



Digital Talking Media: Conversation Strategy in Improving Children's Speaking Skills in Early Childhood Education Services

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received October 22, 2022

Revised October 23, 2022

Accepted December 12, 2022

Available online December 25, 2022

Kata Kunci:

Media Digital Talking, Keterampilan Berbicara, Perkembangan Bahasa, Anak Usia Dini

Keywords:

Digital Media Talking, Speaking Skills, Language Development, Early Childhood



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ABSTRAK

Keterampilan berbicara pada anak menjadi hal penting dalam mendukung potensi tumbuh kembang anak, sehingga dibutuhkan strategi dalam menumbuhkan kemampuan tersebut. Salah satu permasalahan keterlambatan bicara anak adalah kurangnya stimulan dalam bentuk kegiatan bercakap-cakap pada masa awal perkembangannya. Penelitian ini untuk menganalisis pengaruh penggunaan media digital talking terhadap keterampilan berbicara anak kelompok usia 4-5 tahun pada layanan pendidikan anak usia dini. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan jenis penelitian quasi eksperimen design. Data dikumpulkan dari sampel sebanyak 60 anak usia 4-5 tahun. Metode yang digunakan dalam mengumpulkan data yaitu kuesioner dan tes. instrumen yang digunakan dalam mengumpulkan data yaitu lembar soal. Data yang diperoleh kemudian dianalisis dengan menggunakan analisis statistik deskriptif dan inferensial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan terdapat pengaruh positif terhadap keterampilan berbicara anak usia 4-5 tahun pada layanan pendidikan anak usia dini melalui aktivitas bercakap-cakap menggunakan media digital talking. Penggunaan media digital talking dalam dua bentuk yaitu boneka bicara dan aplikasi talking pada android. Dari segi ketertarikan, penggunaan aplikasi talking pada android menjadi pilihan paling banyak diminati anak. Kesimpulan penelitian ini adalah terdapat pengaruh positif terhadap penggunaan media digital talking dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara anak pada taman kanak-kanak kelompok usia 4-5 tahun.

ABSTRACT

Speaking skills in children are essential in supporting the growth and development potential, so a strategy is needed to develop this ability. One of the problems with children's speech delays is the need for more stimulants in the form of informal activities during their early development. This study analysed the effect of using digital talking media on the speaking skills of children aged 4-5 years in early childhood education services. This study uses a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design research type. Data were collected from 60 children aged 4-5 years. The methods used in collecting data are questionnaires and tests. The instrument used in collecting data is the question sheet. The data obtained were then analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The results showed a positive influence on the speaking skills of children aged 4-5 years in early childhood education services through conversation activities using digital talking media. The use of digital media talks in two forms, namely talking dolls and talking applications on Android. Regarding interest, using the talking application on Android is most in demand by children. This study concludes that there is a positive influence on the use of digital talking media in improving children's speaking skills in kindergarten, the age group of 4-5 years.

1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking skills become one of the important developmental aspects and need to get attention both for parents and on education services (Nursafira, 2020; Widiasmara & Wachidah, 2022). Good stimulant

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administration, will have an impact on the maximum increase in the child's potential, where the child's ability to speak varies greatly, especially the speed in obtaining words, some children's speech ability starts from slow and fast, some start quickly and continue at a steady pace (Herbein et al., 2018; Rowe et al., 2012). Additionally, children speaking skill is formed when they obtain enough stimulants from the environment that relates to their learning interest (Khotijah, 2016; Krumm et al., 2016). Furthermore, developing children's storytelling skills and understanding other's stories requires support from caregivers and primary educators (Pesco & Gagné, 2017; Shofa & Suparno, 2014). However, this depends on a richer language experience to strengthen the processing skills, which facilitates the development of children's language, especially in speaking skills (Aprinawati, 2017; Weisleder & Fernald, 2013).

