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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WHISPERING GAME TO DEVELOP LANGUAGE SKILLS IN CHILDREN AGED 5–6 YEARS

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Abstrak
Pengembangan kemampuan berbahasa anak usia dini merupakan aspek penting yang perlu distimulasi melalui kegiatan pembelajaran yang sesuai dengan karakteristik anak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan penerapan permainan bisik berantai dalam mengembangkan kemampuan berbahasa anak usia 5–6 tahun. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif di TK Thoyyibah Bandar Lampung dengan subjek 15 anak dan guru kelas. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa permainan bisik berantai mampu mengembangkan kemampuan bahasa anak, terutama pada aspek menyimak dan berbicara. Berdasarkan hasil observasi, sebanyak 13 dari 15 anak (86,7%) mampu menyimak dan memahami pesan dengan baik, sedangkan 10 dari 15 anak (66,7%) mampu menyampaikan kembali pesan secara lisan dengan lebih percaya diri. Namun, masih terdapat kendala seperti konsentrasi, kemampuan menyimak, dan perbedaan kemampuan bahasa antaranak.

Kata Kunci: *Kemampuan Berbahasa, Anak Usia Dini, Permainan Bisik Berantai, PAUD.*

Abstract
The development of early childhood language skills is an important aspect that needs to be stimulated through learning activities that are appropriate to the child's characteristics. This study aims to describe the application of the chain whisper game in developing the language skills of children aged 5–6 years. This study used a descriptive qualitative method at Thoyyibah Kindergarten, Bandar Lampung, with 15 children and their class teacher as subjects. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results showed that the chain whisper game was able to develop children's language skills, especially in the aspects of listening and speaking. Based on the results of observations, 13 of the 15 children (86.7%) were able to listen and understand the message well, while 10 of the 15 children (66.7%) were able to convey the message verbally with more confidence. However, there were still obstacles such as concentration, listening skills, and differences in language skills between children.
Keywords: *Language Skills, Early Childhood, Chain Whisper Game, ECEC*

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A. INTRODUCTION

Language development is one of the important aspects in early childhood because it functions as a means of communication and a support for children's cognitive development[1]. Well-developed language skills help children socially interact, understand information, and express ideas effectively. Therefore, language stimulation needs to be provided through learning activities that match the characteristics of early childhood[2]. At this time, children experience very rapid development in physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, and language aspects[3]. Early childhood language development takes place gradually and requires consistent stimulation so that the ability to listen, speak, understand, and express language can develop optimally.[4] Children's language skills develop through social interactions that occur actively with the surrounding environment. Children's language development is influenced by the quality of interaction the child receives from their surrounding environment, so providing consistent stimulation becomes very important[5]. The selection of an appropriate pedagogical method constitutes a critical determinant in supporting optimal language acquisition during early childhood[6]. Therefore, children need opportunities to communicate, listen, and convey ideas in various

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[4] D A N Tahapan Perkembangan, 'Article History: Received: April 2024 , Accepted: May 2024 , Published: June 2024', 5.2 (2024), pp. 278–88.
[5] Putri Sukma Nabila, Ayunda Sayyidatul Ifadah, and Fitri Ayu Fatmawati, 'Peran Interaksi Orang Tua Dalam Perkembangan Bahasa Anak Usia Dua Tahun', 9.6 (2025), pp. 2990–3000, doi:10.31004/obsesi.v9i6.7558.
[6] Nenni Khairani, Rosmaimuna Siregar, and Jumaita Nopriani Lubis, 'Penerapan Metode Bermain Peran Dalam Meningkatkan Perkembangan Bahasa Anak', 7.5 (2023), pp. 5942–52, doi:10.31004/obsesi.v7i5.5383.

learning activities[7]. Therefore, it is important to provide maximum language stimulation at an early age so that children can be ready to continue to the next education[8]. Language also functions significantly in developing children's thinking abilities, because with language, children can understand symbols, concepts, and meanings that support their cognitive development process[9]. Early childhood language development requires consistent stimulation through activities that allow children to hear, understand, and re-express the information they receive[10]. Language development is closely related to cognitive development; children learn through social interaction supported by language.

