



The Role of Guidance Counselors in The Language Development of Young Children

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to identify variables that influence early childhood language development. A literature review approach was used in this study to determine the elements that influence early childhood language development. The findings of this study indicate that language development in early childhood begins at birth and develops through experience and expertise. The language and communication development of early childhood is greatly influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors include genetic characteristics, gender, health, and intelligence. External factors include social relationships, parental education, family economic status, and family dynamics. The role of counseling guidance in early childhood language development is to help children develop language and communication skills, identify and overcome children's language difficulties, provide support and guidance to parents, integrate language guidance programs into learning activities, and monitor children's language development and provide intervention if necessary.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication tool that people use to inform others about their goals (Dhea Alfira & Siregar, 2024; Maghfiroh, 2022). Human perception of how they use language in their daily social lives determines the importance of language as a human identity. Humans only have one tool to carry out their human tasks. People can use words to express their thoughts. Because they are not expressed, things that are considered identical or comparable are not always identical. Language is the only tool that can make something feel real and tangible. Language is very important for human life because it gives them the ability to convey their thoughts, feelings, and desires to others (Anas & Sapri, 2022; Kusyairi et al., 2024). Language is also important for children's learning and cognitive development. As a result, everyone, especially parents, teachers, and counselors, must pay special attention to children's language development.

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Children typically have language development skills that include language comprehension and expression, reading, writing, and counting (Alfisyahri et al., 2024). Children's language development includes the ability to speak with similar words and meanings. Children can indicate their age or date of birth, pronounce or spell their name perfectly, and say their home address. Children develop their language quickly, so they can sing songs, stories, and fairy tales they hear, and repeat poems in complete sentences (Nurul Iman, 2021; Parapat et al., 2023). They may also ask about the meaning of words or sentences they hear, or imitate the accent of sentences they hear.

The early stages of a child's growth and development depend on language development, which is very important for communication and this stage of development (Anggraini, 2021; Nurita et al., 2025). It can be said that each child's talent in language acquisition will certainly differ and correspond to their biological maturity. To support early childhood language development, parents play a key role as primary educators by teaching a wide variety of vocabulary and encouraging interaction with their children through picture books that help them understand what their parents are saying (Almaghfiroh et al., 2024). Because children's language development can begin even when they are still in the womb, many expectant mothers often encourage their unborn children to speak.

Children who have a keen interest in the environment learn to understand themselves and recognize their own emotions, which they gradually learn to control (Engkizar et al., 2025; Fuadia, 2022; Komar & Aslan, 2025). This is based on the development of language in children in tandem with physical, motor, linguistic, social, and emotional development and change. The relationship between child development, particularly language development, and their interest in the social environment needs to be understood. This study will focus on the factors that influence language development in children in Indonesia.

Children will inevitably learn about their environment through their social lives. Since they can only communicate through language, they are trained to speak from an early age so that they can put words together and express themselves verbally in accordance with their intended meaning (Riadoh Riadoh & Larasati Larasati, 2024). The complexity and breadth of interactions with the surrounding environment will have a major impact on how language skills develop. Young children may experience difficulties in mastering grammar, identifying and forming sentences, understanding and using words appropriately, and developing their verbal communication skills (Ocktaviana, 2023; Saripah Saripah, 2024). Children may find it difficult to engage with their surroundings, communicate with classmates, and learn well in class as a result of these problems.

Problems in early language development may be caused by several factors. Both internal and external variables, such as neurological or genetic disorders, an unstimulating home environment, or a lack of social engagement, can contribute to the emergence of language development problems in children (Friantary, 2020). Therefore, it is important for us to understand the problems that occur during early language development in young children and find practical solutions to these problems (Maghfiroh et al., 2024). With careful learning and appropriate intervention, children with language development problems can get the support they need to learn and communicate as well as possible.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method, which aims to describe, understand, and analyze phenomena in depth based on relevant literature data. This method is carried out through a literature study, namely by collecting data from books, journals, and other scientific sources related to child language development,

then analyzed using descriptive analysis techniques (Engkizar et al., 2025). This approach allows researchers to interpret information systematically, group important concepts, and compile a comprehensive picture of early childhood language development. The purpose of this study is to explain and analyze the role of counseling in child language development, specifically how counseling can provide appropriate support, stimulation, and intervention for children with language barriers (Nasrullah et al., 2023). This study also aims to identify counseling strategies such as verbal communication, emotional support, educational games, and social interaction that can help optimize children's receptive and expressive language skills, so that counseling services can be utilized optimally in early childhood education settings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Language Development in Early Childhood

Early language development is a shift in the sound symbol system that affects a child's ability to speak and helps them identify themselves, communicate, and work with others. One way to observe language development in children is through their cognitive skills related to overall academic success (Zega & Suprihati, 2021; Etnawati, 2021)(Engkizar et al., 2025; Etnawati, 2022; Zega & Suprihati, 2021). There are five stages of pre-speech segmental feature development, namely: i) reflexive crying and vegetative sounds (zero to eight weeks), such as vocal sounds with a slightly hoarse voice, ii) cooing and laughter (eight to twenty weeks), vocal play (sixteen to thirty weeks), iii) reduplicative babbling (twenty-five to fifty weeks).