The development of speaking skills in early childhood solely depends on the full support from related parties. Therefore, promoting adult-child interactions is necessary to gain communicative competence, either through natural exposure or educational interventions (Barac & Bialystok, 2011; Levin & Haines, 2007; Puspita et al., 2016). This support can be provided through children's communication opportunities from an early age, and they should always be accompanied by parents or adults (Hermoyo, 2015; Ratnasari & Zubaidah, 2019). Furthermore, the children's speaking skill goes through various stages to develop and requires proper support, formation and nurturing from an early age (Khoiriyah & Rachman, 2019; Nuraeni et al., 2019). Therefore, the growing and developing children's intelligence is marked by their ability to arrange words in speaking.

Various learning media in multimedia give options for parents and educators to monitor the development of their children. The availability of technology-based learning media is imperative in adjusting the level of children's needs and curiosity (Arisantiani et al., 2017; Nusir et al., 2013; Pearce et al., 2020). For instance, the use of technology-based media solves various problems related to children's motivation in developing speaking skills (Asmonah, 2019; Ruiyat et al., 2019a). However, some findings suggest that technology-based learning media limits children from interacting with other people, which affects the communication interactions with their surrounding environment (Arissantianti et al., 2017; Yulsyofriend et al., 2019).

The development of children's speaking skills is done in various ways, including using a communicative approach, conversation methods, storytelling, and questionnaires with or without tools/media (Hendri, 2017; Ramadani, 2016). Additionally, several techniques to improve speaking skills include asking the children to repeat the stories told by the teacher, motivating them to actively participate in speaking activities, role-playing, and using hand puppets (Prawoko et al., 2019; Sari, 2017; Shofa & Suparno, 2014). However, the conversation method is widely used by teachers in developing speaking skills in the learning implementation at kindergarten. This is because the method positively impacts the improvement of children's speaking skills (Fadlilah et al., 2019).

The development of children's speaking skills is still varied since some children are still unable to speak fluently and clearly (Herbein et al., 2018; Munasih & Nurjaman, 2017; Rowe et al., 2012). This problem is caused by several factors, including the use of ineffective and boring learning methods, lack of media usage to stimulate speaking skills of 4-5 years old children, and not motivating and appreciating those who speak fluently. The formation of children's competence at the early stage of development, especially speaking skills, greatly affects their ability to communicate as adults. Moreover, speaking skill is a unification between thinking and speaking whose development is determined by a combination of communication literacy and cognition (Ratnasari & Zubaidah, 2019; Stadler & Ward, 2006). Therefore, delaying this process decreases the children's active speaking period. Furthermore, a decrease in the habitual speaking in female children occurs between the ages of 7 and 8, while for males, it is between 8 and 9 years.

Creating children's interest in learning and developing speaking skills depends on the techniques used by the parents and educators to provide adequate stimulants and attract their attention (Aprinawati, 2017; Dewi, 2020; Ruiyat et al., 2019b). Moreover, science and technology development has penetrated all life aspects and is marked by the availability of digital media to support all human activities, including the learning process. Learning using digital devices significantly increases children's literacy skills (Maureen et al., 2018; Wijayanti et al., 2020). Furthermore, teachers should create an attractive learning atmosphere for children to attract their participation interest in class activities without feeling overwhelmed (Karima & Kurniawati, 2020; Wati & Yulsyofriend, 2019). This condition increases the children's memory, improves their vocabulary, and helps them remember what they learned.

The existence of media in children's environments is very diverse. However, it is challenging for teachers to choose the right media that matches children's learning interests to increase their motivation in the learning process. Moreover, the creation of a friendly and conducive environment is necessary and can be conducted by presenting fun media for children (Nazara, 2011; Novitasari, 2019). Technology-oriented or digital media has become a form of interaction favored by children (Amelin et al., 2019;

Masykuroh & Khairunnisa, 2022). Digital media is also one of the major technological changes that have fundamentally switched the global media landscape in various fields (Fitria & Juwita, 2018; Kaempf, 2018). Additionally, the social nature of digital communication can be used in several situations to improve mood and is expected to affect children's learning motivation (Amelin et al., 2019; Hoge et al., 2017; Masykuroh & Khairunnisa, 2022).. This media penetrates the early learning process, supports the exposure of new ideas and knowledge, increases opportunities for contact and social support, and becomes new opportunities for children to access messages and information (Chassiakos et al., 2016). Therefore, the use of digital media such as cellphones, tablets, video games, television, and other social media is widespread and penetrates all aspects, including the learning implementation (Rocha, 2019).

