



The Role of Parents in Stimulating Early Children's Language Development Through Smartphone Use

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Abstract

Language is a relatively essential means of communication to pay attention to and develop in early childhood, starting from children who have not yet learned the sounds of language, the vocabulary of letters and phrases, to assembling simple sentences. In this case, parents, teachers, and the surrounding community are responsible for children's language development through digital media, one of which is media use. This study aims to describe the role of caregivers in stimulating children's language development through smartphone media. The type of research used is descriptive qualitative, through primary data as a source of research data originating from related parties obtained from respondents; this study uses a questionnaire data collection technique with two closed answers (yes/no) and is equipped with open questions obtained online through the Google forms platform. The data analysis technique is an interactive model carried out through three stages: data reduction, presentation, and verification. The results of this study explain that the use of wise parental supervision will be more effective and effective in increasing the stimulation of children's language development because parents control every child's activity at home. It can be seen from the duration of use. In early childhood, it reaches 47% in the range of 2-3 hours per day, and the application often used by children is YouTube as a way for children to gain mastery of language both orally and in writing. The study results show that caregivers' role in stimulating children's language development is crucial; this can be proven by children who think broadly and are skilled at communicating.

Keywords: parents, language development, smartphone use

Introduction

Advances in technology are very helpful in facilitating access to information by all levels of society. This progress needs to be addressed wisely and efficiently to benefit all users (Asmawati, 2021), Especially parents who are fully responsible for early childhood because of the success or failure of a child. Of course, there is the role of parents who educate and raise from childhood to adulthood. The saying goes that a child is valued like a blank slate that will be written to become a masterpiece, so the point of success in the child's learning process depends on how parents treat it well (Kementrian Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan, 2017).

The fundamental thing in children's education is parenting. Childcare begins when the baby is in the womb, so childcare is often the mother's responsibility. Mothers are considered a central figure in raising children because children interact more with mothers. The role of the

father and mother is a stepping stone that supports children's success through imitation. When fathers and mothers do not work together to raise children, children become confused and have difficulty living by favorable rules. Of course, this is not reassuring in raising children because the knowledge and experience of fathers and mothers with caregivers greatly influence children's behavior, just like saying that every child is born in a holy. His parents reflect the excellent side, so parents are the first and foremost school of education for children (Miftahul Huda, 2008).

Vulnerable early childhood between the ages of 0 to 8 years is an individual character that experiences a rapid and fundamental development process. At this time, there is a process of growth and development from various aspects, one of which is language development. Mastery of the first language occurs early in a child's life, and the family environment around the child dramatically influences a child's language learning. Language development is a critical aspect of early childhood education because the language makes communicating easier for each individual. Language is a means to communicate with others (Dewi et al., 2019).

Age development also affects children's language and speech. Parents can detect delays or abnormalities in children from language skills and social interaction. Social interaction is a relationship that relates to other people regardless of anything and with anyone; social interaction can also be called a key to all aspects of human life. Therefore, without social interaction, human life cannot communicate and provide input (Oktaviana, 2021). Language is one of the essential things in a child's life in the form of gestures or hand movements, emotional expression by speaking emotionally, speaking using the mouth, or written language expressing it in words. By talking, early childhood can express what is felt in their hearts, desires, and needs (Arum et al., 2022).

In addition, psychosocial development refers to psychological factors such as emotions, motivation, personal growth, and the child's interactions with others (Nahriyah, 2018). At this stage of development, children begin to learn to be responsible and control their feelings so that developing children's language includes receptive and expressive aspects. Receptive language is the ability to understand what is seen and heard, while expressive language is the ability to communicate symbolically, both visually and aurally. Children's language development is influenced by innate talent, environment, or other factors that support physical and intellectual development (Dadan Suryana, 2020).

Language development has four aspects: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four aspects are interrelated to form the language acquisition process in children, usually achieved through verbal contact. This phase is the fastest between the ages of 2-5 years. Increased from 50-100 to more than 2000, the most critical development begins at 2-4 years old. Language competence is an indicator of a child's linguistic intelligence development, which can be interpreted as a child's ability (Yuswati & Setiawati, 2022). However, in the current era of globalization, technological developments are growing, one of which is the use of smartphone media.

Smartphones or mobile phones (HP) are not limited to employees. However, almost everyone, including children, uses it a lot now. They spend more time in the day using them

than playing with their neighborhood friends. Some children secretly take their parents' smartphones to play with them (Sawitri et al., 2019).

