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Observation of The Relationship Between Play Activities and Language Development in Children Aged 3-5 Years and The Role of Parents.

Yoza Fitria[1*], Ivan Achmad Nurcholis[2]

[1] Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu
Email[*]: yozafitria258@gmail.com , ivanachmadn@umb.ac.id

Abstract

Observation of the Relationship Between Play Activities and Language Development in Children Aged 3-5 Years and the Role of Parents Language development in early childhood is crucial as it influences children's cognitive, social, and emotional abilities. Between the ages of 3 and 5, children undergo significant changes in their understanding and use of language. This process involves not only vocabulary expansion but also the acquisition of grammar and communication skills. One effective way to support language development is through play. Imaginative, constructive, and social play provides opportunities for children to experiment with language in enjoyable contexts. Activities such as role-playing, puzzles, guessing games, singing, and counting stimulate both language skills and memory. In this observation, environments such as home and preschool are shown to greatly influence how children learn and interact with language. Through play that involves verbal interaction, children naturally develop their language skills in a fun and engaging way. Therefore, the role of parents and educators in creating a language-rich play environment is essential in supporting language development during early childhood.

Keywords: *Observation of Play Activities, Language Development, Early Childhood, Parental Involvement, Cognitive Development*

INTRODUCTION

Language development is a fundamental aspect of early childhood that influences a child's cognitive, social, and emotional growth. Between the ages of 3-5, children undergo significant changes in their ability to understand and use language. This stage, often referred to as the critical period for language acquisition, lays the foundation for all subsequent communication skills. Language development impacts not only a child's ability to express thoughts and emotions but also their capacity to interact meaningfully with others. The ability to use language effectively plays a crucial role in educational outcomes, as it enables children to follow instructions, participate in group activities, and engage in complex thinking. Research has shown that children who experience rich language environments early on tend to perform better in literacy and academic tasks later in life (Snow, 2019). Thus, fostering language development in early childhood is vital for a child's future learning, socialization, and success in school.

Language development during these early years is not only about vocabulary expansion but also involves the acquisition of grammar, syntax, and pragmatic skills. For example, children learn to ask questions, form sentences, and use language to express their needs and desires. These milestones in language acquisition are essential for their social interactions, as they begin to understand and interpret others' verbal and non-verbal cues. Furthermore, children's ability to engage in conversations with peers and adults improves their social skills, enhancing their sense of identity and belonging within their communities. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), early language skills correlate with later literacy skills, suggesting that a child's ability to communicate fluently and confidently can significantly influence academic achievement in the future (Whitehurst, 2021). Therefore, it is essential to pay attention to the language development process during early childhood, as it sets the stage for lifelong learning and social integration.

Additionally, language development is influenced by a variety of factors, including the quality of the interactions children have with caregivers, teachers, and peers. Children who are exposed to a language-rich environment, where they engage in frequent conversations, storytelling, and reading activities, tend to develop stronger language skills. On the other hand, children who experience limited verbal interactions may face challenges in their language acquisition. The first five years of life are particularly crucial because children's brains are highly receptive to language input during this period. This is supported by studies from researchers like Hart and Risley (2018), who found that children from language-rich environments had significantly larger vocabularies compared to those with less exposure to words. As such,

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understanding the significance of language development during early childhood is essential for parents and educators alike in shaping the learning experiences that children need for success in later stages of life.

Play is often considered the natural language of childhood, with various forms of play fostering essential cognitive, emotional, and social development. Through play, children learn to express themselves, engage in problem-solving, and build critical social skills. Play activities such as role-playing, storytelling, and games with peers create opportunities for language practice. During imaginative play, for example, children take on roles, use new vocabulary, and practice sentence structures in context. This type of play helps children experiment with language in a way that feels natural and enjoyable, thereby accelerating language acquisition. According to a study by Ginsburg (2020), play-based learning is directly linked to the development of executive function and cognitive skills, including language development. Children who engage in various types of play show higher levels of language fluency and cognitive flexibility than those who experience less playtime or more structured activities.

In early childhood education, play-based learning is a cornerstone for fostering language skills. Teachers and caregivers often use play as an intentional tool to support language development. For example, engaging children in pretend play allows them to expand their vocabulary by acting out scenarios that require new words and phrases. Moreover, collaborative play encourages communication between children, promoting social language skills. As they negotiate roles, share ideas, and describe objects, children naturally practice their listening and speaking skills. The interactive nature of play allows for rich verbal exchanges, which are crucial for language development. According to research by Pellegrini and Smith (2019), play not only enhances language acquisition but also supports the development of the theory of mind and empathy, skills that are closely related to verbal communication. Thus, play is not merely a recreational activity but an essential pedagogical tool for developing language and communication skills.