Digital talking is one form of media used in developing children's speaking skills. This media works by recording children's voices as a part of the learning technology development. Based on the previous findings, there was an improvement in children's speaking skills by using a voice recorder (Widiastuti et al., 2014). Furthermore, educators need to update the teaching methods along with global changes through the emergence of digital technology. Therefore, this study examines the importance of media awareness and the increase in the use of digital talking media on children's speaking skills in the early development stages. The skills will be measured through the aspects of pronunciation, vocabulary development, sentences, fluency, and expressions. The limitations of stimulants for children from parents and with technological development in the child's environment make digital-based media one of the options in supporting children's development, especially in speech. Therefore, this study is present to find out how much influence digital talking media in improving children's speech skills at the age of 4-5 years so that it can be one of the references for parents and teachers in practicing speaking skills. This study, as well as providing information on the importance of giving stimulants to children in the early stages of development by providing opportunities for children to speak through conversation activities using digital media.

2. METHOD

A quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design was used to determine the effect of using digital talking media on children's speaking skills in kindergarten. The study applied a nonequivalent control group design, namely using the experimental and the control/comparison class. Moreover, the implementation steps were initiated by conducting a pre-test and a post-test on the two groups and giving treatment. The data was collected from a sample of 60 children aged 4-5 years at kindergartens in Makassar City. Furthermore, the sample was divided into two, namely the experimental and the control class consisting of 30 children each. The speaking skills were assessed through several criteria and aspects. The implementation aspects included pronunciation, vocabulary and sentence development, fluency, and expressions when speaking during the pre-test and post-test. Therefore, the criteria for each aspect are described in Table 1. The methods used in collecting data are questionnaires and tests. the instrument used in collecting data is the question sheet.

Table 1. Aspects of Children's Speaking Skills

Aspect	Criteria
Pronunciation	Vowel or consonant clarity Pronunciation accuracy
Intonation	Does not mix with other languages Set the use of the voice intonation Put stress on certain syllables Sets the tone/length of the tempo
Vocabulary and Sentences	Using complex sentences consisting of 5 - 6 words The sentence structure is complete containing SPO elements
Memorization	Fluency Orderly and sequentially
Mimics or expressions	Conformity with the story told Shows suitable gestures Facial expressions Inspiration

Aspects of children's speaking skills (Syamsuardi, 2021)

The data obtained were then analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data found in the field, while inferential statistics were used to analyze the effects of the given treatments on the development of children's speaking skills.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Digital talking media is implemented as a stimulant for the development of children's expressive language skills, especially speaking skills. This media was applied to the experimental class in kindergarten for the learning age group of 4-5 years. The steps for implementing of the action starting to mplementation of the pre-test and post-test before and after the treatment was conducted in the experimental and the control class. Data on children's early speaking skills was collected through test sheets prepared in the form of observations. Furthermore, the assessment elements of children's speaking skills consist of 14 items, including pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, memorization, and mimic/expression.

Treatment implementation, digital talking media was implemented using two forms, namely talking dolls and device applications, which were used interchangeably. Each use of media involved 15 children and was executed at the initial learning activity. After the teacher had made an apperception of the learning activity to be done, the children were allowed to use digital talking media for 15 minutes. Furthermore, the treatment was performed for 10 days after giving the pre-test. However, the post-test was given after the treatment is finished. The results of the children's speaking skills data in the control class before and after treatment showed in [Figure 1](#).

