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The Influence of Teachers on Developing Early Childhood Speaking Skills

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Abstract

Speech skills in early childhood are the main foundation for children's language development. This study aims to analyze the influence of the role of teachers in developing early childhood speaking skills in An-Nahri Nurjanah Kindergarten. The focus of the research is directed at how teachers' strategies and iteration quality contribute to the enrichment of vocabulary and children's speaking fluency. The method used is a quantitative approach with a descriptive design. The data collection technique used was a likert scale questionnaire and children's speaking ability was measured using a performative test based on five indicators. Furthermore, data analysis techniques using SPSS include descriptive statistics and simple linear regression. The results showed that the role of teachers had a positive influence on the development of children's speech skills but was very small. Most of the development of a child's speaking ability is influenced by other factors such as the home environment, media stimulation, and the child's individual characteristics. This study emphasizes the importance of improving the quality of teacher-child interaction and the implementation of a more structured and consistent language stimulation strategy.

Keywords: *The role of teachers, speaking skills, language development, early childhood.*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood speech skills are a key foundation for language development, which underpins cognitive abilities,

social skills, and literacy readiness at subsequent levels of education. At an early age, speech development does not occur automatically but is strongly influenced by the quality of the learning environment, particularly how teachers provide interactive and responsive support in daily activities. Cross-national research shows that the quality of teacher-child interactions in preschool is a significant predictor of children's receptive and expressive vocabulary development (Yang et al., 2021). Teachers act as language facilitators, providing meaningful communicative experiences through conversation, storytelling, play activities, and spontaneous daily interactions (Hasanah & Sumarni, 2025; L.I., 2022).

Teacher-facilitated interventions, such as scaffolding-style dialogue during shared reading activities, storytelling (including digital storytelling), and role-playing activities, have been shown to be effective in increasing vocabulary, improving narrative skills, and encouraging children's speech production when implemented with high-quality interactions and consistent implementation (Neumann, 2020). However, the effectiveness of these methods is influenced by how teachers practice these techniques in everyday interactions (e.g., frequency, questioning style, and utterance expansion).

However, the literature also shows variation in results: some studies found significant improvements in groups receiving structured interventions, while others reported smaller gains when the quality of teacher interactions was low or the intervention was less sustainable (Yan et al., 2023). This underscores the need for studies that not only examine the type of intervention but also examine the quality of teacher implementation and its effects on individual children, especially for children who exhibit vocabulary barriers. In the context of early childhood education practices at An-Nahri Nurjanah Kindergarten, initial observations indicate that a number of children still experience limitations in the use of functional vocabulary in everyday conversation. This condition aligns with research findings showing that inconsistent teacher stimulation, a lack of supporting media, and a lack of dialogic interaction can hinder language development (Kristiani et al., 2024). A similar problem has been reported in studies of classroom action and intervention studies, which emphasize the need for systematic language stimulation (Muyasaroh & Afandi, 2023).

Based on these contexts and gaps, this study aims to analyze the influence of teachers' roles in developing early childhood speaking skills at An-Nahri Nurjanah Kindergarten, with a particular focus on functional vocabulary enrichment. The study is expected to (Yan et al., 2023) identify the most effective teacher strategies for increasing vocabulary use in real-life communication contexts, (Muyasaroh & Afandi, 2023) evaluate the quality of teacher-child interactions as a mediator of language learning outcomes, and (Neumann, 2020) provide practical recommendations for early childhood education teachers in designing language stimulation activities that can be implemented in the classroom. The expected conclusion is the identification of concrete teaching practices that can improve children's speaking skills (vocabulary and speech production) in a measurable manner and can be replicated in other early childhood education settings.

METHODS

This research uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive quantitative approach. Quantitative research is structured and expresses data in numerical units/quantifications so that it can be analyzed and its findings can be generalized. According to (Sugiyono, 2014), quantitative research methods are based on the philosophy of positivism and are used to study specific populations or samples. Data collection in quantitative research methods utilizes research instruments, and data

analysis is quantitative/statistical, aimed at testing predetermined hypotheses. The study population included all teachers and early childhood children at An-Nahri Nurjanah Kindergarten. The research sample was selected using purposive sampling techniques for teachers and random sampling for children at An-Nahri Nurjanah Kindergarten on Friday, November 7, 2025. The total sample used in this analysis was 19 respondents, aged 5-6 years.