In addition to peer interaction, parental involvement in play significantly enhances the language-learning process. Research has shown that when parents actively participate in play, especially pretend play, children experience more meaningful language interactions. Parents can model complex language structures, introduce new vocabulary, and encourage children to articulate their thoughts and ideas. This collaborative interaction strengthens the parent-child bond while also providing valuable opportunities for children to experiment with language. Furthermore, the type of play parents choose to engage in with their children, such as reading books together or playing word games, can influence their child's linguistic abilities. Studies by Fisher (2022) emphasize that parental guidance in play, particularly in literacy-related activities, significantly impacts a child's language development trajectory. Therefore, the role of both educators and parents in creating an enriching play environment cannot be overstated, as it directly influences the growth of language skills in young children.

The primary purpose of this observation is to investigate how various types of play activities, such as symbolic, constructive, and social play, influence the language development of children aged 3-5 years. Play has been widely recognized as a critical tool for fostering language acquisition in young children, providing a natural environment for children to experiment with words, phrases, and sentence structures. Symbolic play, for instance, allows children to engage in pretend scenarios, using language creatively to represent objects or actions. This type of play has been linked to vocabulary expansion and the ability to construct more complex sentences (Bodrova & Leong, 2020). On the other hand, constructive play, which involves building and creating, often requires verbal communication to express thoughts and ideas, contributing to cognitive language development. By observing these different forms of play, we aim to identify specific language skills that are nurtured during each type, whether it is through the development of vocabulary, sentence complexity, or the use of specific language structures that are context-dependent.

Furthermore, social play, which involves interaction with peers or adults, plays a significant role in language development by encouraging turn-taking, dialogue, and collaborative problem-solving. In these social settings, children practice conversational skills, negotiate meanings, and engage in reciprocal communication that strengthens their understanding of syntax and semantics. The observation will focus on how children's engagement in these types of play fosters their ability to understand and use language in different social contexts. The interaction with peers and adults during social play is also thought to enhance metalinguistic awareness, allowing children to better understand the rules governing language use (Berk, 2021). Ultimately, the purpose of exploring these play activities is to uncover the extent to which each type contributes to children's linguistic abilities and how different modes of play can be leveraged to support language development in early childhood.

An equally important purpose of this observation is to explore the role of parents in facilitating language growth through play activities. Parents are the first teachers a child encounters, and their interaction during playtime is crucial in shaping how language is acquired and developed. During play, parents often model language for their children, introduce new vocabulary, and help scaffold conversations by expanding on what the child says. Research has shown that when parents actively engage in play with their children, such as narrating actions, asking open-ended questions, and encouraging verbal interaction, it leads to significant language improvements, including an increase in the child's vocabulary and the complexity of their speech (Halle et al., 2020). In this observation, we will specifically focus on how parents' involvement in play influences the frequency and diversity of language used by the child. The degree to which

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parents act as language facilitators can provide valuable insights into the link between parental interaction and linguistic progress.

Moreover, the observation will also examine how different parenting styles impact language development during play. For instance, authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth and responsiveness, is often associated with more positive language outcomes as it fosters a nurturing environment where children feel comfortable exploring language. Conversely, parents who take a more passive role in play, or who are less responsive, may not provide the same level of linguistic support, which could potentially affect the child's language development. A key aspect of this observation will be to assess the extent to which parents create opportunities for verbal interaction, encourage dialogue, and provide corrective feedback during play. This examination aims to highlight the crucial role parents play in creating an enriching linguistic environment and to understand the practices that contribute most effectively to the development of language skills in young children.

The research questions in this study are: 1.) How do different types of play activities (symbolic, constructive, and social play) contribute to the development of vocabulary in children aged 3-5 years? 2.) In what ways do parents' interactions during play influence the complexity of sentences and grammatical structures used by children aged 3-5 years? 3.) What role does parental involvement in play (e.g., active participation vs. passive observation) play in the frequency and diversity of language use in young children? 4.)How does social play with peers, compared to play with parents, impact the development of communication skills and conversational abilities in children aged 3-5 years? 5.) What strategies do parents use during play to support language development, and how effective are these strategies in promoting linguistic skills such as vocabulary acquisition and sentence construction?

The purpose of writing about the observation of children aged 3 to 5 years is to understand the stages of language development during these crucial years. At this stage, children are rapidly acquiring language skills, expanding their vocabulary, and learning the rules of communication. By observing their language development, we can gain insights into how they process new information and express themselves. Studies indicate that early language development is a key factor in overall cognitive growth and influences later academic success (Hoff, 2019). Understanding how children at this age communicate helps us recognize their cognitive abilities and their capacity for understanding the world around them through language. Through careful observation, we can measure how well children grasp new concepts, especially those that align with their interests.