Children who show good progress in language are usually faster in social interaction, catching cues, and adapting to their learning places[11]. Likewise, children who have good language skills are usually faster in socializing, understanding directions, and adapting to their learning environment[12]. Trianingsih ᵘnderscores that early childhood language development is optimized when facilitated through interactive and engaging activities. Consequently, educators are required to design and implement diverse, creative play-based learning experiences that align with children's developmental milestones.[13] Through activities like this, children can learn

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[13] Naimah Fitriyani, 'Strategi Pengenalan Bahasa Inggris Anak Usia Dini', *Jurnal*

to understand and convey messages naturally, so that their language skills develop in accordance with the play characteristics they have. As explained by Ernawati, the sequential whispering game is able to expand children's vocabulary while training them in conveying back messages accurately, so that children's expressive language skills are developing.[14] However, in reality, there are still many children aged 5 to 6 years who face difficulties in language ability, such as problems in expressing opinions, a lack of vocabulary, and a lack of confidence when speaking in front of others[15]. This obstacle also arises because the teaching methods applied by teachers are often still traditional and do not sufficiently combine play elements that are familiar to children's lives[16]. A recent study by Utami shows that the application of language game methods in early childhood education is proven to be more successful in stimulating language skills compared to only using academic approaches.[17] Other research also shows that the lack of innovation from teachers in creating language learning strategies can affect the low involvement of children in learning activities[18].

To overcome this, fun, varied learning strategies that match early childhood characteristics are needed. The use of varied and interactive learning methods can help stimulate early childhood language development more optimally[19].

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[19] Nurul Afifah, Aristiana Prihatining Rahayu, and Nina Veronica, 'Penggunaan TIK Berbasis Video Animasi Dengan Metode Show And Tell Pada

Interactive learning activities that involve children actively can help improve early childhood language skills because children get direct communication experience during the learning process. The use of learning methods involving play activities can help children develop language skills through interactions and communication that occur during the learning process.[20] One of them is through educational games that can stimulate children's language skills. Besides that, in early childhood education, the main focus is usually on reading and writing, while the encouragement to listen and speak is often not maximized[21]. Deficiencies in learning media are also a challenge, because children do not get enough variations of methods that can encourage creativity in language[22]. All of these situations show the importance of creative and interesting learning methods. Therefore, teachers are required to be able to present varied, creative learning based on play and in accordance with child development. Play-based learning can also expand children's opportunities to interact with peers, thus supporting language development through communication activities carried out naturally during the learning process[23]. Traditional games can be used as fun learning media because they are able to stimulate various aspects of child development, including language ability[24].

One suitable activity to do is the sequential whispering game. In this game, a message in the form of

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[21] Ramadaniah Fitri and Rakimahwati Rakimahwati, 'Game Edukasi Berbasis Budaya Lokal Sumbang Duo Baleh Untuk Meningkatkan Kecerdasan Interpersonal Anak', *Jurnal Obsesi : Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 6.1 (2021), pp. 239–51, doi:10.31004/obsesi.v6i1.1220.

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words or sentences is conveyed by whispering from one child to another child until the last message is conveyed back to the teacher. The whispering game requires children to concentrate in listening, understand information accurately, and then convey it back without changing the meaning. A study by Retyuningsih demonstrates that the whispering game effectively enhances the listening comprehension of children aged five to six years at TK Mugi Rahayu 1 PGRI.[25] Nevertheless, that research relied on a simplistic quantitative approach (a one-group pretest-posttest design), thereby merely measuring final outcomes without elucidating the children's dynamic interactions during the activity or capturing their subjective learning experiences. Other research also shows that the modification of the whispering game with BATAKA media can strengthen children's oral communication skills. However, the main focus is more on the effectiveness of the media, not on the aspect of children's language development holistically.

