




Improving Language Ability in Children with Speech Delay Aged 3-4 Years by Utilizing Flashcard Media

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Abstract

Language development is one of the important aspects in supporting the child's development process. Children with good language development according to their age will avoid speech delays. The use of Flashcard media as one of the effective ways to improve the language skills of children who experience Speech Delay at preschool age. This study aims to describe how the use of Flashcard media can improve the language skills of children aged 3-4 years at KB Permata Bunda. This study applies data collection techniques through interviews, observations and documentation. The type of research used is qualitative research with classroom action research methods. Data validity checks were carried out using Patton triangulation which emphasizes the interactive and continuous data analysis process during the study. The location of the study was at KB Permata Bunda with 2 boys aged 3-4 years as research subjects. Data collection by providing interventions before and after the use of Flashcard media in children with Speech Delay. Data analysis in this study used Miles & Huberman. The results of the study showed that the use of Flashcard media can improve speaking skills with increased vocabulary, receptive and expressive language understanding after the use of a Flashcard media.

Keywords: Early Childhood, Speech Delay, Flashcard

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received

May 10, 2024

Revised

September 28,
2024

Accepted

December 28,
2024

Published by

Website

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<https://attractivejournal.com/index.php/bec>

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>



INTRODUCTION

Children born between 2010 and 2025 are considered Generation Alpha, growing up in the digital age with easy internet access. As a result, gadget use has become a privilege for children, leading them to spend more time with gadgets than interacting socially with those around them (Amalia & Ramlita, 2023; Fajarrini & Diana, 2024). Alpha generation children are children who are very familiar with digital technology as if their lives cannot be separated from the internet or gadgets. Humans as social beings cannot live alone without interaction with other humans, where in the process of interaction, humans need language as a sound system that can be used by humans to communicate and interact with others. Language development for early childhood is an important aspect in supporting the child's development process, especially in terms of social interaction (Lestari & Wijayanti, 2022). Children with good language development according to their age stage will avoid speech delays, commonly called speech delays. This occurs as a negative impact of excessive and continuous use of gadgets every day without time limits. This phenomenon is often experienced by preschool children aged 3 years. Speech delay is a condition where a child's speaking ability does not match their age stage. A child is said to have a speech delay

communication barrier when their speaking ability is far below the average of children their age (Aminah & Ratnawati, 2022). From the author's observations in the Permata Bunda KB environment since July 2024, there were 2 parents with children aged 3-4 years old who are indicated to have speech delays because in their daily lives, two children with the initials HS and ZM use gadgets that exceed the time limit that is not appropriate for the child's age. This diagnosis was conveyed directly by the parents to the teacher when registering their son for the new school year in June 2024. According to a brief story from two parents with children indicated to have speech delays, parental concerns began to arise when the two children's language development did not improve like other children of the same age and pronunciation of words with unclear articulation from HS and ZM. The parents of these two children also said that the speech delay was caused by excessive use of gadgets, minimal interaction activities with others and a lack of play activities provided by parents to their children. The problem experienced by parents is the lack of interest in children to play compared to when children meet gadgets. In one day, children can access gadgets for more than two hours with different content and shows (Barus & Damanik, 2025).

Speech delay is a language disorder that indicates a condition where a child has difficulty expressing desires or feelings through words, is unable to speak clearly, and has a limited vocabulary (Nugraha, 2022). There are many factors that influence speech delay in children, such as lack of speech stimulation, less than optimal oral hygiene, poor chewing movements, inability to chew, difficulty consuming foods with a rough texture, and a tendency to prefer porridge or foods with a soft texture (Jannah, Djoehaeni, & Romadona, 2024). This needs to be taken seriously and needs to be addressed immediately by schools, how teachers can provide good and appropriate stimulation to help improve language and social skills in children with speech delay (Juliana & Ismaraidha, 2025). In addition, teachers can build positive and ongoing collaboration with parents when the child is at home, such as providing reports on the child's language development or vocabulary improvement at school, which are given periodically to parents as a reference for interactions at home (Musyafa, Darmawan, Subir, 2025). This is similar to what has been done by the Permata Bunda KB institution, this institution routinely provides child development reports to parents once a week on Saturdays, which contain all the child's development notes for 1 week.