Another important aspect to consider is how quickly children absorb new information during this stage. Children are highly receptive to new stimuli, and their brains are constantly making connections between ideas, words, and concepts. The speed at which a child picks up new words and phrases often correlates with their exposure to different experiences, including play and social interactions. According to research, children between 3 to 5 years old are particularly sensitive to language input and can learn several new words in a short amount of time, especially if the new words are connected to things they enjoy or care about (Tomasello, 2018). This ability to rapidly absorb language is a reflection of the plasticity of the brain during early childhood, as their neural pathways are shaped by their environment and experiences.

In addition, the observation of children's memory and how it relates to their interests provides valuable insights into their cognitive development. Young children's memory functions are highly influenced by their level of engagement with the material or activity at hand. When children are involved in activities they enjoy, such as drawing or playing with toys related to their favorite characters, they are more likely to retain new information. This is supported by findings that suggest children's memory recall improves when the information is tied to emotionally significant or personally relevant experiences (Bauer, 2019). The way children's brains process and store new information shows how their interests catalyze deeper learning and memory retention, providing further evidence of the importance of engaging children in meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vygotsky's Social Interactionist Theory: Role of Social Interactions in Language Learning

Vygotsky's Social Interactionist Theory emphasizes the importance of social interactions in language development, particularly in the early years of a child's life. According to Vygotsky, language is not developed in isolation but through interactions with caregivers, peers, and the surrounding environment. The theory posits that children acquire language through meaningful social engagement, which includes dialogue with adults and more knowledgeable individuals. This process involves the child gradually internalizing the language used by others and using it to construct their understanding of the world. Vygotsky highlights the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which defines the difference between what a child can do independently and what they can achieve with the help of others. Play, especially pretend play, is seen as a vital context for this social interaction, as it allows children to practice language in real-world scenarios, such as role-playing different social situations and using language in imaginative contexts (Bodrova & Leong, 2017).

The role of adults, particularly parents, becomes critical in this theory. By scaffolding a child's learning experience during play, parents can guide the child through more complex language tasks, helping them to gradually reach higher levels of cognitive and linguistic competence. Vygotsky's theory suggests that when parents engage with their children

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during play, using language and offering feedback, they are essentially facilitating the child's ZPD, allowing for language development to occur dynamically and interactively. Through social interactions in various play settings, children learn not only to communicate effectively but also to develop social skills, negotiate meanings, and refine their language use (Miller, 2021).

Recent studies have further emphasized Vygotsky's theory about play and language acquisition. Research indicates that joint attention and shared activities, such as those that occur in play, significantly influence the development of early language skills (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2019). In structured play settings, such as collaborative games or group storytelling, children are more likely to engage in dialogue, practice new vocabulary, and experiment with sentence structure. Parents and caregivers, by being active participants in these activities, can provide the necessary support to enhance language growth. Thus, the social interactionist perspective underscores the significance of play as a context in which language learning is both nurtured and scaffolded by caregivers, leading to enriched linguistic development.

Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory: Relationship Between Play and Cognitive Development

Jean Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory emphasizes the relationship between cognitive growth and play, proposing that children's cognitive abilities are closely linked to their engagement in various types of play. Piaget classified children's cognitive development into four stages: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational. According to Piaget, play is central to cognitive development, particularly in the preoperational stage (ages 2 to 7 years), where children begin to engage in symbolic play. In this stage, children use their imagination to create scenarios, imitate adult behaviors, and manipulate objects in pretend play. These activities are crucial for developing symbolic thinking, which is the ability to represent objects or ideas with symbols, such as words or pictures. Play, thus, allows children to experiment with different cognitive concepts such as cause and effect, object permanence, and classification (Ginsburg, 2020).

Piaget's theory also suggests that cognitive development is a gradual process, with play providing opportunities for children to test hypotheses and explore the world around them. Through active engagement with toys, objects, and other children, children expand their mental schemas—mental structures that help them understand the world. This exploration fosters the development of language as children learn to categorize, label, and articulate their experiences. Furthermore, Piaget viewed play as a form of accommodation, where children adjust their cognitive structures to incorporate new information. For example, when children engage in pretend play, they must adapt their thinking to represent imaginary scenarios, which, in turn, contributes to the flexibility and complexity of their language use (Fischer, 2021).