The use of smartphones has negative and positive effects on early childhood development and growth; the use of smartphones has positive effects, including facilitating children's language mastery, the ability to practice foreign language skills, the ability to make it easier for Children to recognize written symbols, make children more interactive and stimulate creativity in children. Meanwhile, the negative impact of using smartphones on children's language development is that they can reduce concentration in children, make children lazy, and affect children's language skills. From Communication and Informatics (KOMINFO), RI said that the Digital Marketing Research Institute increased 2018 the number of active smartphone users in Indonesia is more than 100 million. With such a large number, Indonesia will become the country with the fourth largest active users worldwide after China, India, and America.

Development has brought changes not only to adults but also to children. Some studies show the impact of smartphone use on early childhood. Research conducted by Kyung-SeoCho and Jae-MooLe (Cho & Lee, 2017). in "The Effect of Adolescent Addictive Tendencies on Problem Behavior and Emotional Intelligence: Mediating Effects of Parental Self-Assessment with s". The results showed that the higher the parents' self-assessment of their child's smartphone use, the lower the influence of the children's smartphone addiction on their problematic behavior.

Further research conducted (Alia & Irwansyah, 2018) explained that one of the efforts of parents in providing education to children in families in this digital age is to help children use technology. Through this process, parents can nurture their children and encourage them to use technology promptly according to their child's development. Then the research was continued by (Dewi et al., 2019) with the title the relationship between gadget use and early childhood language development, showing that introduction or use too early in children can have both positive and negative impacts. This is influenced by various factors such as frequency, duration, and parental assistance. Utilization as a learning tool will have a positive impact, such as increasing children's creativity and thinking power. With this, the task of parents is wise in addressing and directing children and being firm in setting time limits for children in playing with gadgets.

Many parents are unaware of the adverse effects of general use on children's behavioral patterns in their daily lives. Children who tend to keep using it will become very dependent and become activities that must and will be routinely performed by children in their daily activities. Undeniably, children are playing more than studying and interacting with their environment. This affects language and speech development; for example, children have communication difficulties because they have no contact with their peers, children tend to isolate themselves and do not want to talk to other people, lack of interaction can impair children's vocabulary, understanding not multiple commands at the same time, have no more words to express ideas to other people, children get angry quickly, children's knowledge does not develop, and children focus too much on games on smartphones and so on. Therefore, this research aims to determine the role of parents in stimulating early childhood language development through smartphones.

Literature Review

Language plays an essential role in human life because language is a means of human communication in everyday life. Language is a way of conveying ideas, thoughts, feelings, or information to others orally and in writing. This follows the idea that speech skills are a means of communication between members of society in the form of sound symbols produced by human speech organs. Language is used in most human activities, especially in children from an early age, to help children express their feelings, share experiences, and increase their intelligence. The stage of language development from an early age needs to be fostered and developed to make the most of one's language skills. Without direction and guidance, there is a fear that their language development will not match the expectations of parents at home or educators at school (Mansur, 2014).

Language intelligence is also referred to as linguistic intelligence, namely the ability to use words effectively orally and in writing. The intelligence referred to here includes sensitivity to the meaning of words, word order, sound, rhythm, and intonation of spoken words, including the ability to understand the power of words in changing the state of mind and conveying information (Lilis Madyawati, 2016).

Children can express thoughts through language so that other people understand them and create a social relationships. So, it is not surprising that language indicates a child's success (Dadan Suryana, 2020). Forming and nurturing children physically and psychologically requires the role of parents as first and foremost educators who have complete responsibility for children. There are several roles of parents in educating children in the digital era, including (1) reducing children's time using gadgets and other digital media, (2) stimulating children to carry out other motor activities, (3) choosing media or shows that are appropriate and safe for them. Children, (4) supervising the child's virtual world environment, (5) accompanying and monitoring children's activities in accessing and using social media, (6) showing excellent and positive role models using social media, and (7) counselors, demonstrators, friends, facilitators, source of knowledge, mentor, motivator, role model, support for early childhood to use social media (Santosa, 2015).

Methods

This type of research uses descriptive qualitative research. This research aims to get an overview of the focus point of the research object. The focus of this research is the role of caregivers in stimulating children's language development through the use of smartphone media. The research instrument used was a questionnaire in the form of questions related to the duration of use and the content used by children. In this case, the research aims to find data or facts and the parts that, after being analyzed, will conclude. The researcher will make field notes on the problems received and then describe them as research (Sugiyono, 2015).

