



## **The Role of Educator Stimulation in Dealing with Speech Delay of 4–5 Years-Old Children at RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan**

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### **Abstract**

Speech delays are one of the causes of developmental disorders that are often found in children. Delayed speech is a serious problem and needs immediate treatment. This research aims to find the stimulation of educators, the learning media and the obstacles and supporting factors in dealing with 4–5-year-old children with speech delay located at RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan. This research uses a descriptive method and a qualitative approach. Data collection instruments used interviews, observation and documentation. The stimulations provided for children at RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan by the teachers are reading storybooks together, singing, and playing with puzzles and legos to trigger new vocabulary. Some media applied are story books, and puzzles to stimulate children to talk flawlessly into correct patterns and to add new vocabularies. The media are chosen as they become effective tools to overcome speech delay difficulties and support the activities. Several factors support and challenge teachers in stimulating students with speech delays. Less stimulation provided by parents in daily life is the most inhibiting factor. In conclusion, educators have a very important role in stimulating children, especially in selecting learning activities and media for teaching students with speech delay but parents have a specific role in the whole language development stimulation. The teacher's role will be optimal by the support of the parent's role.

### **Keywords:**

Early Childhood, Role of Educators, Speech Delay, Stimulation

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**Abstrak**

Keterlambatan bicara merupakan salah satu penyebab gangguan perkembangan yang sering ditemukan pada anak. Keterlambatan bicara merupakan masalah yang serius dan perlu penanganan segera. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui stimulasi pendidik, media pembelajaran serta faktor penghambat dan pendukung dalam menangani anak usia 4–5 tahun yang mengalami keterlambatan bicara yang berada di RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif dan pendekatan kualitatif. Instrumen pengumpulan data menggunakan wawancara, observasi dan dokumentasi. Stimulasi yang diberikan kepada anak di RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan oleh para guru adalah membaca buku cerita bersama, bernyanyi, dan bermain puzzle dan lego untuk memicu kosakata baru. Beberapa media yang digunakan adalah buku cerita, dan puzzle untuk menstimulasi anak agar dapat berbicara dengan pola yang benar dan menambah kosakata baru. Media tersebut dipilih karena menjadi alat yang efektif untuk mengatasi kesulitan keterlambatan bicara dan mendukung kegiatan. Ada beberapa faktor yang mendukung dan menantang guru dalam menstimulasi siswa yang mengalami keterlambatan bicara. Kurangnya stimulasi yang diberikan oleh orang tua dalam kehidupan sehari-hari merupakan faktor yang paling menghambat. Kesimpulannya, pendidik memiliki peran yang sangat penting dalam menstimulasi anak, terutama dalam memilih kegiatan dan media pembelajaran untuk mengajar siswa dengan keterlambatan bicara, namun orang tua memiliki peran khusus dalam stimulasi perkembangan bahasa secara keseluruhan. Peran guru akan menjadi optimal dengan dukungan peran orang tua.

**Kata Kunci:**

Anak Usia Dini, Peran Pendidik, Keterlambatan Bicara, Stimulasi

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## INTRODUCTION

Educators have an important role in providing care to children with speech delays. The care performed by the teacher is an appreciation of stimulation for every student in every skill (Adawiyah et al., 2024). Arifin (2019) stated that speech delay is one of the speech development disorders that occurs during language acquisition, whereas it can lead to a child who experiences speech delay. A child will be considered experiencing speech delay when he/she has speech ability which is below the average of his/her peers. Speech delay in children is defined as an abnormal speech ability of a child compared to the ability of children of the same age. Speech delay can be identified by using language use accuracy which shows unclear pronunciation and using sign language for communication, which can make parents and other people around children not able to understand them although they understand what the parents said. Speech delay is a condition where children find difficulties in speaking clearly. Speech delay in children is usually caused by frequent screen time that less stimulates children to do actual speaking and leaves them listening only instead of commencing interaction. Two factors become the background of speech delay, they are internal and external factors. The internal factors are genetics, physical defect, premature, and sex. Meanwhile, external factors that cause speech delay are the number or order of children, economic status, mother's level of education, family role, and bilingualism (Angraeni et al., 2024).