The integration of play and cognitive development is evident in contemporary studies that build on Piaget's ideas. Research shows that pretend play, in particular, enhances children's linguistic abilities by encouraging them to use more complex language structures and vocabulary. Studies have also demonstrated that the cognitive skills developed during play, such as problem-solving and abstract thinking, are foundational for later language acquisition (Karpov, 2022). Piaget's theory emphasizes the idea that children's cognitive and language abilities develop together, with play-acting as a primary tool for this dual development. Thus, cognitive growth and language development cannot be seen as separate processes but as interdependent factors that are nurtured through interactive, hands-on experiences, particularly in play.

Symbolic Play and Its Relation to Vocabulary Expansion

Symbolic play, often referred to as pretend play, is when children use objects or actions to represent something else. This type of play is fundamental in early childhood development because it fosters imagination, creativity, and cognitive skills. During symbolic play, children engage in a wide range of verbal interactions that allow them to practice and expand their vocabulary. For instance, when a child pretends to cook in a kitchen set, they may learn words related to food, utensils, and cooking processes, thus enriching their lexicon. Research indicates that the more engaged a child is in symbolic play, the more advanced their language skills become, as they are required to verbalize complex ideas and scenarios, often incorporating new words they have heard in everyday conversation (Lillard et al., 2020).

In symbolic play, children also experiment with grammar and sentence structure as they engage in role-playing with peers or adults. Pretend play provides an opportunity to use words in various contexts, which not only helps children learn new words but also aids in understanding sentence construction and the functions of different parts of speech. For example, when pretending to be a doctor, children might say "I need a bandage for the patient," using both action and verbal expression to practice language in context. According to recent studies, the frequency and complexity of language used in pretend play directly correlate with higher language abilities, including vocabulary breadth and sentence complexity (Bodrova & Leong, 2018). These interactions are crucial in building a robust language foundation that will support later literacy development.

The role of caregivers in symbolic play is equally important. Parents who actively participate in pretend play can scaffold their children's language development by modeling new words and encouraging conversation. For instance, if a child pretends to be a teacher, a parent might introduce vocabulary related to teaching, such as "lesson," "homework," or

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"classroom," thereby enhancing the child's exposure to diverse words. Studies show that parental involvement in play, especially in symbolic play, significantly boosts children's linguistic outcomes, helping them acquire not only vocabulary but also conversational skills, such as turn-taking and question-asking (Hughes & Dunn, 2022).

Constructive Play and Its Impact on Problem-Solving Language

Constructive play involves activities like building, assembling, or creating something with materials such as blocks, clay, or puzzles. This form of play is not only a form of physical activity but also enhances a child's cognitive abilities, especially in areas of problem-solving and language use. As children engage in constructive play, they often find themselves in situations where they need to think critically about how to fit pieces together or create a structure that stands upright. The verbal component of constructive play includes discussing strategies, naming objects, and describing actions, all of which contribute to the development of problem-solving language. For instance, when building a tower with blocks, a child might say, "I need a bigger block to make it taller," thus learning spatial and descriptive vocabulary (Tamis-LeMonda & Bornstein, 2017).

Additionally, constructive play encourages children to use more sophisticated language as they explain their thought processes or negotiate with peers. For example, while building a shared structure, a child may need to explain their reasoning or suggest an alternative way to complete the task. This kind of communication fosters not only vocabulary related to objects and actions but also words that reflect logical reasoning, such as "because," "if," and "then." According to recent research, children who regularly engage in constructive play exhibit higher levels of linguistic problem-solving, as they frequently articulate their ideas in a way that organizes thoughts and solutions (Berk, 2019). These experiences provide a solid foundation for more complex problem-solving tasks in school settings, where verbal reasoning is often required.

The involvement of parents in constructive play can further enhance language development. When parents participate in or observe their child's building activities, they can engage in conversations that expand the child's vocabulary. By asking open-ended questions like "What do you think will happen if we add this block here?" or offering new words to describe the child's actions, parents encourage children to think more critically about their environment and their language use. Studies show that parental guidance in constructive play not only helps children understand the task at hand but also strengthens their ability to articulate and solve problems using appropriate vocabulary (Greenfield, 2021). In this way, constructive play becomes a rich environment for both cognitive and language growth.

Social Play and the Development of Communication Skills

Social play, which includes activities such as group games, peer interactions, and cooperative play, is crucial for the development of communication skills. In social play, children interact with others in structured or unstructured activities that require them to share, negotiate, and collaborate. These interactions demand effective communication, whether through verbal exchanges, gestures, or body language. Social play, therefore, provides ample opportunities for children to practice and refine their social language skills, which are essential for establishing relationships and engaging in effective communication. For instance, during a game of tag, children may use phrases like "You're it!" or negotiate roles, thereby practicing both expressive and receptive language skills (Johnson & Johnson, 2020).