Additionally, Ariantiningsih examined the influence of the chain message game on the receptive language skills of children aged 4-5 years and found a significant increase after the application of the game.[26] However, this study focused more on quantitative results and did not explore qualitative aspects such as interaction dynamics and children's responses during the activity. Furthermore, Asih affirm that traditional games can reinforce linguistic proficiency while simultaneously instilling social values and character traits in young children; however, their study does not explicitly address the whispering game as a targeted language learning

[25] Retyuningsih Retyuningsih, Nur Aliyah, and Aprilia Wahyuning Fitri, 'Pengaruh Permainan Bisik Berantai Terhadap Kemampuan Menyimak Pada Anak Usia 5-6 Tahun', *Journal on Teacher Education*, 4.3 (2023), pp. 74–84.

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strategy.[27]

Play-based activities serve as an effective vehicle for stimulating children's linguistic proficiency, as they provide a context where children can actively interact, communicate, and learn in alignment with their distinct developmental characteristics[28]. Based on the results of previous research, there are not many studies that specifically highlight the application of the whispering game as a means to develop early childhood language skills. Most research still focuses on the use of conventional learning methods or other games that emphasize cognitive and social-emotional aspects. In fact, the whispering game has great potential in stimulating the ability to hear, understand, and convey messages orally through direct interaction between children.

The novelty of this study lies in its deployment of a qualitative approach to examine the implementation of the whispering game in developing the linguistic proficiency of children aged five to six years. In contrast to prior research, which predominantly utilized quantitative measures to evaluate vocabulary or language growth, this investigation shifts the focus toward the operational process of the game, the emerging peer interactions, and the authentic linguistic experiences that transpire during the activity. Consequently, this study goes beyond merely documenting outcomes; it provides an in-depth explication of how the whispering game dynamically stimulates both listening and speaking skills through interactive, play-based pedagogical activities.

Based on the description of the background, this research is expected to provide academic contributions in developing early childhood education studies,

[27] Sekar Wiji Asih and Muhammad Yusron Maulana El-Yunusi, 'Permainan Tradisional Dalam Membentuk Karakter Anak Usia Dini', *Ceria: Jurnal Program Studi Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 13.1 (2024), pp. 150–60.

[28] Herliana Cendana and Dadan Suryana, 'Pengembangan Permainan Tradisional Untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Bahasa Anak Usia Dini', 6.2 (2022), pp. 771–78, doi:10.31004/obsesi.v6i2.1516.

especially related to the application of the whispering game in developing children's language skills. Where this research enriches the literature discussing the whispering game by placing it as a communicative and interactive language learning strategy, not just a traditional game. The findings of this study are expected to expand theoretical studies on early childhood language learning based on educational games.

Furthermore, this study contributes to strengthening the theoretical framework of early childhood language acquisition by aligning the whispering game with social interaction theory and play-based learning paradigms. It asserts that simplified play activities can serve as highly effective vehicles for stimulating both receptive and expressive language skills when systematically structured and implemented. Another distinct academic contribution lies in the presentation of empirical descriptions regarding the instructional steps of the whispering game and the communication dynamics within the early childhood classroom. Consequently, these findings provide a valuable academic reference for future researchers examining language-based games in greater depth, thereby complementing prior literature while opening new avenues for subsequent inquiries into innovative early childhood language pedagogy.

In alignment with these objectives, this study offers the implementation of the whispering game as a targeted instructional strategy to enhance the linguistic proficiency of children aged five to six years at TK Thoyyibah Bandar Lampung. This investigation is anticipated to yield novel insights that enrich early childhood language teaching methodologies, emphasizing the critical role of play-based frameworks as instruments for active communication that match children's developmental characteristics.

B. METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method aimed primarily at elucidating the implementation process of the whispering game and the accompanying linguistic experiences of

children aged five to six years within an early childhood education environment. The qualitative paradigm affords researchers the opportunity to comprehend contextual and dynamic educational phenomena from the perspectives of both the participants and the practitioners involved in the instructional activities[29].

The research was conducted at TK THOYYIBAH Bandar Lampung by involving 15 children who were in the age range of 5 to 6 years as the main subjects, and the class teacher who acted as a supporting informant. The research process went through 3 stages, namely: the planning stage, the implementation stage, and the data collection and analysis stage. The planning stage was the initial stage in this research which began with the preparation of learning activity designs together with the class teacher at TK THOYYIBAH. Researchers collaborated with teachers to prepare learning strategies through the initial whispering game, designed in an interesting and fun way and adapted to the daily learning theme. In the implementation stage, the teacher carried out activities that had been designed previously, including providing various facilities or learning resources, and managing learning that was able to encourage children's language development actively and funly. The last stage, namely data collection and analysis, was carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was directed to see the process of children's interaction during the whispering game, such as the ability to hear messages, remember, and convey information back to peers. Interviews were conducted with class teachers to explore perspectives on the effectiveness of this game on improving children's language skills. Documentation in the form of photos, voice recordings, and field notes was used to complete and strengthen data obtained from observations and interviews[30].

[29] John W Creswell and Cheryl N Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (Sage publications, 2016).

[30] Sugiyono Sugiyono, 'Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif Dan R&D', *Bandung Alf*, 2007.

Observation was done directly by seeing the process of implementing the whispering game in class, especially the interaction between children aged 5–6 years when conveying chain messages. The focus of observation included children's attention in listening to messages, the accuracy of conveying back information, understanding of new vocabulary, and fluency in arranging simple sentences. Field notes and visual documentation in the form of photos and recordings were used to record findings during the observation process. Interviews were conducted with class teachers to find out to what extent the whispering game can help develop children's language skills. Documentation of activities during the game was involved to complement the data from observation and interviews, thus providing a more complete picture of the effectiveness of this learning strategy that took place[31]. Data analysis in this research used the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction was done by selecting and focusing on data relevant to the application of the whispering game. Furthermore, the data is presented in the form of descriptive narratives and tables to ease interpretation. The validity of the data was obtained through technique triangulation by comparing the results of observation, interviews, and documentation so that more valid and reliable data was obtained[32]

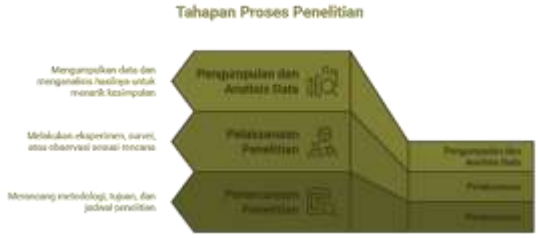


Figure 1. Flowchart of the Qualitative Research Stages

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted at TK Thoyyibah, Sukarame, Bandar Lampung, from February 3, 2026, to March 5, 2026, targeting the classroom teacher and 15 children aged five to six years in Class B through the implementation of the whispering game. Empirical data were gathered

[31] Matthew B Miles and A Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (sage, 1994).

[32] Matthew B Miles, A Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis* (sage, 2014).

utilizing a triad of qualitative instruments: structured observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations were systematically scheduled twice a week, focusing on children's live interactions within the critical sub-domains of listening comprehension, oral communication, and message transmission. Concurrently, interviews were conducted to elicit deeper, multi-dimensional insights regarding the pedagogical execution of the whispering game, explicitly encompassing the dimensions of instructional planning, classroom implementation, and the contextual challenges encountered throughout the activities.

