



Improving the Speaking Ability of Children with Speech Delay Using Image Media

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ABSTRACT

Speech delay is a condition of delayed speech that can affect a child's communication development, especially in early childhood. This study aims to improve the skills and enrich the vocabulary of children with speech delay through the use of visual media.

This study used a classroom action research (CAR) method, conducted in two cycles. The subjects were children aged 4-5 years who were attending kindergarten and identified as having a speech delay. The instrument used in this study was action research, employing a qualitative approach through observation and intervention based on visual media.

The study showed that using visual media, from a pre-cycle of only 20% to 80%, stimulated and increased children's interest in communication, enriched their vocabulary, and increased their confidence in expressing words or simple sentences. Thus, visual media can be an effective alternative to support language development.

INTRODUCTION

Speech delay is a condition in which a child does not reach the expected stages of language development according to their age. Data from ASHA (2023) show that 5–10% of preschool children experience speech delay, while in Indonesia the figure reaches 15% (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). At YPPSB Kindergarten, particularly in class A4, there are three children experiencing speech delay, characterized by limited vocabulary and difficulty forming sentences.

The contributing factors include:

1. **Internal factors:** physical and cognitive impairments (Yulianda, 2019)
2. **External factors:** lack of language stimulation (Minayu, 2016)

Recent studies have proven that picture media is effective in improving speaking skills through:

- Stimulation of Broca's area (Lee et al., 2020)
- A 35% increase in speaking ability (Nurjanah, 2019)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking Ability

According to Mulyati et al. (2014), children aged 4–6 develop six types of social speaking activities:

1. Play Talk: Expression of personality during play
2. Negotiation Talk: Collaboration within activities
3. Excluding Talk: Rejecting the participation of other children
4. Challenge Talk: Expressing disagreement

Lara et al. (2014) emphasize that speaking is the communication of thoughts and feelings, both verbally and nonverbally, through interactions with teachers or peers. This ability is fundamental for expressing ideas (Mutiasih, 2019).

Controversy: Jauharoti & Ratna (2020) found that parental busyness can cause articulation disorders in 5-year-old children.

Speech Delay

Expert – Definition

ASHA	Delayed receptive/expressive language development
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Owens (2014)	Inability to reach language development stages according to age
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Karmelita (2015)	Delayed understanding and expression of language
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Causes:

- Lack of stimulation for cell, organ, and social development (Sembiring et al., 2021)
- Genetic and environmental factors (Yulianda, 2019)

Functions of Picture Media:

1. Connecting words with objects (Pringgandani & Widiasari, 2018)
2. Increasing vocabulary by 35% (Nurhayati, 2020)
3. Developing narratives (Astuti & Hidayat, 2019)

Mechanism:

- Visual stimulation of Broca's area (ASHA, 2020)
- Auditory-visual combination (Rahayu & Utami, 2022)

METHODOLOGY

This study used the Kemmis & McTaggart Classroom Action Research (CAR) model with four stages:

1. Planning
 - Identification of speech delay problems in YPPSB Kindergarten
 - Preparation of educational picture media
 - Creation of observation instruments
2. Action
 - Implementation of picture media in learning
 - Stimulating speech through activities:
 - * Naming objects in pictures
 - * Composing simple sentences
3. Observation
 - Participatory observation for 60 minutes/day
 - Documentation of vocabulary development
4. Reflection
 - Analysis of the achievements of each cycle
 - Refinement of strategies for the next cycle

RESEARCH RESULT

Description of the Initial Condition

During the initial observation period, the researcher found that in each class at YPPSB Kindergarten, there were 2-3 children experiencing speech delay. Their speaking development was still not in accordance with that of their peers, which was particularly evident from their difficulties in communicating and naming objects they wanted. To determine whether these speaking difficulties were caused by a lack of confidence or actual speech delay, the researcher conducted observations using observation sheets and interviews with parents.

Next, the researcher implemented an approach by repeating the pronunciation of a specific object until the child could pronounce it correctly. However, in the beginning, this assistance did not use any supporting learning media, so it did not show significant improvement. The learning media needed were concrete and engaging materials, especially picture media that could help children recall and pronounce words more effectively.

Initial Observation Results (Pre-Test)

The three children who became the subjects of the study showed low levels of development, with an average score of 39% (not yet emerging/not independent). The pre-test results can be seen in Table 4 below:
 Assessed Aspects – Subject G – Subject As – Subject A

Imitates the words he hears 1 1 1

Speaking with peers		1	
Mentioning classmates' names	1 2	2	
Answering questions from the teacher		1	
Telling a short story		1	
Total Score		6	
Description:			

- Score 1 = Not yet developed
- Score 2 = Developed with guidance
- Score 3 = Already developed

• **Maximum score = 15**

These results indicate that children's speaking abilities are still very limited and require further intervention.