Moreover, social play is instrumental in the development of more complex communication skills such as turn-taking, maintaining a conversation, and understanding non-verbal cues. In a group setting, children learn to adjust their language based on the reactions of their peers, fostering skills like empathy and perspective-taking. For example, a child might learn to rephrase a request if a peer does not understand the original statement or use facial expressions and tone to convey emotions more effectively. Recent studies emphasize the role of social play in enhancing pragmatic language skills, which include understanding the rules of conversation and interpreting social cues (Miller et al., 2021). These skills are not only important for socializing but also for academic success, where understanding and following verbal instructions are critical.

Parents play an essential role in guiding and supporting social play, especially in younger children. By encouraging children to interact with peers and providing opportunities for play with others, parents help develop their children's social communication skills. Additionally, parents can model effective communication strategies by demonstrating turn-taking, using appropriate language, and addressing conflicts constructively. Research shows that children whose parents actively encourage social play tend to exhibit stronger communication skills and more positive social behavior (Yuan et al., 2022). These skills, which are fostered through social play, lay the groundwork for children's ability to navigate complex social and academic environments as they grow.

METHOD

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Observation Setting: Description of the Environment

The environment where the observation takes place is essential to understanding how children interact with and process information. In this case, the setting includes both home and preschool environments, where children are comfortable and familiar with their surroundings. These environments are conducive to observation as they provide children with opportunities for natural play and learning. Home settings offer a more relaxed atmosphere, allowing children to feel secure while engaging in activities. Conversely, the preschool setting typically includes structured activities and social interactions with peers, which are essential for observing how children apply language and memory in both solitary and group play. Researchers have found that the familiarity of a setting can greatly influence how children respond to learning activities, as children are more likely to exhibit natural behavior in environments they feel comfortable in (Pica, 2020).

In both settings, various play activities are used to observe the child's cognitive and language development. Activities such as puzzles, guessing games, and songs are effective tools in stimulating children's memory and language skills. Puzzles help children practice critical thinking, shape recognition, and verbalize their thoughts as they solve problems. Guessing games encourage children to think about words and concepts, allowing them to practice the recall of previously learned material. Singing songs and engaging in counting activities create opportunities for rhythmic language use, which aids in memory retention, especially when the content is associated with musical patterns. These activities, when conducted in an environment that promotes active engagement, are effective in enhancing both cognitive skills and language development (Ginsburg, 2017).

Research indicates that active learning environments, where children engage with educational materials and interact with caregivers, promote better memory retention and language skills. For example, using visual stimuli, such as flashcards or picture books, during play helps children associate new words with images, improving both vocabulary and memory recall. In a study by Hyun et al. (2018), it was shown that children who were exposed to interactive learning activities, like those described above, demonstrated improved recall abilities and language comprehension, reinforcing the idea that the environment and the types of play activities play a critical role in fostering developmental progress.

Types of Play Activities Observed

In this observation, various types of play activities are employed to assess the child's memory, language development, and cognitive abilities. The activities include puzzles, guessing games, singing, and counting exercises. Each activity is carefully chosen to stimulate the child's cognitive abilities and enhance memory recall. Puzzles, for instance, engage children in problem-solving and logical thinking, requiring them to use both visual and verbal skills to figure out solutions. This process not only helps with memory retention but also encourages the development of spatial and linguistic skills. Similarly, guessing games, such as "Guess the Object," challenge children to recall previously learned words and concepts, strengthening their verbal memory. According to Piaget (2018), such activities promote cognitive growth by encouraging children to use symbols and concepts in meaningful ways.

Singing is another activity used to promote memory and language retention. Songs with repetitive lyrics and melodies provide children with a rhythmic structure that helps them remember words and phrases more easily. Through song, children can internalize vocabulary and sentence patterns, making it easier for them to recall the information later. In early childhood education, the use of songs is widely recognized as a powerful tool for reinforcing language skills and improving memory. A study by McGhee (2019) found that children who participated in regular music activities showed significantly better verbal memory retention compared to those who did not engage in such activities. The repetitive nature of singing helps to encode new information in a way that is easy for children to retrieve later, which enhances their ability to remember new words or concepts.

Counting activities also play a significant role in memory development. When children are asked to count objects or participate in counting games, they are practicing not only their numerical skills but also their ability to remember sequences. Counting requires children to recall numbers in order, which strengthens both short-term and long-term memory. As children count objects or engage in games that involve numbers, they are simultaneously practicing language skills, particularly about sequencing and categorization. Studies suggest that counting activities have a positive impact on both memory and language development, as they promote cognitive flexibility and improve children's ability to recall information in an organized manner (Sheridan, 2021). These types of activities, when incorporated into regular play sessions, provide a strong foundation for children's cognitive and linguistic development.