It is only after they start school, around the age of seven or eight, that children begin to learn language. Therefore, language development is the process of becoming more proficient in speaking, writing, and sign language. Here, "mastering communication tools" refers to the effort a person makes to understand and be understood by others. Young children begin to understand words in the context of sentences and their interactions with each other.

They develop the ability to distinguish words with different meanings and use them appropriately in specific situations. At first, children may only be able to understand words in contexts that are directly related to themselves, either literally or specifically (Masfufah, 2021). However, as babies grow older, they begin to understand the meaning of increasingly difficult and abstract phrases and may associate these words with more general ideas. Preschool-aged children are in an explicit phase of language development, in which they can express their desires, refusals, and opinions using spoken language (Martini Jumaris, 2006). Aspects of preschool children's language development include vocabulary, syntax (grammar), semantics, and phonemes. Children's vocabulary develops rapidly as they interact with their environment.

Children can also use spoken language with good sentence structure, even though they have not yet learned grammar. Semantics relates to the use of words according to their purpose, and kindergarten children are already able to express their desires, refusals, and opinions with appropriate words and sentences. Phonemes are the smallest units of sound that distinguish words, and preschoolers can already string sounds together to form meaningful words (Suparman & Nurliana, 2022). Speech is a form of language that uses articulation or words to convey meaning, and is the most effective form of communication.

Counseling Guidance in Kindergarten

The role of counseling guidance in children's language development is to help children overcome language difficulties through play therapy techniques integrated into learning activities in kindergarten (Zahira et al., 2025; Zakia Nasution et al., 2023). Counseling serves as a support service that helps children overcome language difficulties, such as shyness in speaking, difficulty in storytelling, or limitations in expressing opinions. Through play therapy, counselors or teachers help create a safe

and enjoyable playing environment, so that children are more free to express their ideas, feelings, and spoken language.

Counseling guidance in kindergarten is a support service provided to optimize children's development, including their language development (Amanah et al., 2023)(Amanah et al., 2023; Engkizar et al., 2025). Counseling guidance plays an important role in helping early childhood children who experience language barriers such as difficulty telling stories, lack of confidence in speaking, or limited vocabulary. The role of counseling guidance in children's language development is closely related to child development theory, which views children as unique individuals who need appropriate stimulation during their golden age. The pre-operational stage is when children are able to use symbols, imagine, and begin to tell stories well. Early childhood is a sensitive period for language development, making counseling intervention highly appropriate. Counseling uses games such as puppet shows, storytelling, singing, picture cards, and language games, all of which have been proven to improve vocabulary, sentence construction, the ability to express opinions, and the courage to speak (Raniza et al., 2023).

The additional role of counseling guidance in children's language development, apart from the roles described above, also shows that counseling guidance plays an important role in creating a safe emotional environment, which greatly influences children's language development (Meilisa Fauzia Nastiti & Ma'mun Hanif, 2024). Counseling guidance also plays a role in building social interactions, which according to Vygotsky is the main basis for language development. Guidance counseling helps remove psychological barriers to language, such as shyness, fear of making mistakes, or anxiety about speaking, in line with the concept of overcoming resistance in play therapy (Arsini et al., 2025). Guidance counseling also plays a role in identifying language problems early on and connecting schools and parents regarding children's language development.

Counseling also plays a role in strengthening children's confidence in language. Speaking is the most effective form of communication, and counseling helps children feel more confident in using language as a tool for expressing opinions, asking questions, or telling stories. The role of counseling in children's language development is to provide planned assistance to young children to help them develop language skills appropriate to their stage of development through a child-friendly approach (Abdul Latief et al., 2024). The understanding of the role of counseling is based on the views of Morensen & Schmuller, who state that counseling is an important part of education that helps individuals develop their potential optimally, as well as the opinions of Jones, Staffre & Stewart, who emphasize that counseling helps individuals adjust and overcome difficulties.

CONCLUSION

Children's language development depends on interaction, self-expression, and opportunities to actively use language. Through play therapy, children are given the space to express themselves freely, interact with peers, and practice using language symbols in accordance with Piaget's pre-operational stage. The role of counseling in children's language development is to help provide a safe, interactive, and emotionally supportive play environment so that children can express themselves through language, overcome communication barriers, and develop optimal speaking skills according to their developmental characteristics. Counseling also helps children develop language skills through interaction, self-expression, and opportunities to actively use language. Through play therapy, children are given the space to express themselves freely, interact with their peers, and practice using language symbols. In addition, counseling also helps overcome children's language barriers by facilitating their emotional expression, interaction, and communication through therapeutic play.

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