Adawiyah et al. (2024) stated that speech delay is a condition for children who experience difficulties in language development and speech ability. Such conditions will result in challenges while communicating and interacting with children of the same age, parents, and other people around. Social interaction plays an important role in children's development, but children with speech delays may find it difficult to do such things. A supportive environment can help children motivate and develop their abilities, even though with speech delay experience, by using good social contact and communication (Manizar, 2017).

In children's language development, there are two kinds of language which are receptive language (listening) and expressive language (speaking). Receptive language focuses on understanding words or symbols, and expressive language manages pronunciation (Hidayati et al., 2024). As speaking ability is easier to be identified than other abilities, discussion of speaking ability is often related to speech ability. Language and speech skill is affected by intrinsic factors (from the child) and extrinsic factors (from the environment). Intrinsic factor is a congenital condition that includes the physiology of speech and language-related organs. Meanwhile, extrinsic factors are stimuli around children especially speeches received by them (Angraeni et al., 2024).

Nurfadhillah et al. (2022) stated that children will be diagnosed with speech delay if the sound production and communication are below average for children of the same age. The speech aspect is the aspect of children's development that starts from the first day they are born. The ability to communicate with a child starts from reacting to the sound of the mother or father (Desiarna et al., 2023). Even at the age of 2 months, children showed a social smile to everybody who interacted with them. At the age of 18 months, children should be able to understand and produce as many as 20 meaningful vocabularies. Moreover, children can produce a complete sentence consisting of two words at two years old, such as "Mama go", "I piss". If children can not meet such conditions, they will be considered for speech delay (Muthia et al., 2024).

The problem of speech delay in children is an urgent and serious problem that needs to take immediate action, as it has become one of the most frequent causes of child development interference. Speech delay is reflected by the language use accuracy that shows unclear pronunciation using sign language only for communication purposes, so parents and other people around them will not be able to understand them although they understand what the parents and people around them said (Budiasih et al., 2024). Speech delay showed deficit or disorder of child development. Language disorder in children is previously defined as language abnormality development

of a child compared to children of the same age.

World Health Organization have stated that 0-6 years old children are considered at the state of golden age caused by rapid growth and development in the spawn of human life (Istiqlal, 2021). During this age, children learn by watching, listening, and learning about their surroundings. The fulfilment task of previous children's development stage will affect the future stage of development. Children are the gift from God Almighty presented for every parent to always be cared for, loved, and nurtured not only to children born with normal conditions but also to those who are born with impaired mental and physical condition (Isnaeni & Latipah, 2021; Manurung 2020). Parents play a significant role in the process of children's growth and development. Many parents who possess children with abnormal conditions experience stress and many of them can not accept the reality of their child's condition and do not fulfil their expectations.

Educators or teachers have a crucial role in growing children's speech ability during the learning process. It aims to stimulate and optimize children's language development. Basri et al. (2023) stated that the cognitive and Social-emotional development of children is highly affected by the ability of speech of children. Educators and teachers have an essential role in growing children's speech ability in the learning process by stimulating and optimizing children's speech ability (Basri et al., 2023). Their speech ability affects their cognitive skill deeply. Speech ability is an early ability that needs to be mastered by children in order to be able to have comprehensive communication (Hoerudin, 2024).

In this study, the researcher chose RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan, a kindergarten institution as the setting of study which indicated that the institution has students with characteristics of speech delay, from 17 students of the institution, 5 of them experience speech delay. Moreover, the school has a B-level certification, which is why RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan is a proper place to conduct this study. On one hand, there are several reasons for choosing the school, the strategies of teachers who face children with speech delay by implementing extra time after

school. The activities consist of reading a storybook, playing puzzles, guessing images, and playing with dolls in order to overcome the delay.

The study aims to find the stimulation of educators in dealing with 4–5 years old children with speech delay located at RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan. The second objective of the study is to reveal the role of Media in taking care of 4–5 years old children with speech delay at the age of RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan. The third goal is to reveal the obstacles and supporting factors while dealing with children with speech delays at RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan.