The population of this study was 35 parents who had children aged 3-6 years. Taking data sources, especially from parents, this study used a questionnaire or questionnaire data collection

technique with two closed answers (yes/no) and completed with open questions online through the Google form platform. Closed questions support the proportion of smartphone use rate data to improve early childhood language. In addition, open questions are also used to determine the role of parents in stimulating language development in early childhood (Zaini & Soenarto, 2019). Types of questions that respondents can answer freely and give their personal opinions. Random sampling technique is the technique of choice used by researchers in sampling because the sampling of members of the population is done randomly without forgetting the existing strata in the population.

The data analysis technique used is an interactive analysis technique (Miles dan Huberman, 2014) explained that the data analysis was carried out using an interactive analysis model in three phases, the three phases were: (1) data reduction, namely the process of evaluating, focusing, and simplifying data emerging from written notes on site. (2) Data representation (display); the data obtained are presented as easily understandable descriptions, schemes, tables, or diagrams. (3) Data Verification (Conclusion Verification), namely data collected and analyzed, and then a conclusion is drawn.

Result/Findings

Along with the times, a smartphone is one of the primary needs. The use of digital technology in the post-pandemic era makes it easier for anyone to access various types of information quickly. Children in the era of digital generation adapt very quickly to the development of information technology. Therefore, the parent's role is crucial in facing various challenges to raising and controlling children, especially in using digital media, namely smartphones.

This smartphone has a variety of positive and negative energies when used correctly and following the level of development of the times. This is aimed at children aged 3-6 years to understand smartphones as a means of communication in addition to the surrounding environment in improving various aspects of development. Among these developments, some aspects of language are the main factor for children to acquire language.

Based on the research results taken from a random questionnaire with 35 respondents, the introduction or use of smartphones too early in children can have both positive and negative impacts. This can be seen from the duration of smartphone use for early childhood given by parents at home.

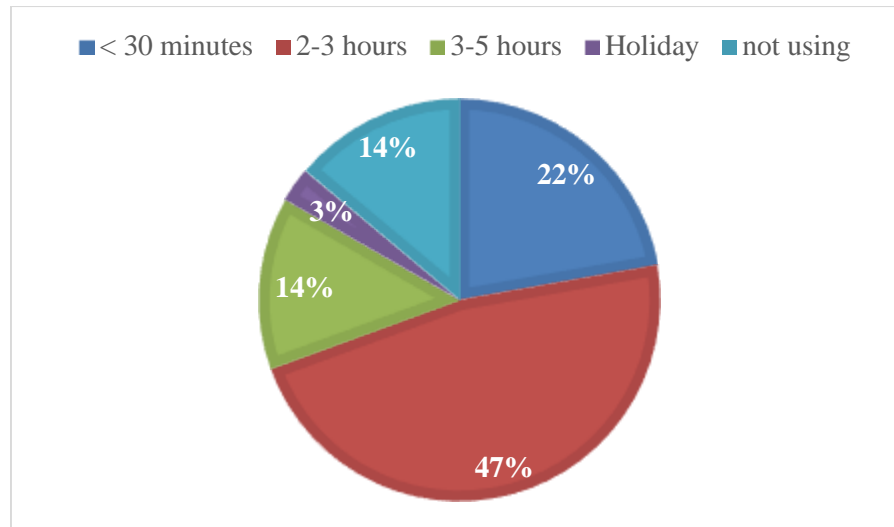


Fig. 1. Duration of Smartphone Usage

From the diagram above, the highest duration of use in early childhood reaches 47% in the span of 2-3 hours per day, 22% in the span of <30 minutes per day, 14% is used for <30 minutes and 14% is used for 3-5 hours per day for children provided that they are given a break interval in their use, besides that there are also 3% of parents who do not give smartphones at all to early childhood. Several factors influence presentation results, such as frequency, duration, and parental supervision. Using gadgets as a primary material for learning in children will have a positive impact, such as increasing creativity, children's thinking power, and even language development. In this case, parental mandates can arise if parents are wise in controlling and directing children and are firm in setting time limits for children when playing on smartphones. Vice versa, if parental supervision is lacking and there are no firm efforts to limit children's time playing with gadgets, it can cause a negative side.