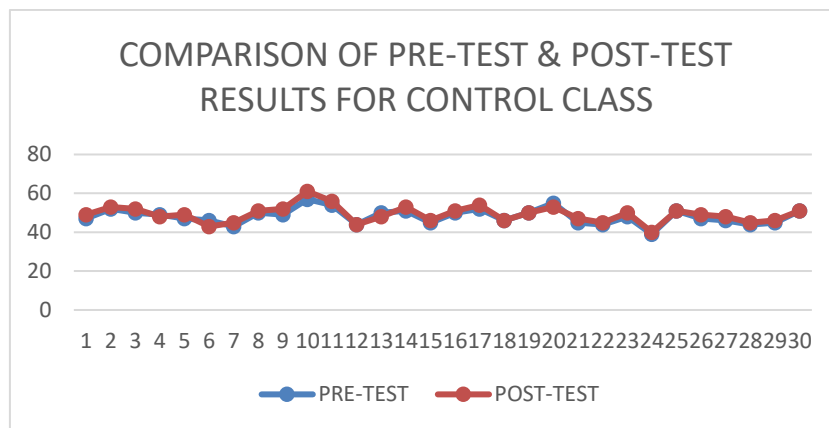


Figure 1. Graph of Comparison Between the Results of the Pre-Test and Post-Test in the Control Class

The pre-test results from the moderate category of children speaking skills were 29 children or 97%, and 1 child or 3% from the low category. However, in the post-test, the moderate category was 29 children or 97%, while the high category was 1 child or 3%. Therefore, there is an increase in children's speaking skills, although there are not many differences in each category. Furthermore, the average value before the treatment was 48.2, which increased to 49.2 after the treatment. The changes in children speaking skills before and after being given treatment in the experimental class showed in [Figure 2](#).

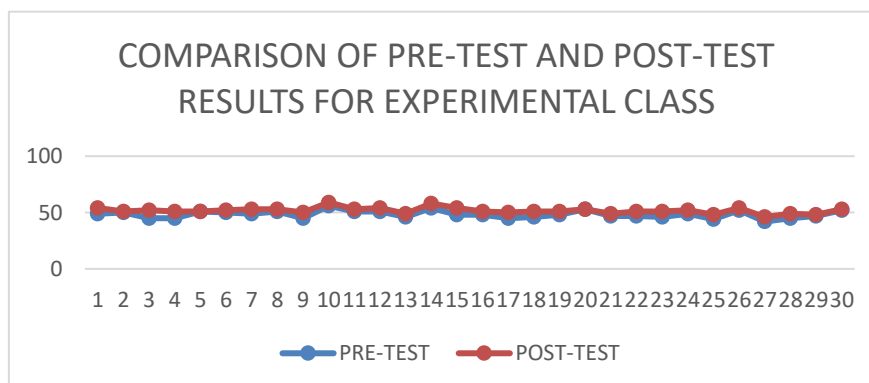


Figure 2. Graph of Comparison Between the Results of the Pre-Test and Post-Test in the Experimental Class

From the figure, the pre-test and post-test results on the children speaking skills were in the moderate category with 30 children or 100%. This shows an increase in children's speaking skills, although there is no difference in each category. Moreover, the average value of 48.4 before the treatment increased to 51.7 after being given treatment. From the results based on the pre-test and post-test data, the application of digital talking media in the experimental class affects children's speaking skills. This is after testing the hypothesis with t-test analysis. Furthermore, the data from the experimental class (A) and the control class (B) were analyzed to determine the overall value acquisition that was analyzed using the t-test with SPSS windows application. Therefore, the results of hypothesis testing use a significance level of 0.05 with the assumption "Ho is rejected if $t_{count} > t_{table}$, and is accepted if $t_{count} \leq t_{table}$ ".

Based on data analysis, the probability value (significance) shows that the equal variance assumed (assuming the two variants are the same) of 0.365 is greater than 0.05. Therefore, Ho is accepted since both variants (in the experimental and control class) are the same. Furthermore, the value of $t_{count} > t_{table}$ was $0.179 < 2.042$ and P-value was $0.858 > 0.05$, therefore, Ho is accepted. This means that there is no difference in the average pre-test value between the experimental and control class. Additionally, the speaking skills in the experimental and the control class before the treatment was almost the same.