Based on the interviews with the classroom teacher at TK Thoyyibah Bandar Lampung, it was revealed that the whispering game was strategically employed as an instructional approach to foster the linguistic proficiency of children aged five to six years. The teacher asserted that this game transcended a mere recreational activity, serving as a structured pedagogical instrument to train children's capabilities in listening, comprehending, and retransmitting oral messages to their peers. Furthermore, the children demonstrated heightened enthusiasm during the learning process; they deliberately attempted to listen attentively to the messages to ensure accurate transmission to the next child. Notably, several children who were typically passive began to confidently exhibit verbal participation during the gameplay. According to the teacher, the group-based nature of the play activity stimulated the children to become more active and courageous in their communication throughout the session. In the planning phase, the teacher explained that the activities were meticulously designed by aligning them with the developmental characteristics of early childhood. The teacher intentionally selected simple, brief, and easily comprehensible words or short phrases to optimize the children's capacity to receive and transmit the messages effectively. Additionally, the teacher systematically prepared peer groupings and established explicit game rules to ensure the classroom environment

remained orderly and conducive to learning.

During the implementation phase, the teacher systematically explained the game rules accompanied by direct demonstrations to ensure the children fully comprehended the mechanics of the activity. Subsequently, the children were instructed to transmit the message sequentially from one peer to another. Throughout this process, the teacher maintained an active role by providing guidance, message repetitions, and encouragement to children who encountered difficulties in either listening or message transmission. In the evaluation phase, the teacher compared the initial baseline message with the final message delivered by the last child to assess the accuracy of the information transmission. The teacher asserted that the whispering game exerted a positive impact on the children's linguistic proficiency, particularly within the sub-domains of listening and speaking skills. These qualitative findings were further corroborated by empirical data obtained through direct observations during the sessions. To elucidate the observational results, the percentage distribution of the children's language development is presented in the following table.

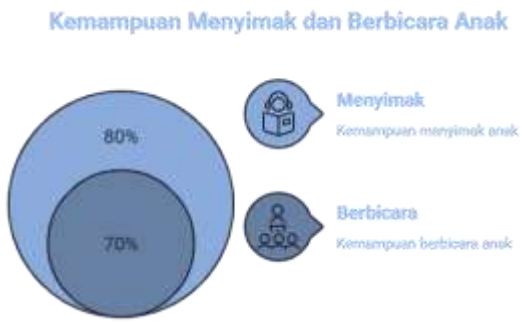
Table 1 Children's Language Development Success Rate (N = 15)

No	Linguistic Aspect	Number of Children	Percentage
1	Listening	13	86,7%
2	Speaking	10	66,7%

As illustrated in Table 1, the empirical observation indicated that the children's listening proficiency reached a success rate of 86.7%. The researchers observed that 13 children demonstrated the emerging capability to actively listen to and comprehend the transmitted messages. Among these children, a heightened focus was exhibited when receiving information from their peers, alongside an evolving capacity to retain the given information—although a few children still encountered minor errors in accurately capturing the messages. Meanwhile, the speaking aspect yielded a success rate of 66.7%. This progress was evidenced by the children's ability to orally retransmit the messages to their peers with developing courage and self-

confidence. Nevertheless, several children continued to face challenges in conveying the messages in a coherent and clear manner, thereby requiring direct scaffolding and guidance from the teacher during the instructional activity.

Figure 2. Graphical Representation of Language Development Metrics



Beyond the advancement of linguistic domains, distinctive developmental progress in other areas was also discernible during the observations. The researchers noted highly positive responses from the children throughout the gameplay. They consistently demonstrated enthusiasm, active engagement, and a profound interest in participating across all behavioral stages of the activity. The vast majority of the children exhibited heightened courage to participate and engage in peer interactions when transmitting or receiving the sequential messages. Furthermore, the play-based learning atmosphere established a highly enjoyable instructional environment, effectively mitigating cognitive boredom and sustaining the children's attention throughout the session.