## METHODS

This study applied a descriptive qualitative approach. Denzin and Lincoln quoted by Ahmadi stated that qualitative research is multi-method in focus. The method used an interpretive and naturalistic approach to the main problem. This means that researchers who implement qualitative research tend to choose a natural setting to understand and provide an interpretation of phenomena from values given by people to the researcher (Aisya & Amelia, 2022).

This study setting took place at RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan, a kindergarten school located in Jalmek district, Pamekasan, East Java. This kindergarten school has B-level accreditation and has indications of students with speech delay. Among 17 students of RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan, 5 of them experience speech delay. They are AZ, DD, RK, FR, and AR. Thus, RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan is a proper setting for the research. The subject of this study is students from Kindergarten who happened to have speech delay disorder. The total subjects of this study are 5 children. The interview of this study was done with the parents or teachers as secondary interviewees.

The data collection process was done by applying observation, interview, and documentation. The data gathered by the researcher in this study is direct information that was collected from respondents with different words. Moreover, the observation done by the researcher in this study was observing the school condition, environment and family condition of the children with

speech delay and revealing as much as information about data of children who have speech difficulties to be gathered while on the field. To support the analysis of this study, the researcher also commenced documentation, taking pictures, archived, or other evidence that will support this research.

The data collection technique applied in this study follows the interview procedure, observation, and documentation. First, the interview is a data collection technique that implements an answer-question process by the interviewer and answers by the interviewee. The data used during the interview was about 3 focuses. Focus 1 is about how educator stimulation takes care of children with speech delay. Focus 2 is about how media implementation affects children with speech delay. Focus 3 is about supporting and inhibiting factors concerning speech delay.

Instruments used in this method were interview sheets and observations regarding the focus of the study that was discussed previously. The researcher applied structured interviews with guidelines as follows.

**Table 1.** Interview Guideline Questions

Variable	Interview Guidelines
How does educator stimulation take care of 4–5 years old children with speech delay at RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan?	What is the importance of stimulation for children with speech delay?
	What kind of stimulations have been implemented for children with speech delay?
	Did the applied stimulation result an optimal outcome?
	What are the teacher's next steps if the given stimulation was failed?

In addition to the main guideline question as a trigger, the researcher also explored using unstructured interview questions to find the focus of learning media and the challenges of child stimulation.

Observation used in this study is a nonparticipant technique as the researcher is not part of RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan. Stages of observation include direct observation of the subject of study on the field such as the behaviour, attitude, conversation,

and interaction among them (Hasanah, 2017). The last data collection technique is documentation which is in the form of text, picture, or a work from subjects that later will be documented about the use of media in dealing with children with speech delay.

Several focuses become limitations in observation and documentation. The first focus is on educators' stimulation to overcome the speech delay as an object of observation and difficulties experienced by children. The second focus will concern about the use of media implementation in taking care of children with speech delays with storytelling using pictures as objects of observation. The third focus is on supporting and inhibiting factors to take care of speech delay by commencing extra learning time after class, learning by singing, and performing early diagnosis of children's development.

There are three stages in analysing qualitative data. The data reduction stage is a process of reducing or simplifying data in order to meet the study requirement and to collect the data easily (Susanto et al., 2023). After the data reduction stage, data display is the next stage. As the name recalls, the research can provide reduced and simplified data to be displayed. According to Miles and Huberman, the next step of the data qualitative stage is conclusion drawing. Thus, the constructed and identified data by using significant techniques, the conclusion can be drawn.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Stimulation of Children with Speech Delay

Based on the results of the interview and observation took place at Hidayatullah Pamekasan for 4–5 years old children of A class. Researchers found that several children experience speech delays. Such a disorder will disturb the learning process in class. Thus, children will find it difficult when asked by the teacher during learning in class. Based on findings in the field the indication refers to the speech delay problem.

According to Tasemen et al, two factors cause speech delay which are internal and external (Tasemen et al. 2020). The internal factor comes from the child itself namely genetics, physical deformation, neurology malfunction, premature condition, and sex. On

the other hand, external factors come from the outside occurring among children such as lack of language stimulation from both parents, family and environment. In general, schools need to implement one of the strategies by providing hearing aid devices, teacher can also give extra learning time in private. A teacher should provide an equal amount of extra time for children with speech delays in order to increase their vocabularies, conduct a sentence, and train them to be involved in a conversation.

