Implementation Outdoor Learning Activities (OLA) to Develop Early Childhood Language Skills

Khusnul Laely, Lilis Madyawati, Hermahayu, Syakilla Fatkhia Rizki, Chomisah

Abstract

Aspects of language is one aspect that is owned by early childhood that must be stimulated. At this time, children's language skills have not been optimally stimulated and have not been designed through interesting activities. The aim of this research is to describe the need to implement early childhood language development through Outdoor Learning Activity. This study uses a survey method. The subjects were educators at Early Childhood Education institutions under the auspices of Himpaudi Magelang Regency, the Bustanul Athfal Teachers' Association, the Raudhatul Athfal Teachers' Association totaling 40 educators. The data collection tool used a questionnaire at the FGD event to identify the implementation of OLA in developing early childhood language. The analysis technique uses descriptive analysis, namely describing facts with the right interpretation to recognize phenomena and to describe accurately some of the phenomena, groups or individuals that are happening. The results showed that 27.03% of educators had implemented OLA every day and had not optimally developed children's language skills. Stimulation of children's language is still carried out monotonously in the classroom by using conversation method by 24%, storytelling 22%, and question and answer 11%. So that it has not fulfilled the BAN PAUD and PNF accreditation instruments, namely education units that apply interesting learning activities outdoors to get at least 30 minutes of sunlight every day. This supports the need for OLA learning designs to take advantage of the potential of the child's environment.

Keywords: outdoor learning activity; language skills; early childhood.

Introduction

The preschool period is where the child's first experiences at school are obtained (Yoleri, 2014). Preschool age is often referred to as a critical period, which is an early age where the child's further development is influenced by the child's self-concept and basic competencies (Chi et al., 2016). Dealing with open places and nature is important for children to be integrated into education. This is because playing outside can increase physical activity and prevent obesity (Stone & Faulkner, 2014).

Research in America in 2020 the world is faced with the Covid-19 pandemic, PAUD institutions are trying to provide services and prevent the spread of the virus so that learning designs are stimulated by providing distance when children take lessons, learning is designed...
outdoors, and children get vitamin D (Chaney, 2021). Survey results of the 481 child care centers in Texas, what is most needed to improve the quality of the outdoors is managing by creating environments with nature, vegetation, pathways, and play and learning settings. However, PAUD educators do not provide opportunities for students to study outside every day for various reasons (Ernst, 2012). Most childcare centers in the United States have only access to fenced play areas with commercial play structures (Byrd-Williams et al., 2019). Whereas outdoor learning which is designed naturally is beneficial for children's self-control, increasing physical fitness, reducing ADHD, increasing children's gross motor skills, and children's self-confidence (Cooper, 2015). Physical activities such as kicking, swinging, jumping, running will be able to provide blood supply to the child's brain, causing natural chemicals to support a greater number of neuron connections (Healy, 1998). In America, both policy makers, teachers, and parents downplay the benefits of outdoor recess in the name of improving the quality of learning (Kieff, 2001). Even though outdoor activities can provide opportunities for children to learn and gain learning experiences that are impossible to obtain when learning is done indoors (Burriss & Burriss, 2011).

The results of interactions with nature are linguistic, cognitive, and motor skills including balance, coordination, and children's endurance is getting better (Yıldırım & Akamca, 2017). The results of the study indicate the need for an educator to be equipped with education about outdoor learning which must be improved because outdoor learning contributes to aspects of child development, namely motor, language, cognitive, and social-emotional preschoolers (Yıldırım & Akamca, 2017). Language ability is the child's ability to process words or use words. Children's language skills include the ability to listen, read, write, and speak (Sujiono, 2011). There are several language components possessed by children including pragmatic, semantic, morphological, and phonological (Nunike et al., 2021).

Efforts to implement children's language development did not go straight as expected but experienced several obstacles. Isna stated that there are several language problems experienced by early childhood, including dyslexia, Asperger's syndrome, Multisystem Development Disorder (MSDD), and Childhood Disintegrative Disorder (CDD) (Isna, 2019). Some people argue that this language barrier is due to the excessive use of gadgets in children without any assistance from their parents (Yulsyofriend et al., 2019). Therefore, the role of parents is very important in stimulating children's development, especially language development, because the family is the first institution that determines children's development (Sari, 2018). In addition to the role of parents, the role of educators is also very important in designing interesting learning activities for children (Fitriani et al., 2019).