Data were collected using three techniques. First, a questionnaire was used to measure the teacher role variable (X) using a Likert scale of 1-4. This questionnaire covers aspects of the teacher's role in guiding, providing stimulation, and providing opportunities for children to speak. Second, the test is used to assess the variable of children's speaking ability (Y) through practical activities such as telling stories or answering questions. The assessment is carried out using a structured rubric with 5 aspects, including speech clarity, fluency, vocabulary, speaking courage, and sentence structure, with a score range of 1-4. Third, documentation is used as supplementary data in the form of RPPH (Daily Learning Implementation Plan), anecdotal notes, and photographs of learning activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

In this study, data description was organized using SPSS for Windows to generate information to determine the extent of the teacher's role in early childhood language development. The following data was used in this analysis:

Table 1. Teacher and Student Questionnaire Results Data

The Role of Teachers (X)	**Children's Speaking Ability** (Y)
40	57
37	52
33	50
32	47
42	40
45	43
45	54
43	53
42	48
40	51
35	41
34	49
40	48

(Source: Primary Research Data, 2025)

Based on Table 1 above, it was found that the children were able to speak fluently when answering questions posed by the teacher about the plants they had at home. The scores achieved were around 3.3. This was also confirmed by observations, which showed fluency when the teacher asked questions about something the students already

knew. This score indicates that the children were quite capable of delivering a continuous speech, although there were occasional pauses or hesitations.

We also measured five aspects of children's speech development, including: speech clarity, fluency, rich vocabulary, speaking confidence, and sentence structure. The results showed that children's speech abilities in these five aspects showed varying levels of achievement. Observations showed that children were able to pronounce the words "butterfly," "leaf," and "stem" quite clearly and were understandable to others. The speech clarity aspect obtained the highest score, which was around 3.6. This means that speaking skills in early childhood are the main foundation for children's language development. Our research shows that the role of teachers has a positive influence on the development of children's speech abilities, but this is very small. Most of the development of children's speech abilities is influenced by other factors such as the home environment, media stimulation, and individual characteristics of the child. This research emphasizes the importance of improving the quality of teacher-child interactions and the implementation of more structured and consistent language stimulation strategies.

Overall, the data shows that the children's speaking skills at An-Nahri Nurjanah Kindergarten are developing quite well, especially in terms of clarity of speech. However, sentence structure is still lacking and requires focus on development in learning activities. Based on the theories of Vygotsky, Bruner, and Skinner, children's language development is influenced by social interaction, gradual support from teachers, and positive reinforcement provided throughout the learning process.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics Results

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Peran guru	19	13	32	45	752	39.58	3.977	15.813
Kemampuan berbicara anak	19	20	37	57	936	49.26	5.476	29.982
Valid N (listwise)	19							

(Source: Primary Research Data, 2025).

Based on the descriptive statistics in Table 2 above, it shows that the teacher role variable measured in 19 respondents showed a minimum score of 32 and a maximum of 45 with a range of 13. The average value of 39.58 indicates that the teacher's role is in the fairly high category. The standard deviation of 3.977 indicates that respondents' perceptions are relatively consistent or homogeneous, because the spread of the values is not too large. Meanwhile, the child's speaking ability variable has a minimum score of 37 and a maximum of 57 with a range of 20. The average value of 49.26 indicates that children's speaking ability tends to be in the high category. The standard deviation of 5.476 indicates a slightly greater variation compared to the teacher's role variable, so that children's speaking ability among respondents is more diverse. Overall, both variables have the same number of valid samples, namely 19, so that the analysis can be carried out in a balanced manner between the two variables. The regression equation formed:

$$\hat{y} = 44.243 + 0.127X$$

Table 3. Results of the Regression Equation

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	44.243	13.225		3.345	.004
	Peran guru	.127	.333	.092	.381	.708

a. Dependent Variable: Kemampuan berbicara anak

(Source: Primary Research Data, 2025).

From this equation, it can be concluded that the child's speaking ability (Y) will have a value of 44.243 when the teacher's role (X) has a value of 0. The value of the child's speaking ability (Y) will increase by 0.127 for every 1 unit increase in the value of the teacher's role (X).

Table 4. Results of the coefficient of determination (R2)

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.092[a]	.008	-.050	5.610	.008	.146	1	17	.708

a. Predictors: (Constant), Peran guru

b. Dependent Variable: Kemampuan berbicara anak

(Source: Primary Research Data, 2025).

Based on Table 4 above, it shows that the R Square value is 0.008, meaning that the Teacher's Role variable is only able to explain 0.8% of the variation that occurs in Children's Speaking Ability, while the remaining 99.2% is influenced by other factors outside this research model. However, the positive regression coefficient indicates that a small increase in the teacher's role is still followed by an increase in children's speaking ability. This finding indicates that the teacher's role does contribute, but is not yet the main factor that shapes children's language development in this PAUD. Thus, it can be said that the low influence of the teacher's role does not mean that the teacher has no influence, but rather that the strategy, intensity, and quality of its implementation need to be improved. PAUD teachers need to apply more varied and consistent strategies, such as storytelling, role-playing, two-way dialogue, meaningful singing, and the use of visual media to stimulate children's speaking ability more optimally.