From the results of the assessment that took place at the KB Permata Bunda Early Childhood Education institution located on Jln. KH. Ghozali, Jebuk Hamlet, RT 15 RW 02, Sumberkradenan Village, Pakis District, the author tried to use movement and song activities as stimulation with simple lyrics such as songs: gecko on the wall, my balloons have five and climb up to the top of the mountain to 2 children with the initials HS and ZM to support the improvement of their language development, however, this activity did not provide a significant impact on increasing children's vocabulary due to their lack of interest in stimulation activities using songs (Lestari, 2024). So the author tried to use flashcard media that was adjusted to the needs and interests of children. According to several previous studies, providing stimulation to children with speech delays using flashcard media as discussed by Lestari et al., n.d. (2024) in their article entitled Handling Speech Delay in Early Childhood through Flash Card Media at Al Falah Islamic Kindergarten. The use of flashcard media is said to be an interesting and efficient media for increasing vocabulary in children with language delays. Flashcards can be used to support classroom learning. Research shows that they can improve children's speaking skills in an interactive and engaging manner, with significant improvements in vocabulary and communication skills. In addition to using flashcards, the author has also conducted blowing exercises using candles, balloons, paper, and tissues, as well as providing support to parents by exchanging information about their children's language development at school and at home (Latiifah, et. al., 2022).

Flashcards are a medium made of paper with various interesting images that are often used to improve understanding of the meaning of images and vocabulary in early childhood (Mirantisa, et. al, 2021). The flashcards used by researchers were flashcards made of 230-gram krungkut paper with image selections tailored to what attracts children. HS, a child who tends to like the world of animals, while ZM, a child who prefers images about the world of transportation. Therefore, the author created flashcard media tailored to the needs of children. After using the flashcard media created by researchers, HS and ZM were more enthusiastic in pronouncing some vocabulary.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, aiming to understand and describe phenomena in depth within the natural context in which they occur. This type of research was chosen because the researchers wanted to clearly illustrate how the use of the *angklung* can serve as a medium for preserving traditional musical instruments in early childhood learning activities at Mambaul Ulum Gondanglegi Kindergarten.

This research was conducted at Mambaul Ulum Gondanglegi Kindergarten, located at Jalan KH. Hasyim Asyari No. 01, RT 01/02 Sepanjang, Gondanglegi District, Malang Regency. The research period was May to June 2025, adjusted to the school's learning and extracurricular schedule. The subjects were teachers and Group B students aged 5–6 at Mambaul Ulum Gondanglegi Kindergarten. The object of the research was the use of the *angklung* as a medium for learning music and as a means of preserving traditional musical instruments in early childhood.

Data collection techniques in this study included: Observation: Conducted by directly observing the *angklung* learning process, teacher-child interactions, and children's involvement in playing traditional music. Interviews: Conducted with class teachers and *angklung* extracurricular mentors to obtain in-depth information regarding the objectives, benefits, and implementation of the activity. Documentation: Included the collection of photos, videos, and notes of relevant learning activities to strengthen the data from observations and interviews.

The data obtained were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman (2018) model, which consists of three stages: Data reduction: Simplifying, selecting, and focusing data according to the research objectives. Data presentation: Organizing data in a systematic, descriptive narrative. Conclusion drawing and verification: Summarizing the research results and verifying the accuracy of the data based on observations, interviews, and documentation.

To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher used source and technical triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from observations, interviews, and documentation. Meanwhile, technical triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of several data collection methods to obtain a valid and reliable picture

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of interviews, observations and documentation in this study conducted from June 12, 2024 to June 24, 2025 to 2 parents and children with speech delay aged 3-4 years at KB Permata Bunda, it can be explained that this has become a challenge for the school. Situations and conditions like this cannot be underestimated, so it is very necessary for the presence of teachers and the KB Permata Bunda institution to be able to provide good and appropriate assistance in providing language stimulation to 2 children HS and ZM with speech delay obstacles which begins with the preparation stage. In the preparation stage carried out by the researcher, namely coordination with the relevant teacher council regarding the selection of preventive measures to be given to HS and ZM, these two children with the same gender, namely boys who are in the same class, namely the Alfarabie class at KB Permata Bunda.