The applications or content that are often opened by early childhood from the results of the questionnaire survey in use are:

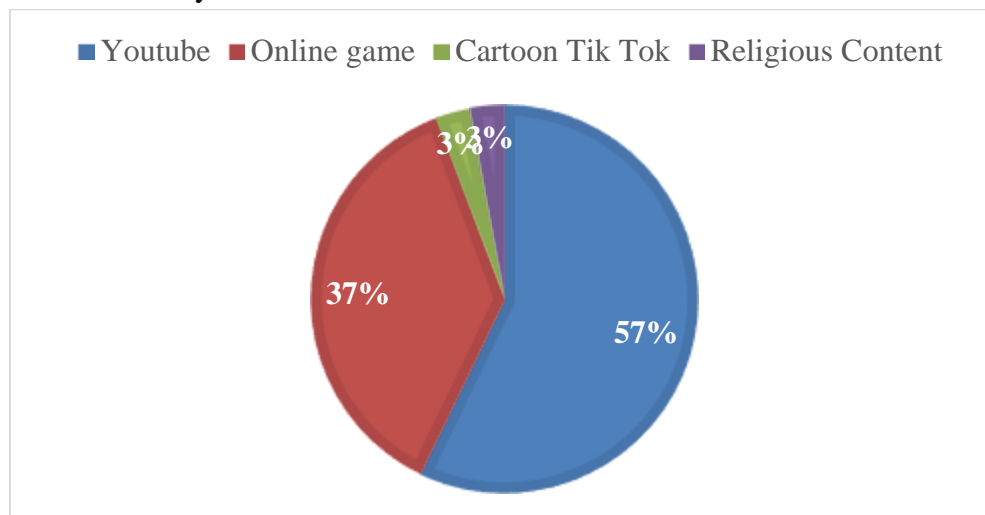


Fig. 2. Applications or Content That Children Often Use

From these data, the use of smartphones in children is at a moderate intensity level. There are 47% of parents stated that the use of smartphones in early childhood in a day for more than 1 hour with content or applications that are often opened is first YouTube (57%); YouTube is one of the applications favored by children to get language acquisition both in terms of oral or written. Second, opening online games (37%) with children is very reasonable because games are interactive applications that are of interest to children to help foster creativity. However, parents must also keep activating games that educate and help children stimulate all aspects of child development. Third, watching cartoons via TikTok (3%). Fourth, on the other hand, religious content such as rote muroja'ah or prayers is only often done by 3% of children.

From these different contents or applications, the role of caregivers in stimulating early childhood language development through smartphone media is very important. This can be seen from several positive and negative impacts on its use. The positive impacts of using smartphones as a stimulus for children's language development include children often retelling what children have watched, singing or praying, getting to know written symbols of letters and numbers, and even knowing various languages. At the same time, the negative impacts of using smartphones include children having difficulty communicating, being silent and only focusing on cellphone screens, dirty language or words causing children to be practiced or speak in everyday life with peers and the surrounding environment, children are less sociable, children sometimes expressing his defeat in playing games by shouting, and most worried that children will tend to be lazy in doing something harmful.

Discussion

The first initial source of a child's life is the parents; the role of parents is influential in guiding and teaching communication skills to children. Suppose the child is not given language input. In that case, the child will not get the language style, as well as the style of behavior and interaction in the surrounding environment, resulting in the child's communication skills needing to be able to develop correctly. The way parents raise their children is the solution to all these problems. The family is a child's first school before interacting with the social environment outside of the home. In the family, the child is formed to have immunity to negative influences. Parenting styles such as a sense of parental attention are required when children play on cell phones (Alia & Irwansyah, 2018).

The development process that children will experience is not only in terms of language but also various kinds of behavior that will accompany the child's development; input to children given by parents is not just providing language input, but more than that because learning language behavior is part of the learning tool given to children as parents also have the responsibility to often provide language encouragement to stimulate and to communicate to children so that they can be accompanied by their cognitive thinking functions.

The goal is to provide education about things or content that children can open. Parenting methods can also influence children's language development; effective parenting can encourage language development. However, even though parents have sufficient knowledge about

children's language development, many do not use the suitable method. So it will have a negative impact on all aspects of child development, and children will experience dependence on smartphone use (Melati & Anesty Mashudi, 2021).

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the role of parents in developing children's language is very important in order to hone communication skills through language development carried out by parents in a directed manner according to the child's developmental stage. Mastery of language in children through smartphone media will easily convey desires, ideas, and problems; language can be a teller for children about the world, actions, events, and language objects that exist in the child's environment so that the role of a parent pays more attention to and guides children by monitoring the content provided and the duration of smartphones, such as YouTube content, playing online games, or other social media.

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