Skills need to be stimulated to stimulate the ability to communicate well orally and in writing, remember and memorize information, provide explanations, and be able to convince others about certain things. External learning in its implementation, namely at least 30 minutes, must be planned every day (Coopers, 2015). However, Until now, the development of language skills given to children has not been optimal, supported by the implementation of learning activities, there are still limitations, namely only being carried out indoors. OLA learning has not been fully implemented because there are still concerns about the risk of injury (McFarland & Shelby, 2018) as well as a lack of knowledge about how to use space and play elements (Ernst & Tornabene, 2012). This research determines the extent to which Learning Outdoor Activity (OLA) is implemented in developing early childhood language skills.

**Methodology**

This study uses a survey method. The subjects in this study were 40 educators from Early Childhood Education institutions under the auspices of the Bustanul Athfal Teachers' Association, the Raudhatul Athfal Teachers' Association and Himpaudi Magelang Regency who teach Kindergarten, RA/BA, Playgroup institutions, and child care centers. The data collection tool used was a questionnaire by respondents in the FGD event to identify the
Implementation of OLA in developing early childhood language skills. The questionnaire contains questions about the current implementation of language development, what strategies have been implemented, the obstacles experienced by educators, as well as educator efforts in overcoming language problems.

In this survey research, researchers used data analysis techniques with a descriptive approach. Descriptive approach is a study to determine facts with the right interpretation to recognize phenomena and to describe or describe accurately the characteristics of several phenomena, groups or individuals that are happening. The stages of the research conducted are presented in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Survey Research Stages](image)

**Result and Discussion**

**Early Childhood Language Development**

Early childhood language is defined as the way children express or listen to a word. Language is the ability to communicate which is expressed in symbols and symbols to express it. Through language children can express wishes. Children's language abilities develop according to the level of achievement of the child's development. The development of children's language can be seen by increasing the child's vocabulary, increasing the fluency of the child in speaking, the child being able to listen and retell the contents of the story that the child has heard. Children's language can develop properly if they get optimal stimulation from both parents and educators and the environment around the child. Early Childhood Education is education deliberately given to children aged 0-6 years who are experiencing rapid development. One development that is experiencing rapid development is the development of children's language. In providing a stimulus to children, educators plan learning activities by implementing learning methods. The methods applied in learning activities based on the results of the study, among others, are presented in the graph in Figure 2.

![Figure 2. Methods for Developing Early Childhood Language](image)
Based on the results of the research, it shows that the method that is often implemented in learning activities is through the method of conversing by 24%, telling stories 22%, and question and answer 11%. Conversation is carried out by educators both in daily communication and in a series of learning activities which include opening, main, and closing activities. Demonstration method is implemented 10%, singing is 9%, and role playing is also implemented 7%. The method planned in the RPPH is manifested in the form of learning activities. Some learning activities that are often implemented in developing children's language skills include stories about prophets, poetry about natural beauty, reading story books and conducting questions and answers after the teacher reads the story, playing chain messages, playing macro roles, playing roles, by playing videos, looking for initial syllables, sorting art images, playing letter jumps, imitating animal sounds, imitating teacher speech, recognizing letters, and mentioning sequences of numbers. To find out the extent to which children's development has increased, educators carry out measurements based on the standard level of achievement of child development that has been determined in Permendikbud 137 of 2014 attachment 1. The indicators that have been determined are used as a reference for the extent to which children have development. However, in implementing the stimulus for children's language development, educators are still experiencing problems. The obstacles experienced by educators include: imitating the teacher's words, recognizing letters, and mentioning the sequence of numbers. To find out the extent to which children's development has increased, educators carry out measurements based on the standard level of achievement of child development that has been determined in Permendikbud 137 of 2014 attachment 1. The indicators that have been determined are used as a reference for the extent to which children have development.