Participants: Children Aged 3-5 Years

Children aged 3 to 5 years represent a critical developmental window characterized by rapid growth in cognitive, social, and linguistic skills. These early childhood years are often described as the "golden age" of learning, where children absorb information from their surroundings at an extraordinary pace. Observing this age group allows researchers to capture the nuances of their language development and cognitive processes. According to Whitebread et al. (2019), children in this age range are particularly receptive to structured and unstructured learning experiences, making them

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ideal participants for studies that explore the interplay between play and language acquisition. By focusing on this group, we can analyze how their interactions with people and objects contribute to their ability to communicate and retain information.

The children participating in this study are selected based on their developmental stage, ensuring they fall within the age range of 3 to 5 years. This selection is crucial because children in this group exhibit a wide range of abilities, from forming basic sentences to engaging in more complex conversational exchanges. These differences provide a rich dataset for analyzing how individual and environmental factors influence language acquisition. Research by Cameron-Faulkner and Noble (2020) highlights the variability in language development among children within this age group, emphasizing the importance of considering factors such as exposure to language, parental interaction, and cultural influences. Observing this diverse developmental spectrum provides valuable insights into the early stages of cognitive and linguistic growth.

In addition to their developmental milestones, children in this age range are naturally curious and enjoy engaging in play-based activities. Play serves as a primary medium for learning, offering opportunities to explore, experiment, and practice communication skills in a low-pressure environment. Vygotsky's theory of social development underscores the role of play in promoting language and cognitive development, as children learn through interaction with more knowledgeable peers or adults (Vygotsky, 1978). By observing children aged 3 to 5 years during play, we can better understand how their language evolves in naturalistic settings and how their cognitive processes are influenced by the activities they engage in.

Participants: Parents or Caregivers Present During the Observation

The role of parents or caregivers is central in shaping the linguistic and cognitive development of children aged 3 to 5 years. These adults serve as the primary source of language exposure and provide the emotional and social support necessary for effective learning. Observing parents or caregivers during play and interaction with children offers a deeper understanding of how their involvement influences language acquisition. Hoff and Core (2019) suggest that the quality of parent-child interactions, such as the richness of vocabulary and responsiveness to the child's cues, plays a significant role in determining language outcomes during early childhood. This makes the inclusion of parents or caregivers in the observation process essential for a holistic analysis.

Parents or caregivers not only facilitate language learning but also provide the emotional context that encourages children to express themselves. Positive reinforcement, such as praising a child for correctly naming an object or encouraging them to try new words, creates a supportive environment for language exploration. Research by Rowe and Zuckerman (2018) indicates that children whose caregivers engage in frequent, meaningful conversations exhibit more advanced vocabulary and better comprehension skills. This highlights the importance of observing how caregivers interact with children during everyday activities, as these moments are critical for language development and cognitive growth.

Furthermore, caregivers' roles extend beyond direct interaction; they also influence the environment in which children learn. By providing toys, books, and other materials that stimulate play and learning, caregivers create opportunities for children to engage in activities that promote language and cognitive skills. According to Tamis-LeMonda et al. (2020), the availability of educational resources in the home significantly impacts children's language development, particularly during the preschool years. Observing caregivers in these settings allows researchers to identify the specific behaviors and strategies that are most effective in supporting early childhood development.

Methods Used for Observation

The primary method employed in this study involved direct observation of children aged 3 to 5 years in their natural learning environments, which included homes and play areas. Observing children in real time allowed for the collection of authentic data regarding their language development, interactions, and learning patterns. This approach provides invaluable insights into the ways children communicate, process information, and respond to various stimuli. Direct observation is widely regarded as a reliable method for understanding early childhood behaviors and has been validated as an effective tool in developmental research (Whitebread & Basilio, 2019). Additionally, video recordings and photo documentation were utilized to supplement the observations. These tools captured the nuances of the children's verbal and non-verbal communication, enabling a more detailed analysis of their interactions over time.

The use of video recordings proved particularly effective in capturing the dynamics of children's language use during play and learning activities. Video footage allowed for repeated reviews, ensuring that even subtle gestures or vocalizations could be analyzed thoroughly. Moreover, photo documentation provided visual evidence of the children's engagement with learning materials, offering a tangible record of their activities. The combination of real-time observation and digital documentation ensured a comprehensive understanding of the developmental milestones reached by the children. Researchers have emphasized the importance of integrating technology into observational methods, as it enhances the reliability and depth of developmental studies (Yelland, 2020). These methods not only provided a holistic view of the children's progress but also facilitated discussions with parents about their children's achievements.