The interview session with the 2 parents of HS and ZM was also included in the initial preparation stage with the aim of knowing the previous language development conditions of HS and ZM at home, with the results of the interview that, the lack of social activities and playing with friends of the same age as well as the lack of providing language stimulation to children, HS and ZM spend more time playing gadgets. In addition, several results of internal coordination between researchers and the board of teachers resulted in an agreement, namely the creation of special teaching modules for HS and ZM, exploration activities of objects around the school environment that can be seen, held directly by HS and ZM, oral function stimulation activities such as blowing balloons, candles, soap foam and paper, as well as stimulation of the use of flashcards for HS and ZM vocabulary in which the child can choose and the teacher as a facilitator provides stimulation for adding vocabulary by saying the name of the picture on the flashcard slowly. The flashcards used in this study were made of 230 gram krungkut paper measuring 13 cm long and 9 cm wide with illustrations that the researcher designed using the Canva application. In selecting the illustrations, the researcher looked at what was needed by paying attention to what HS and ZM liked. This step was used as an effort to accelerate the addition of HS and ZM's vocabulary, from the vocabulary they have, they will be able to speak starting from words to sentences as a means of communication with others.

Researchers also take other preventive measures, namely, building positive collaboration with parents by facilitating a discussion space packaged with the distribution of liaison books as reports on child development results that we routinely do every Saturday. Parents can see, read and know the form of stimulation activities provided by researchers to children as well as the results of children's development for 1 week at school, teachers will also provide stimulation references to parents and can be given and done together at home. The liaison book can be used as a reference for stimulation activities at home.

The positive collaboration that exists between teachers and parents has a significant impact on language development in HS and ZM. These steps have been carried out by researchers and parents for 10 months from July 2024 to April 2025. The focus of this study, from various forms of stimulation activities that have been provided by researchers to HS and ZM, researchers want to examine how the use of flashcard media can improve language skills in children with speech delay aged 3-4 years at KB Permata Bunda with the aim of knowing how the use of flashcard media can improve language skills in children aged 3-4 years at KB Permata Bunda.

In the planning stage, the researcher conducted interviews with the parents of HS and ZM. According to IFM (28 years old) as HS's mother, she initially felt something strange about HS's language development because there was a cousin of HS of the same age (3 years old) who was able to speak clearly and had a large vocabulary compared to HS. IFM also explained that HS had no friends at home, HS spent most of his days at home playing with gadgets. Feelings of anxiety, worry, and fear always rang in the minds of IFM and her husband, they were afraid that their son, HS, would not be able to speak like children in general. Previously, HS had never participated in speech or occupational therapy with a therapist, this was because IFM and her husband did not have information about therapy places for children with speech delays. At that time, HS's parents only used social media such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok with content about children with speech delays, many of which suggested that children with speech delays should be sent to school. So HS's parents decided to choose the educational facility at Permata Bunda Kindergarten so that there would be social interaction activities between HS and children of the same age at Permata Bunda Kindergarten.

Meanwhile, the results of the interview with LF (35 years old) explained that his son named ZM had experienced a speech delay, LF was increasingly convinced that there was something different about ZM's speaking ability which was marked by a lack of meaningful

speech, besides that ZM was very lazy to say something from his mouth. Like other alpha generation children, ZM often spent time playing with gadgets. This is what led LF to want to send ZM to school at KB Permata Bunda. In addition to attending KB Permata Bunda, ZM attended speech therapy at one of the hospitals in Malang City twice a week. In addition, the researcher also conducted an interview with the accompanying teacher of Alfarabie's class. According to ILM (23 years old), HS and ZM are 3-year-old children who have speech delays compared to their peers. HS and ZM have something in common, namely they like to point and drag the teacher's hand when they want something. In addition, they have differences, as follows: HS is an active child, likes to move and also has a desire to speak in a fast way and only takes the ending even though it is not completely clear, what the teacher remembers from HS's words "*bu can u ola ma mama*" which means "*bu Hasan mau sekolah sama mama*" ("mom, Hasan wants to go to school with mama").

While ZM is a quiet child, does not make much noise. When the teacher asked the children "who took a bath this morning?", ZM quickly raised his hand while saying "mama" which the word "mama" means "me". Of the 3 informants consisting of 2 parents of HS, ZM and also 1 accompanying teacher of Alfarabie class with the initials ILM, have provided very meaningful information for researchers to continue their research at KB Permata Bunda.