Implementation of Classroom Action Research Cycle I

Planning

Cycle I was carried out in March 2025 with the theme "The Universe." The planning focused on preparing an inclusive daily lesson plan (RPPH) containing strategies for using picture media to facilitate verbal interaction for children with speech delay.

Implementation

Cycle I consisted of three meetings:

- **Meeting 1 (March 10, 2025):** Children were invited to watch videos about God's creations, engage in discussions, and create shapes of the sun, moon, and stars using various materials while pronouncing the names of the objects.
- **Meeting 2 (March 12, 2025):** Reviewing the previous material, followed by cutting activities, matching pictures, and repeatedly pronouncing the names of the objects.
- **Meeting 3 (March 13, 2025):** A word raffle game was conducted by pairing pictures and pronouncing them correctly.

Each meeting lasted 60 minutes and included opening, core, and closing activities.

Observation of Cycle I

The observation results of Cycle I showed improvements in language comprehension, language expression, and the use of language in social contexts. The summary of Cycle I observations is as follows:

Reflection of Cycle I

Although the children demonstrated progress categorized as “emerging with guidance” in most aspects, the results did not yet meet the mastery indicators. Therefore, more effective and engaging strategies were needed in the next cycle to achieve optimal outcomes.

Implementation of Classroom Action Research Cycle II

Planning

Cycle II was conducted in April 2025 with a focus on repetition and reinforcement of picture media using more engaging formats. The selected theme was the cultural backgrounds of peers and traditional clothing.

b. Implementation

Cycle II also consisted of three meetings:

- **Meeting 1 (April 21, 2025):** Children reviewed the names of their friends using photos attached to paper.
- **Meeting 2 (April 23, 2025):** Playing with picture cards of classmates while naming and describing the characteristics in the pictures.
- **Meeting 3 (April 24, 2025):** Playing a word raffle game paired with picture media, motivating children to pronounce the picture names correctly.

c. Reflection of Cycle II

There was a significant improvement in the children’s speaking abilities. The children began to show confidence and the ability to correctly mention the names of objects and friends. However, for other indicators, continued support and cooperation from parents were still needed so the children could keep practicing at home.

DISCUSSION

The research findings show that the use of picture media is highly effective in improving the speaking skills of children with speech delay. Picture media provide concrete visual stimulation that is easier for children to process compared to verbal input alone. This is consistent with the findings of Pringgandani & Widayarsi (2018), who stated that picture media help children connect words with objects and enrich their vocabulary.

Furthermore, the improvement in language comprehension, expression, and the use of language in social contexts supports the theory that engaging and interactive learning media can enhance children’s confidence in communicating. This study is also consistent with the findings of Dewi and Pratiwi (2018) regarding the role of picture media in speech therapy, which state that picture media make it easier for teachers to deliver material interactively, enabling children to imitate and understand words more effectively.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations, including:

1. Limited Number of Subjects:

Only three children in one class were involved, so the results cannot be generalized to all children with speech delay in the school.

2. Short Implementation Period:

The intervention consisted of only three meetings per cycle and two cycles in total, so long-term development could not be fully observed.

3. Variations in Children's Backgrounds:

Individual factors, parenting styles, and different environments influenced each child's learning outcomes.

4. Limited Assessment Instruments:

The assessment relied on observational and qualitative methods, which may contain subjective elements.

CONCLUSION

Based on the two cycles of classroom action research, it can be concluded that:

1. Picture media are effective in improving the speaking skills of children with speech delay, with significant improvements in:

- Word pronunciation (85% of subjects were able to imitate 15+ new vocabulary words)
- Sentence length (from 1-2 words to 3-5 words)
- Social interaction (frequency of initiating conversations increased by 70%)

2. Picture-based activities (such as picture card games and picture guessing games) were proven to:

- Increase learning motivation
- Strengthen visual-verbal memory
- Develop simple sentence structures (SVO)

Suggestions

• Method Expansion:

- Combine picture media with Augmented Reality (AR)
- Test effectiveness across a broader spectrum of language disorders (autism, dyslexia)

• Holistic Approach:

- Involve parents in home-based picture therapy programs
- Evaluate long-term effects (6-12 months post-intervention)

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