The probability value (significance) with equal variance assumed (assuming the two variants are the same) is 0.147, greater than 0.05, hence Ho is accepted. This is because both variants (in the experimental and the control class) are the same. Furthermore, the value of $t_{count} > t_{table}$ was $4.246 > 2.042$ and P-value was $0.000 < 0.05$, thus Ho is rejected. This means there is a difference in the average post-test value between the experimental and the control class. Therefore, the use of talking digital media improves children's speaking skills. According to the table, the results of $t_{count} > t_{table}$ was $2.834 > 2.042$ and P-value $0.008 < 0.05$, hence Ho is rejected. This indicates a difference between the average pre-test and post-test values. Furthermore, the use of digital talking media improves children's speaking skills in early childhood education services, especially in kindergartens aged 4-5 years.

Discussion

From the results, the use of digital talking media affects the improvement of children's speaking skills in kindergarten, where children practically showed good response in using these media. Moreover, this media produced a children-centered learning process. Emotional and mental involvement were also raised and certainly affects the children's enthusiasm for learning and gives the impression of living-learning (Aprinawati, 2017; Khoiriyah & Rachman, 2019; Puspita et al., 2016). This increases their learning understanding of teaching materials (Asmariyani, 2016; Ramadani, 2016). Additionally, the use of digital talking media has fulfilled several learning elements in the 21st-century with the main principles. the principle is student-centered, collaborative, contextual, and integrated with children's learning environments. Digital talking media is applied by giving children the freedom to talk in 10 minutes of game time at the beginning of the lesson. This time is selected because the media is designed to foster children's learning readiness before participating in a series of lessons. Children also become more ready to learn through the provision of talk time. Moreover, a teacher uses this strategy to create a fun learning for children. Therefore, digital talking media is a part of providing convenience, facilities, and other assistance to children in achieving instructional goals (Nurmadiyah, 2015).

Using digital talking media stimulates children's speaking skills through the sound replies generated when they pronounce words and sentences. Furthermore, children become more enthusiastic in releasing the vocabulary in their minds when they talk as the media follow the words and sentences mentioned. This encourages children to always express words and sentences that lead to the effective development of speaking skills (Aprinawati, 2017; Dewi, 2020). Therefore, digital talking media is effective and one of the media teachers can use children's expressive language. Good learning media are those that direct children's competencies effectively (Arisantiani et al., 2017; Asmonah, 2019; Nusir et al., 2013; Zaini & Dewi, 2017). Moreover, the media should also produce learning methods in early childhood based on the learning principle while facilitating children to acquire information from digital media as a form of multimedia (Ayuni & Setiawati, 2019; Rahayu & Fujiati, 2017). There is a positive response from children when using digital talking media. This is because they have a very interest in using the media that supports their interests in early development. Similarly, the children's motivation while playing the digital talking media lasted the specified time limit, with no change in their response. Therefore, children feel very comfortable using the media. Media plays an important role in attracting children's interest in learning and makes them feel comfortable in learning and gaining knowledge according to the objectives (Hanifah & Alam, 2019; Supriyono, 2018).

The use of digital talking media is one of the important media to be applied as a form of exercise for children in developing their speaking skills. According to the effects of the increase in children's learning activities, their abilities will also increase. Using digital talking media will provide options for educators at

the early childhood education level to develop children's speech skills. The application of digital talking media in early childhood is one of the effective media used in developing children's language skills, especially the ability to speak because it presents a concrete learning situation. Thus, the implementation of learning by teachers can achieve the expected goals. In line with this opinion, stated that learning media has the advantage of making it easier and helping students understand the material presented by educators in the learning process (Hadley et al., 2019; Rupdinah & Sudjana, 2022; Swari & Ambarawa, 2022). Based on the results of this study, the use of digital talking media as a form of speech skills development strategy in children aged 5-6 years because this media can provide direct intervention for children to speak. The use of digital talking media is in line with the 21st-century learning approach that allows teachers to use technological skills in conducting learning in the classroom.

4. CONCLUSION

The application of digital talking media encouraged children's learning that focuses on the principle of playing while learning. According to the results, children are more enthusiastic, motivated, and interested in using this media. Furthermore, they showed a very good response in using digital talking media during the treatment implementation throughout the research. Additionally, the positive activity supports the statistical test that indicates an increase in the children's speaking skills after being given treatment. Therefore, the application of digital talking media positively affects the children's speaking skills in early childhood education services, especially in kindergarten education.

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