Discussion

According to Vygotsky's theory, children's language development occurs through social interactions. Children's speech clarity improves because they frequently receive direct examples from teachers, who act as more knowledgeable others (MKO). Teachers model correct pronunciation and guide children within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), enabling them to imitate and improve their own speech clarity (Etnawati, 2022). Furthermore, according to Jerome Bruner, fluency can develop through the Language Acquisition Support System (LASS) provided by teachers. Teachers' questions and responses help children understand conversational patterns, providing gradual support (scaffolding) so that children can more easily construct continuous utterances (Muna & Ridwan, 2025).

The vocabulary aspect of the observation results showed that the child was able to pronounce several new vocabulary words introduced by the teacher, such as pollen and flower petals. The child obtained a score of around 3.05, indicating that the child's vocabulary mastery is in the moderate category. The child is able to use a variety of basic vocabulary, but needs improvement to enrich the use of words in more diverse contexts. This aligns with Skinner's theory, which states that children learn to associate words with meaning through interactions with their environment. When teachers introduce new vocabulary and reinforce their use, children's vocabulary skills develop further (Hamidah et al., 2021).

Furthermore, observations of the speaking confidence aspect showed that children were able to express their opinions when given choices by the teacher, such as

choosing which color to paint their butterfly. The score was 3.35, indicating that the children demonstrated sufficient confidence in expressing their opinions or responding to questions. However, increasing opportunities to speak is still needed to further strengthen children's self-confidence. According to Skinner's theory, praise or attention given to children who speak up helps them become more confident in providing verbal responses. The more frequently children receive positive experiences when speaking, the more their confidence increases (Muna & Ridwan, 2025).

The final aspect, sentence construction, showed that children still need guidance in constructing more coherent and complex sentences. This aspect, as shown in the graph, received the lowest score of around 2.95. The ability to combine words into logical sentence structures appears to be an area that requires greater attention in learning. According to Vygotsky's theory, sentence construction skills develop through discussions with adults before ultimately becoming an internal skill. This decline in scores indicates that habituation, teacher example sentences, and teacher conversations still need to improve sentence structure scaffolding (Etnawati, 2022).

Compared to previous research, this study's results are inconsistent with those of Rusmaeni et al., 2024, which stated that storytelling methods provided by teachers significantly increased children's speaking confidence. The results indicate that the teacher's role has a positive but very modest influence on children's speaking ability. This means that the teacher's role is not the primary factor determining children's speaking ability in this early childhood education environment. Most children's language development is influenced by other factors such as family stimulation, the home environment, the intensity of communication with parents, and individual differences.

Furthermore, when compared with other studies, these results differ significantly. Many studies show that the teacher's role has a significant influence when learning strategies are implemented in a structured and consistent manner. The use of routine storytelling methods can significantly increase children's confidence and fluency (Hasanah & Sumarni, 2025). Saleha et al. (2025) also showed an increase in children's expressive language when teachers used storytelling expressively and interactively. This difference indicates the possibility that teacher strategies at An-Nahri Nurjanah Kindergarten have not been optimally implemented. Several possible causes for this low impact include: less dialogic teacher interaction, where teachers predominantly speak one-way without interaction with the children, and children are given fewer opportunities to speak. Kustini (2025) and L.I. (2022) found that teachers still tend to provide one-way instructions, thus preventing children from having sufficient opportunities to produce language independently. This minimal interaction results in children having less practice speaking in real contexts.

Inconsistent stimulation, where teachers provide stimulation in irregular learning activities that vary. Auliya et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of teacher consistency in providing language stimulation through planned activities. Children need repetition, ample opportunities to speak, and continuity of activities for language development to improve.

Due to the lack of varied media and methods, teachers only use one theme book and do not utilize other learning media, such as picture books, hand puppets, role-playing games, or other visual media, which are very helpful in improving children's speaking skills (Anriyani & Vitaloka, 2025; Mustakim, 2023). If teachers do not utilize stimulation media optimally, children's language development will be less significant.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the role of teachers in

developing early childhood speaking skills at An-Nahri Nurjanah Kindergarten is in the moderately high category, while children's speaking skills are in the high category. However, regression analysis shows that the influence of the teacher's role on children's speaking skills is only 0.8%, meaning its contribution is still small. This finding differs from a number of previous studies that have shown a significant influence of the teacher's role through storytelling methods, scaffolding, and dialogic activities in improving children's language. The low influence in this study indicates that the strategies implemented by teachers may not be optimal, inconsistent, or have not provided enough space for children to practice speaking skills actively.

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