The observation stage in this study, the researcher conducted every 3 times in 10 months starting from July 2024. In the initial observation, the researcher approached HS and ZM as an initial observation carried out by providing play activities in the indoor playroom of KB Permata Bunda on June 28, 2024 at different observation hours with a duration of 120 minutes. HS got the first session with the following observation results: HS has a desire to speak although it is still classified as parroting when talking 2 ways with other people. The words that emerged from HS's babble with unclear articulation but could be understood a little, included: *Tawoh: taruh* (put), *Cayi: cari* (search), *Lolong: tolong* (help), *Esdim: es krim* (ice cream), *Tong: pentol* (meatball), *Nyatu: punyaku* (mine), *Uwit: duit* (money), *Tu: tolong* (help), *Kiyu: keliru* (wrong), *Ri: berdiri* (stand), *Cici: cuci* (wash), *Totor: kotor* (dirty), *Dah: sepeda* (bicycle), *Wat: pesawat* (plane), *Lah: sekolah* (school), *Pipi: TV* (TV), *Jau: hijau* (green), *Nyang: kenyang* (full), *Popok: kerupuk* (crackers), *Hak-hak: Ultraman*, *Nyum: minum* (drink), *Njam: pinjam* (borrow), *Cucuy: susu* (milk), *Kit: sakit* (sick).

While the words that appear with clear articulation, as follows: *ayah* (Father), *mama* (mother), *mau* (want), *emoh* (no no, call the name zaim), *ibuk* (mother), *pak e* (father), *ikan* (fish), *ayam* (chicken), *apik* (good), *iya* (yes), *ayuk* (come on), *sek* (while), *main* (play), *hp* (self phone), *bubuk* (sleep), *meam, gigi* (teeth). In this initial observation process, HS was so enthusiastic and active in playing activities, various babbles could be understood by researchers because HS said it by holding, pointing and trying to invite researchers to communicate with body gestures. Some of HS's babbles were recorded by researchers to be used as a reference for the next stimulation activity.

The initial observation of the second session was given to ZM with a different duration of time, namely 60 minutes, the difference in duration was caused by ZM's condition who was less enthusiastic, quickly bored and wanted to go home quickly. The results of ZM's observations are as follows: ZM is a child who tends to have less desire to speak, only a few words appeared, including: Mama, person's name (dena), hmm, no the rest uses sign language by just pointing. In the observation process of several play activities that the researcher provided, ZM was more interested in playing ball and slide. In addition to conducting observations in the indoor playroom, the researcher also invited ZM to do outdoor activities and at the same time, the researcher tried to give commands to ZM such as get the ball, let's run and asked several questions such as where are the leaves, where is the water and where is the swing. ZM can do it well, although he is not yet willing to utter other babbles.

The next observation was carried out in July 2024 which began with movement and song activities using songs with simple and repeated lyrics such as: gecko on the wall, my

balloon and climbing to the top of the mountain. The results of the observation are as follows: HS and ZM are less interested in movement and song activities accompanied by musical rhythms so the teacher invites them to play and learn using flashcard media as a form of language stimulation, especially in adding new vocabulary for HS. HS's response when the teacher invited him to play and learn using flashcard media, HS wanted to follow quietly even though he was not yet willing to imitate what the teacher said, HS could understand the commands "point to the picture of the carrot" "point to the picture of the chicken" "point to the picture of the monkey" "which one is the picture of the cow?" HS quickly pointed to the pictures using his index finger. In addition to pointing, HS also said words that were taken from the final syllables such as pi: cow, nyet: monkey, yam: chicken. Meanwhile, to ZM, the researcher invited him to play and learn using flashcard media as a form of language stimulation, especially in adding new vocabulary for ZM. ZM's response was not yet willing to imitate what the teacher said, but ZM could answer the teacher's questions by pointing to the pictures on the flashcard. HS and ZM in stimulation activities using flashcards had their own interests, HS preferred flashcards with animal illustrations while ZM was more interested in flashcards with transportation illustrations. This became a valuable clue for researchers to provide language development stimulation to HS and ZM in the following days.