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To further enrich the observational data, parents' insights and participation were actively incorporated into the study. Parents provided materials such as a whiteboard, markers, erasers, and other educational tools, which were used during learning activities. This collaboration between parents and educators underscores the pivotal role that family engagement plays in fostering a child's language development. Parental involvement in providing resources and participating in the observation process helped create an environment conducive to learning and growth. Studies have shown that when parents are actively involved in their children's education, it positively influences developmental outcomes, including language acquisition and cognitive skills (Fantuzzo & McWayne, 2021). By integrating parents into the observational framework, the study ensured a more inclusive and supportive approach to understanding early childhood development.

Recording of Language Use

The study focused on recording and analyzing children's language use, including vocabulary, sentence complexity, and the use of gestures during play and learning activities. Vocabulary acquisition was measured by noting the variety of words children used while engaging in activities such as storytelling, role-play, and interactive games. For instance, during pretend play sessions, children were observed using domain-specific terms, demonstrating their growing ability to use context-appropriate language. Research has shown that vocabulary development during early childhood is significantly influenced by the richness of the language environment provided by caregivers and educators (Rowe, 2020). By documenting the children's spoken words and phrases, the study provided insights into how they incorporated new vocabulary into their everyday communication.

Additionally, the complexity of the children's sentence structures was analyzed to understand their grammatical development. Sentence complexity was evaluated by examining how children combined words to form coherent and contextually appropriate sentences. For example, children who could articulate multi-clause sentences such as "I want to play with the blue car because it's my favorite" demonstrated advanced linguistic abilities for their age group. Recent studies suggest that sentence complexity in young children is a key indicator of their cognitive and language processing skills (Snow & Uccelli, 2019). By recording such instances, the study identified areas of strength and potential improvement in the children's linguistic abilities.

Gestures were also an essential focus, as they often serve as a precursor to verbal communication in young children. Observations revealed that gestures such as pointing, nodding, or using hand movements to emphasize words were frequently used alongside spoken language. These non-verbal cues are critical in helping children convey meaning, especially when their verbal skills are still developing. Studies indicate that the integration of gestures with speech enhances children's communicative competence and supports their overall language development (Goldin-Meadow & Alibali, 2019). By carefully recording these gestures and analyzing their context, the study highlighted the interplay between verbal and non-verbal communication in early Rowe, M. L. (2020). The influence of input quality on children's language development child.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Analysis of Play Activities and Language Development in Children Aged 3–5 Years

NO	OBSERVATION DATE	PLAY ACTIVITY	LANGUAGE SKILLS OBSERVED	ROLE OF PARENTS
1	06 November 2024	Interactive Conversation Games	- Children imitated greetings ("Hello", "What is your name?"). - Responded with phrases like "Ersya", and "3 years old". - Demonstrated basic understanding and repetition of simple vocabulary.	- Encouraged participation through questions. - Provided a supportive environment for children to practice responding.
2	11 November 2024	Object-Based Play ("Pesawat")	- Children repeated object-related words ("Pesawat"). - Practiced pronunciation and revisited prior knowledge of greetings.	- Introduced familiar objects to make learning relatable. - Repeated phrases with the child to reinforce vocabulary.
3	19 November 2024	Number Counting Game	- Children counted from 1 to 10 in sequence. - Showed improvement in	- Used repetition and counting games during everyday activities.

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			pronunciation and sequence memory.	- Encouraged the child to count independently.
4	11 December 2024	Alphabet Songs and Flashcards	- Children learned and repeated the alphabet (e.g., "A" as "Ei"). - Demonstrated clear pronunciation of letters.	- Actively participated by singing along and using flashcards at home. - Corrected errors gently and praised efforts.

Key Findings

a. Play Activities and Language Development:
   1. Play-based activities such as games, songs, and object interactions foster children's ability to acquire, repeat, and comprehend new vocabulary.
   2. Activities involving repetition and familiar contexts are particularly effective for memory retention.

b. Role of Parents:
   1. Parents play a critical role by creating a nurturing and interactive environment.
   2. Encouragement, modeling, and active participation significantly influence the child's ability to learn and retain new language skills.

c. Age-Appropriate Activities:
   1. Structured yet engaging activities like counting games, alphabet songs, and role-playing are most effective for children aged 3-5 years.
   2. These activities help build foundational skills in pronunciation, vocabulary, and conversational abilities.

