

Table 3. Activities for Building Expressive Language

No.	Activities	Description
1.	Wordless Books	Wordless books are great for young children who are working on developing expressive language skills. With young children, you can ask them direct questions like, “What is this?” or “What color is this?.” In this activity, parents can expand upon their child’s answers by saying things like, “You’re right; that’s a cat. He’s a black cat.” This will help model language and provide good input as well as working on output.
2.	Books with Simple Text	Books with simple text are a great way to elicit expressive language in children with emerging language. The important thing to remember when reading books with your child is to ask Open-Ended questions. Parents can ask children a question where they generate their own answers. For example: “What is she doing?,” or “How is he feeling?” Avoid questions with one-word answers.
3.	Bubbles	Bubbles are a great tool to use with younger children. Blow bubbles and pause. Teach child to ask for more bubbles, or get him to say, “my turn,” if he would like to blow bubbles too.
4.	Playdough	Playdough can be used to build scenery, animals, food or any number of creations. Allow children to express what they want to create or what they want you to build. Cookie cutters or other moulds can help children if they are having trouble utilising their imagination to build with playdough. This is a great opportunity to have child request more or different playdough by using an, “I want....” or an “I need...” phrase.

No.	Activities	Description
5.	Toy Animals	Toy animals can be used for pretend play. Again, be sure to ask open-ended questions. This is also another opportunity to have child utilize “I want...” or “I need...” phrases. Ask him to narrate or describe the activity and animals.
6.	Train Sets or Cars	Cars and trains can be used in a similar manner that toy animals would be used. Cars or trains sometimes come with tracks or ramps. If there is no ramps, a table or another piece of furniture can be used as an improvisation. Tracks or ramps can be utilized to have child verbalize “go again” or “go up/down” or “ready...set...go” In this activity, children can pretend they are cooking and/or serving you food. Have them ask you what you’d like to eat, or express what they are cooking and how, and to whom they are serving it to. Puppet also can be used in this activity. Ask the children to feed the puppet and tell it, “Eat the banana” or “Eat the apple puppet”. Engage them by pretending to either enjoy or dislike the food in an exaggerated manner.
7.	Play Food	

Discussion

A language disorder is impairment in the ability to understand and/or use words in context, both verbally and nonverbally. According to previous study people with language disorder have a problem in their daily conversation and have limitation to communicate (Levia et al., 2019). The sufferers do not know how to share the ideas and also being polite to others. One or a combination of these characteristics may occur in children who are affected by language learning disabilities or developmental language delay. Children may hear or see a word but not be able to understand its meaning. They may have trouble getting others to understand what they are trying to communicate. In addition, Language disorder is characterized by impairments in vocabulary, sentence structure, and discourse level communication (Gillam, 2017; Kiogora, 2021). Finally, language disorder must be present from early development and must not be attributable to intellectual impairment or global developmental delay (Indrayani, 2016; Yuniari et al., 2020).

For many children, the cause of Expressive language Disorder is not known. Some children experience difficulties in language development alone, while other areas of their development are progressing as expected (Hambly & Fombonne, 2012; Pierson, 2020). For other children, expressive language disorder is associated with known developmental difficulties or impairments for example, down syndrome, autism or the loss of hearing (LeBarton et al., 2013; Sandra & Kurniawati, 2020; Sproston et al., 2017). Acquired expressive language disorder is caused by damage to the brain, such as stroke, traumatic head injury, seizures or other complicated medical conditions. Many children with expressive language disorder might have an accompanying receptive language disorder meaning that they have difficulty in understanding the language in general.

Previous study reveal that several strategy that can improve expressive language skills namely modeling, expansion, choices, waiting or withholding, imitation, parallel talk, picture communication, paraphrase, and place things out of the child’s reach (Pierson, 2020). It is proved by other study that found modeling intervention may be effective in increasing symbol comprehension and production, and may be an appropriate intervention strategy for some preschoolers with autism (Drager et al., 2006). It is supported by other study that examine expansion effect in expressive language delays in children (Wolfe, D. L. & Heilmann, 2010). The result found that child produced more total expressive language in the expanded input condition, revealing that modifications to examiner input also impacted the child’s pragmatic language use.

Most of the toys or activities that already have at home can help child begin to talk more and practice expressive language skills. Several activities that recommend by researcher such as wordless book, bubbles, play dough, toy animals, train sets or Cars, and play food. Those toys or activities can help child begin to talk more and practice expressive language skills. It is in line with previous study that found teachers in Spanish–English bilingual preschool classrooms varied in the way they shared wordless picture books with the children, with analyses yielding three distinct narrative styles: didactic constructors, didactic providers and conversational sharers (Schick, 2015). These styles were differentiated in the manner in which teachers engaged the preschoolers in book-sharing interactions. Other study also found that Bubble Play promotes systems thinking by requiring players' use of visual concepts and is designed to support instruction in basic mathematics and language skills (Vishkaie & Levy, 2015).

The implications of this study provide an overview related to children's speech and language disorders. This research also shares strategies and activities for building expressive language that can improve children's speech and language disorders. This research will be useful for readers, especially for educators for students who experience speech and language disorders so they can implement strategies and activities that can improve children's expressive language. This research is still very limited because it is a literature review. The data presented is only based on an analysis of existing sources. Therefore future research should continue to investigate this strategy and its effects on functional communication directly in the real world especially in classroom.

4. CONCLUSION

Language disorders can profoundly affect children's ability to communicate; learn; and establish and maintain strong family, peer, and community relationships. Language disorder affects expressive language of children. The children with expressive language disorder have difficulty in conveying or expressing information in speech, writing, sign language or gesture. In addition, the children with expressive language disorder might have difficulties in combining words to form accurate phrases and sentences. Several strategies can be applied to improve expressive language of children. These strategies are appropriated used by parents at home. Those strategies can be supported with most of the toys or activities that already have at home.

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