### Table 1. Obstacles to Early Childhood Language Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Development Barriers</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introverted child</td>
<td>6.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language delay/speech delay</td>
<td>27.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shy</td>
<td>20.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courage to express opinions is still lacking</td>
<td>8.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet type</td>
<td>16.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard to socialize</td>
<td>6.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's language that has been contaminated with adult language</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child has difficulty speaking</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children still lack confidence</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, in implementing the stimulus for children's language development, educators are still experiencing problems. The obstacles experienced by educators include: imitating the teacher's words, recognizing letters, and mentioning the sequence of numbers. To find out the extent to which children's development has increased, educators carry out measurements based on the standard level of achievement of child development that has been determined in Permendikbud 137 of 2014 attachment 1. The indicators that have been determined are used as a reference for the extent to which children have development. However, in implementing the stimulus for children's language development, educators are still experiencing problems. The obstacles experienced by educators include: The indicators that have been determined are used as a reference for the extent of development that is owned by the child. However, in implementing the stimulus for children's language development, educators are still experiencing problems. The obstacles experienced by educators include: The indicators that have been determined are used as a reference for the extent of development that is owned by the child. However, in implementing the stimulus for children's language development...
development, educators are still experiencing problems. The barriers experienced by educators are presented in Table 1.

Based on the data table 1, it can be concluded that the obstacles faced by educators in terms of language development in early childhood are that there are still children who experience language delays as much as 27%. As for the obstacles, there is adult language contamination, difficulty speaking, and lack of confidence as much as 3.39%. This language delay is triggered by parenting carried out by parents and the lack of optimal stimulus provided by both parents and educators. Therefore it is considered very important that there is a stimulus that must be given which is implemented in learning activities.

**Implementation of OLA in Developing Early Childhood Language Skills.**

OLA is defined as learning activities carried out outside the school room that are designed in an attractive and fun way so that children get enough sunlight. However, there are still those who argue that OLA is only interpreted as outdoor play activities. Based on the results of an analysis of understanding of OLA, the results show that the OLA diagram above, it is obtained data that 96% of new educators understand that OLA is just learning activities carried out outside the room. Meanwhile educators who already have a more complete understanding of not just carrying out outside activities, but designing fun learning activities and aiming to get enough sunlight have only reached 6%. This shows that there is still a need for awareness about the understanding of OLA which is implemented by educators every day to get sunlight in accordance with the BAN PAUD and PNF accreditation assessment, which requires educators to design learning activities outside every day to get sunlight (PNF, 2021).

In particular, learning activities that develop language skills are currently implemented indoors. Activities that are implemented by playing outside are only activities related to the physical. Therefore we need a model of learning activities that provide alternative learning activities that take advantage of all the potential of the existing environment including the environment by utilizing outdoor places to develop all aspects of development including language skills of early childhood. The results of the analysis of the quantity of OLA implementation have only reached 27.03% of educators who implement outdoor learning every day. The quantity of OLA implementation can be observed in table 2.

**Table 2. Quantity of OLA Implementation for 1 month**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 Times</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 times</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>37.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 times</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 times</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 times</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 times</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>According to the needs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the OLA implementation analysis found that 27.03% of educators had implemented OLA every day. Most of the OLA is only implemented once a week, namely as much as 37.84% through singing and moving activities outside the classroom and has not been planned in the RPPH implicitly to improve children’s language skills. Learning activities to develop language are predominantly planned by educators through indoor learning activities. This can be seen from several monotonous methods carried out in the classroom by using the conversation method by 24%, storytelling 22%, and question and answer 11%. Conversation is carried out by educators both in daily communication and in a series of learning activities which include opening, main, and closing activities. Demonstration method is implemented
10%, singing is 9%, and role playing is also implemented 7%. So it is felt that there is a need for innovative learning strategies, especially in developing language skills which are not only carried out indoors, but the need for innovative learning activities outside the room which can develop all aspects of development, especially the language development of Early Childhood.

Educators in implementing monotonous learning activities are carried out indoors and have not optimally utilized the potential of the environment because they are still experiencing problems. Based on the results of the research analysis, it was found that there were still obstacles experienced by educators. The obstacles experienced by educators include fear of controlling children when learning is carried out outdoors because it requires more supervision from educators, unpredictable weather when playing outdoors, time-consuming preparation required, limited learning activity facilities, consideration child safety because there are still educational units that do not have fences, and the minimum number of educators supervising outdoor learning activities.

Discussion

The results of the research show the implementation in the field in developing language through several singing methods. Educators can first introduce folk songs through singing activities by introducing songs or folk songs that are closest to the child. This singing activity can be started by listening or listening to a certain song and then inviting the children to sing together (Anggraini et al., 2019). In addition, storytelling methods can be effective in improving children's language skills, especially those aged 4-6 years (Syamsiyah & Hardiyana, 2021). Implementation of storytelling by educators using media or without media. Educators can also use picture story media to develop children's language skills. Through illustrated story books, it can increase children's interest in reading, supported by the provision of adequate book facilities and the role of educators who always provide a stimulus for children to get to know, invite them to tell stories and ask children to retell stories that have been told by educators.