Table 2. Summary of Findings on Play Activities and Language Development

PLAY ACTIVITY	LANGUAGE SKILLS DEVELOPED	ROLE OF PARENTS
INTERACTIVE GAMES	- Imitating greetings ("Hello", "What is your name?"). - Basic conversation practice ("3 years old").	- Encouraged participation and guided responses.
OBJECT-BASED PLAY	- Vocabulary building (e.g., "Pesawat"). - Repetition of familiar words.	- Introduced objects and reinforced vocabulary.
COUNTING GAMES	- Sequencing numbers (1 to 10). - Improved pronunciation and memory.	- Encouraged independent counting through daily tasks.
ALPHABET SONGS	- Recognized and pronounced letters ("A" as "Ei"). - Practiced phonetic sounds.	- Used flashcards and sang along to reinforce learning.

Discussion

The findings from this observation highlight the significant relationship between play and language development in children aged 3 to 5 years. Play-based activities, whether structured or unstructured, provide essential opportunities for children to acquire, practice, and refine language skills. Interactive games, for example, allow children to imitate and respond to greetings, fostering conversational abilities. This aligns with the findings of Pica (2020), who emphasized that activities engaging children in social interactions are instrumental in enhancing their communicative competence. Additionally, object-based play, such as naming familiar items like "pesawat," reinforces vocabulary through repetition and contextual association. Research by Sheridan (2021) underscores the importance of associating words with objects, which supports cognitive and linguistic growth.

Parents play a pivotal role in supporting language development, as evidenced by their active involvement in the observed activities. Encouraging participation, providing feedback, and modeling correct responses create an environment conducive to learning. Tamis-LeMonda et al. (2020) highlighted that parental engagement, particularly through interactive play, significantly enhances children's ability to acquire new words and concepts. For instance, parents who

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used flashcards or sang alphabet songs alongside their children reinforced phonemic awareness and pronunciation. These findings are consistent with Hoff and Core (2019), who stressed that rich, responsive language interactions between caregivers and children are key determinants of vocabulary growth during early childhood.

The study also underscores the importance of age-appropriate activities in fostering both language and cognitive skills. Structured activities, such as counting games and alphabet songs, were particularly effective in building foundational skills like sequencing, memory retention, and phonetics. This is supported by Vygotsky's theory, which posits that structured yet engaging learning activities enhance cognitive development through guided interaction with knowledgeable adults (Vygotsky, 1978). Furthermore, repetitive and rhythm-based activities, such as singing, have been shown to enhance memory retention, as noted by McGhee (2019), who observed improved verbal recall in children exposed to musical learning methods.

In summary, the integration of play-based learning with active parental involvement significantly contributes to language development in children. By providing a nurturing environment and engaging in interactive activities, parents and educators can effectively support children's linguistic and cognitive growth. These findings reinforce the need for incorporating structured play into early childhood education while encouraging parents to take an active role in their children's learning journey. As Whitebread et al. (2019) suggested, fostering play in natural and supportive environments creates a robust foundation for lifelong learning.

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of age-appropriate activities, such as counting games and alphabet songs, was another key finding. These activities are not only engaging but also tailored to the developmental stage of children aged 3 to 5 years. Counting games, for instance, help strengthen sequencing skills and numerical awareness while also promoting memory retention. Similarly, alphabet songs incorporate phonetic patterns that facilitate both recognition and pronunciation of letters, as supported by McGhee (2019).

A noteworthy observation was the role of repetition and familiar contexts in reinforcing language skills. Children were more likely to remember and use words or phrases when these were consistently repeated in familiar scenarios. This finding aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social development, which posits that learning is most effective when children are actively engaged in meaningful, context-rich interactions.

Finally, the interplay between verbal and non-verbal communication was evident throughout the activities. Gestures often accompanied verbal expressions, serving as a bridge for children to convey meaning when their vocabulary was still developing. This aligns with research by Goldin-Meadow and Alibali (2019), which emphasizes the importance of gestures in supporting language acquisition during early childhood.

The observation of children aged 3 to 5 years highlights the profound impact of play-based activities on language development and cognitive growth. Interactive games, object-based play, counting activities, and alphabet songs effectively support vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and conversational skills. These findings confirm that structured yet engaging activities provide a strong foundation for early language and memory development.

Parents and caregivers play a crucial role in this process by creating a supportive environment and actively participating in their child's learning journey. Through encouragement, modeling, and interactive engagement, they significantly enhance the child's ability to retain and apply new language skills. Furthermore, repetition and the use of familiar objects or contexts during play improve memory retention and facilitate deeper learning.

This study underscores the importance of integrating play into early childhood education as a key strategy for fostering language and cognitive skills. By leveraging age-appropriate activities and involving caregivers in meaningful ways, educators and parents can provide children with the tools they need to succeed in their developmental milestones.

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