The next observation was conducted in December 2024. In the 2nd period, the provision of stimulation activities at the beginning of each class was still predominantly using flashcard media and also various picture story books tailored to the needs of HS and ZM with a duration of 20 minutes every day. In this period, HS began to want to say some of the names of pictures from flashcards. Such as: snakes, cows, butterflies, deer, fire, lions, chickens, turtles and related to the 2-way communication that HS had in the 2nd period showed an increase in receptive and expressive language, such as: Teacher: "HS put his shoes on the shoe rack" HS answered: "yes ma'am". While ZM When the teacher tried to invite ZM to say the vowel sounds (a, i, u), ZM did not want to make a sound, only to the stage of imitating his mouth movements (open mouth: a, grimace: i, mecucu: u). In the second period, ZM began to want to say some of the names of pictures using flashcard media, such as: cars, wheels, people, rickshaws, apples, bananas, chickens, trucks. The improvement in language skills related to 2-way communication in the 2nd period that has been achieved by ZM began to be seen. ZM began to understand simple commands such as: Teacher: "Is this ZM's bag?" ZM answered: "Yes, this is ZM's bag". The next observation was the 3rd observation conducted in April 2024 with the following observation results: in the 3rd period, HS began to understand the meaning of cause and effect. This is indicated by HS starting to provide feedback when the teacher asked a trigger question, such as: Teacher: "Is fire dangerous?" HS: "It's dangerous, fire is hot, don't play with it. Your hands will get hurt." In addition, HS in the 3rd period also often told stories to the teacher, for example, telling stories about "I eat fried chicken cooked by my mother, then Hasan likes to eat fried chicken" in his pronunciation was no longer too fast. HS was also able to clearly pronounce the names of friends at school. Meanwhile, the development of observation results on ZM has shown an improvement in speaking skills. This is demonstrated by his developing expressive language, such as saying "please" when he needs help, saying "sorry" when he makes a mistake, and saying "thank you" when he receives assistance. ZM can also clearly state the names of all his friends.

The results of all research cycles conducted showed that communication skills developed by teachers can enhance vocabulary and enhance articulation: for example, "kuni" becomes "susi" and "bu gulu" becomes "bu guru"—a fairly perfect translation. This communication is crucial for language acquisition in children with speech delays if implemented consistently. Schools and families require intensive communication and detailed progress reporting to provide appropriate learning and targeted stimulation (Lestari, 2024).

The process of expressive and receptive language acquisition, such as asking HS to fetch a book and then giving it to others as instructed, demonstrates significant development in the teacher's role in providing understanding and learning appropriate words and sentences that can be understood by early childhood children with speech delays. This process, followed by the ability to answer simple questions, by asking for supplies and then answering correctly, also demonstrates significant language acquisition for early childhood children, even with very simple methods and sentence structures (Salnita, Atmazaki, & Abdurrahman, 2019).

The language acquisition process for children with speech delay through the implementation of ongoing learning processes for children with speech delay requires different services than for children with normal speech, even though it only requires 5 minutes of separate time to assess and redesign their language development from meeting to meeting. This process is an important finding that early childhood children with speech delays are also capable of developing their language acquisition process well and must be re-analyzed during classroom instruction. This significantly facilitates learning implementation and reduces negative emotional states during classroom instruction (Suparman, 2022; Nadrah & Ritonga, 2025). Similarly, feedback provided by students during communication after being given flashcards. A smooth process eases the burden of communication and increases the enthusiasm of early childhood children with speech delays in communicating. However, this process still requires guidance and specific clues or triggers from the teacher to provide appropriate stimuli in the communication process. The process has developed well with simple clues and triggers, making communication faster and more developed (Sumaryanti, 2017).

Another crucial finding is how the role of teachers in the learning process of children with speech delay in the Playgroup class during a comprehensive diagnostic assessment with the creation of modules tailored to the needs of children with speech delay is the key to successful, systematic progress. The process of how teachers document learning outcomes and then communicate them with parents produces quite significant results when parents also know the details of the learning provided at school to continue at home. The learning process in the classroom is somewhat draining the teacher's concentration, so in their recommendation, teachers still need shadow teachers who are competent enough to accompany children with speech delay to assist in the communication focus (Yuliati, et. al, 2024). Another finding regarding the use of flashcard media for early childhood with speech delay is that the media built and developed must be in accordance with the interests of children with speech delay, as assessed; for the first 2 months, flashcards are sufficient and then varied with other picture story books in 2 months after communication development occurs. The communication process with flashcards is then added with expressive and receptive language stimulation adapted to the communication context and its development over time. This development requires quite rigid details considering the communication patterns of children with speech delay also experience many specific obstacles. The learning process to train the communication organs is also an important note that should not be ignored to facilitate communication articulation (Yuniarti, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Flashcards used for children with speech delays offer many effective and efficient benefits for communication learning. Communication using flashcards does not automatically enable children with speech delays to communicate effectively and correctly, as they require appropriate learning processes and modifications to be delivered appropriately to children with speech delays. Children with speech delays, like other children, have individual differences with unique communication learning processes that must be understood and comprehended by both teachers and parents. No learning process for children with speech delays is effective and efficient, even with the aid of media, without

appropriate and specific treatment and modifications tailored to their circumstances and needs. Future research is expected to develop flashcards in a more specific direction for developing social skills and improving emotional management in children with speech delays.

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