Furthermore, the real-time social interactions generated during the gameplay significantly aided the children in cultivating their pro-social competencies and communicative performance. The children learned to foster peer collaboration, practice active listening, and comprehend the concept of turn-taking when transmitting messages. Through this experiential process, they also began to exhibit heightened confidence in communicating in front of their peers. Throughout the session, the vast majority of the children demonstrated the capacity to adhere to the teacher's instructions and remained actively involved across all phases of the game. These findings underscore that the whispering game is highly effective in driving active child engagement within the early childhood instructional framework.

Based on the explanation of the results above, the whispering game

gives a positive impact on the language skills of children aged 5–6 years, especially in the aspects of listening and speaking. As the explanation above shows that children's listening ability obtained a percentage of 80%, while speaking ability obtained a percentage of 70%. The data shows that play activities involving direct communication can help children in understanding and conveying information orally. Through the whispering game, children get the opportunity to listen to messages, understand information, then convey the message back to peers sequentially.

Children's listening ability developed because the whispering game requires children to concentrate when receiving messages from friends. Children need to listen with focus so that the received message can be conveyed back correctly. Besides listening ability, children's speaking ability also began to develop through children's courage in conveying messages orally in front of their friends. This activity makes children more active in communicating and provides firsthand language learning experiences through social interaction during the game.

The results of this study are in line with Lev Vygotsky's theory about the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which states that the development of children's abilities can occur optimally through assistance from teachers and peers[33]. These findings show that the whispering game not only trains listening and speaking skills, but also creates a social learning process. Children obtain help from the teacher through giving examples and direction, as well as learning from peers when conveying messages in a chain. This condition reflects the concept of scaffolding in Vygotsky's theory, namely the provision of gradual support so that children are able to achieve abilities that previously could not be done independently. In the whispering game, children learn through teacher guidance, examples given, and interaction with friends during the

[33] Susanti Etnawati, 'Teori Vygotsky Tentang Perkembangan Bahasa Anak Usia Dini', 22 (2022), pp. 130–38.

activity. Through these stages children easily understand messages and train communication skills gradually according to their level of development. In addition, the results of this study are also supported by Azlin Atika Putri et al. who stated that the whispering game has an effect on the oral communication skills of children aged 5–6 years[34]. Besides that, research by Retyuningsih, Aliyah, and Fitri explains that the whispering game is able to help children in improving the listening ability of children aged 5–6 years[35]. In conclusion, the whispering game can be one of the learning strategies that support children's language development through fun play activities. Therefore, the whispering game has provided quite good development to children's language skills, especially in the aspects of listening and speaking. However, adjustments and mentoring are still needed so that the development of children's language skills can take place more maximally. This can be seen from the fact that there are still some children who experience difficulties in listening and concentrating when receiving messages, thereby affecting the accuracy of information delivery. Therefore, teachers need to apply more adaptive learning strategies and provide more intensive mentoring so that all children can follow learning activities optimally.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the empirical findings, the implementation of the whispering game at TK Thoyyibah Bandar Lampung effectively facilitates the language development of children aged five to six years. This play-based activity affords structured opportunities for children to refine their listening comprehension and oral communication skills through direct, real-time social interactions with their peers. Furthermore, the playful learning environment stimulates children to become more active, enthusiastic, and deeply engaged throughout the instructional sessions.

[34] Azlin Atika Putri, Reswita, and Nurhayatun Nufus, 'Pengaruh Permainan Bisik Berantai Terhadap Kemampuan Berkomunikasi Secara Lisan Anak Usia 5-6 Tahun', *PAUD Lectura: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 5.02 (2022), pp. 112–17, doi:10.31849/paud-lectura.v5i02.9590.

[35] Retyuningsih, Aliyah, and Fitri.

Nevertheless, several operational constraints persist, such as individual deficits in concentration and disparate linguistic capabilities among children, which subsequently compromise the precision of message transmission. In conclusion, the whispering game serves as a viable alternative learning strategy for early childhood language acquisition, provided that educators continuously align the practice with the unique developmental needs and characteristics of each child.

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