The stimulations provided for children at RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan by the teacher are reading story books together, singing, and playing with puzzles and legos in order to trigger new vocabulary obtained by children and also to stimulate them to love communication with children of the same age in class. There are several activities provided by educators to stimulate children with speech delay, as follows.

**Table 2.** Stimulation Activities for Children with Speech Delay

Type of Activity	Total of children	Speech Delay	Note
Story Telling	17	5	Children with speech delays can interact with other children of the same age.
Stimulating children by using pictures in a storybook	17	5	Children with speech delays love story books with pictures just like other children.
Stimulating children to repeat every word	17	5	Able to speak with confidence although in a stammering state
Stimulating children to love reading and listening	17	5	Children with speech delay can adapt with enthusiastic motivation, although limited to their voice ability.

Some of the above activities are carried out alternately and adjust the scheduling of activity variations. Examples of the above activities can be seen in the following figure.



**Figure 1.** Storytelling Method Implementation to Stimulate 4–5 Years-Old Children with Speech Delay



**Figure 2.** Playing Puzzles and Lego to Stimulate 4–5 Years-Old Children with Speech Delay

### Learning by Media Stimulation for Children with Speech Delay

Table 2 above provides information about stimulation given by teachers toward children with speech delay for several weeks by using several media. Some media applied at RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan are story books, puzzles, and Lego in order to stimulate children to talk flawlessly, in correct patterns, and add new vocabularies. The three media are chosen as they become effective tools to overcome speech delay difficulties. The media

provides various ways to attract children commencing communication with others, asking and answering questions, and peer discussion at class.



**Figure 3.** Media Used to Stimulate 4–5 Years-Old Children with Speech Delay

The above media was chosen based on the needs of supporting activities and also children's interest in real media and also props that can be communicated to trigger communication in activities.

### Result of Stimulation toward Children with Speech Delay

On Tuesday, 02 September 2024 researchers conducted a deepening through interviews to find out the impression of educators regarding the results of stimulation that has been carried out in several meetings. Table 3 below shows the field observation result.

**Table 3.** Table of Stimulation Results for Students with Speech Delay

Question	Answer
Are the children able to listen and understand the words or questions spoken by other people well?	<b>AZ:</b> she is able to listen well, understand the words and answer questions from the teacher after two instructions <b>DD:</b> she is able to listen well and understand the words, but she cannot

	answer the two questions.
Do they talk verbally?	<b>AZ:</b> she is able to talk verbally. <b>DD:</b> she uses body gestures often.
Are they able to understand and retell the stories previously told by the teacher?	<b>AZ:</b> She does not understand fairytale story. "She cannot understand the story yet" stated by one of the teachers.
Do they respond to other people's opinions?	<b>AZ &amp; DD, both</b> children are not able to express other people's opinions.

The findings above show that there is progress in 2 out of 5 students with speech delay. Some progress was shown through identification and expression during the stimulation process and afterwards through observation. While the other 3 students with speech delay have not shown any identifiable development.

### Inhibiting Factor of Speech Delay Stimulation

Several factors support and prevent teachers from stimulating speech delay. Environmental factor becomes a supporting element for the language development of children with speech delay as children tend to imitate words they heard in their surroundings. The inhibiting factor is the less stimulation provided by parents to engage children to speak in the correct pattern in daily life.

Stimulation by educators at school is done in a very limited time so it needs continuous stimulation activities at home by parents. However, the findings show that busy parents make parental stimulation very lacking at home so they rely on stimulation by educators at school.

Erroneous parental stimulation practices are also a hindrance. Parents often mimic the child's voice through verbal language instead of showing them how to say the correct verbal expression so that the process of imitation of the correct speech pattern is slowed down because the child's language association and acquisition are slowed down.