Referring to survey results related to the quantity of learning implemented outdoors, it was found that 37.84% of educators implemented OLA once a week which was conducted every Friday and outdoor learning activities that were implemented were just gymnastic activities that stimulated children's gross motor skills only and has not been specifically designed to develop other abilities including language skills. Whereas outdoor activities can provide opportunities for children to explore children's abilities to learn and gain learning experiences that are not possible when learning is done indoors (Burriss & Burriss, 2011).

In addition, OLA has not yet been implemented which develops all aspects of development including this language because there is no complete understanding of OLA, namely where 94% of educators do not have a complete understanding of OLA, namely where OLA only means playing outdoors but has not been interpreted as a design activity. Fun learning activities to develop all aspects of development and get enough sunlight. Though the outdoor environment isa complete learning environment, which caters to all the needs of the child namely cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social and physical of the child (Bilton, 2014). Children's interest is even greater when playing activities are presented in outdoor form (DfES, 2006; Shackell et al., 2008). This is in line with (Cooper, 2015) where outdoor activities in one day are planned for a minimum of 30 minutes and are strengthened by BAN PAUD and PNF accreditation instruments which require children to carry out outdoor activities every day to get enough sunlight to health and fulfillment of children's vitamin D needs (PNF, 2021). Billon also delivers provisions for outdoor games, namely, among others, children are given the opportunity to play outdoors for 15-30 minutes every day, classrooms are designed outdoors, use outdoor features, and carry out planning and assessment of outdoor learning activities (Bilton, 2010). But in reality OLA has not been implemented properly because in the implementation of outside learning that has been carried out educators have not paid attention to the principles of learning and have not documented learning outcomes as a result of learning evaluation (Dahlan, 2019).
Learning activities carried out outdoors through OLA designs can be implemented through imaginative play activities, bicycles, building games, construction, and material games, games that develop gross motor skills, develop fine motor skills, and gardening (Bilton, 2010). OLA is recommended to be implemented in learning activities. This is because learning is done indoors, the very high CO2 content causes reaction time to think to slow down, causing drowsiness so that memory will affect (Clements-Croome et al., 2008). In addition, too high CO2 will cause headaches, dizziness, lethargy, and difficulty breathing (Bilton, 2010). Therefore air quality when children are learning must be a top priority because ventilation that is not suitable when learning in the classroom is the main cause. This is supported by the finding that it only takes 15 minutes for CO2 levels to reach unhealthy levels (Clements-Croome et al., 2008). In addition, if OLA is implemented properly, children will get enough sunlight.

Vitamin D functions to regulate the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body which is very important for bone health. Vitamins are activated under the skin when exposed to sunlight (Bilton, 2010). Low levels of vitamin D will cause death. The results showed that in order for vitamin D to be activated, every day 10-15 minutes of sun screen children get sunlight which is beneficial for making the body healthy, strengthening bones, reducing the risk of cancer, clogged arteries, and heart disease (Fletcher, 2008). This is because vitamin D can slow down cancer cells because vitamin D stimulates the release of chemicals which combine with calcium to form a glue-like substance that binds cancer cells tightly and puts the brakes on the division of cancer cells in the human body (Mohr et al., 2008). Apart from getting vitamin D, OLA can also provide calm and peace while playing. This is because the classroom is a very noisy place for children. The noise level in the room will be bad for children (Dockrell, 2009). This is corroborated by Blackmore’s opinion stating that physical activity designed through OLA activities can improve brain function, improve mood, and enhance learning (Blakemore & Frith, 2005).

Conclusion
Based on the results and discussion in this study, it can be concluded that 27.03% of educators have implemented Learning Outdoor Activity (OLA) every day and have not been optimal in developing children's language skills. The implementation of children's language skills is still carried out monotonously in the classroom by using conversation method by 24%, storytelling 22%, and question and answer 11%. So that it has not been able to meet the needs of BAN PAUD and PNF accreditation instruments where each education unit must apply outdoor learning activities to get at least 30 minutes of sunlight to meet children's vitamin D needs. This supports the need for a Learning Outdoor Activity (OLA) learning design. So that it can take full advantage of the potential of the environment around the child.

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