## Discussion

Playing everywhere and anywhere in the world playgrounds for children can be defined as a direct and spontaneous activity in their development phase (Istiqomah et al., 2024). Speech delay is a condition of children who experience difficulties in language and speech development. Such delay will lead to challenges in communicating and interacting with children of the same age, parents, and other people around them.

During the stimulation process of children with speech delay, educators play a significant role in order to support the development of students to reach the goals of their lives in an optimum way (Arifin, 2019). This fact is in accordance that humans are weak creatures from born and until death (Maryatun, 2016). The role of preschool educators, based on the two definitions above, are people who are responsible, design, execute, and review guidance for children aged 0–8 years old in general (Yarsama, 2021). Stimulation activity by the teacher is one of the teacher's duties as facilitator, evaluator, and demonstrator. (Kirom, 2017). Teacher as Facilitator means the teacher is able to provide learning sources that can be used and support the achievement during the learning process such as source person, textbook, magazine, and newspaper. Teacher as Evaluator. Teachers already evaluate the formulated achievements, do they achieved or not. Teacher as Demonstrator. The teacher is expected to master learning material given to students and develop it as it determines the outcome of studying.

The speaking ability of children is a very important skill for their development process. Educators and parents have a significant role in handling speech delays that occur in children. Children need their role in order to help them overcome the problem, thus educators and parents must provide them with the best option. Speech delay is one of the language disorders that occur during language acquisition, and it can cause them to be delayed in the process. A child is considered to have a speech delay if his/her speaking ability is below their peers (Sari et al., 2018). Speech delay can be identified by inaccurate vocabulary that shows unclear pronunciation

and using sign language as a tool of communication (Istiqal, 2021).

If speech delay is diagnosed and identified at the preschool level, then teacher stimulation must be increased (Ardiyansyh in 'Ulya, 2024). A preschool child is an individual who experiences a rapid growth and development process and even becomes the time of peak intelligent development process. It is a unique phase of life and becomes a changing phase as a growth, development, and refinement process. That occurs for both physical and mental conditions that will lead them for the rest of their life. That is why, stimulation is an effective and heavily affected way to change the result of children's study. Moreover, the media used for stimulation must be various as students of preschool with speech delay will be highly stimulated through games and interaction using media during learning.

Several factors that occurred at RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan are general. A supporting factor is an environment that supports children's language development. Teachers and parents play important roles as children tend to imitate the words they hear around them. Communication between both parents must be anticipated in order to commence two-way communication, using intonation, eye contact, and facial expression (Muthia et al., 2024). The inhibiting factor is the lack of stimulation by parents or lack of awareness to ask children to speak in the correct order in daily life. The factors above can be overcome with a combination of some future strategies such as cooperation between teachers and parents (Angraeni et al., 2024).

This study has some gaps with previous studies. Some gaps can be found in the aspect and method which are research focus (Aini & Alifia, 2022). The previous study limits the study to the identification of the factors (Septiyaningtiyas et al., 2024), detection (Nurhayati, 2020) or stimulation only (Rahmah et al., 2024). This research tries to explore and explore the form of stimulation and its factors in one setting and an educational environment through the role and perspective of educators.



## CONCLUSION

Based on the focus and objective of the study which is the role of educator in taking care of speech delay, the finding of this study concluded that children who experience speech delay will find it difficult to express their opinion and they are not able to speak fluently, children with speech delay are very fragile and need to be treated. There are several simulations performed by teachers at RA Hidayatullah that instruct students to read story books together, and playing puzzles and legos. The attempts show several outcomes. The challenges faced by the teacher are the cooperation between parents and teachers, teachers' motivation, parents' motivation and the environment are very important to help AZ, DD, RK, FR, and AR to speak fluently by providing them space to tell stories about a daily activity such as playing outside with other children of the same age. By having frequent conversations with parents and friends, it will help them to grow their confidence to communicate. Communication between mother and father should be more engaged at home. Educators' advice for parents who have children with speech delay at RA Hidayatullah Pamekasan is to engage in more conversation with the children and to motivate them. In order to stimulate the children, the father and mother must follow the correct language pattern to help them pronounce the correct vocabulary. The suggestion of this study can be used as practical and theoretical background for future study.

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