



INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS LANGUAGE ABILITY DISPARITIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD AT TK MARSUDI RINI, KARANGANYAR SUB- DISTRICT, DEMAK REGENCY

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Abstract

This study aims to identify language disparities in early childhood and inclusive education strategies in Marsudi Rini Kindergarten, Karanganyar District, Demak Regency. Using a case study method with a qualitative descriptive approach, data was collected through observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. The results of the study showed that children with language limitations faced difficulties in speaking, understanding instructions, reading and writing skills, and social interaction. However, an intensive approach is not carried out by all teachers who have children with language disparities in their classrooms. Furthermore, the main obstacles in the implementation of inclusive education include limited facilities, lack of teacher training, low parental understanding, and lack of external support from the government. This study underscores the importance of training for teachers and improving facilities to be able to overcome disparities in children's language skills more effectively. Parent education through parenting activities is expected to increase understanding and involvement in child development. In addition, external support is needed for the sustainability of inclusive programs in schools.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education Strategy, Language Ability Disparity, Early Childhood, Case Study*

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a central role in realizing justice for society. It is not only in its capacity as an object of justice, as enshrined in Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution regarding the right of every citizen to obtain decent and quality education, but education also functions as a subject in the enactment of justice (Bintang et al., 2022). In other words, in the process of receiving education, everyone has the right to receive equal treatment. Schools, as formal educational institutions, have a full responsibility to realize this. However, in reality, practices of injustice against students still occur, especially for those facing academic inequalities due to differences in their capabilities. This disparity in abilities can manifest in various aspects, one of which is language skills. Language proficiency is a fundamental aspect of individual development alongside

cognitive, socio-emotional, psychomotor, religious and moral aspects, as well as the arts. These aspects are even the main focus of preschool education, also known as early childhood education (ECE). This is not without reason, as the initial foundation for preparing an individual to learn various subjects at school is the maturity of each developmental aspect during their golden age (0-6 years).

However, among the various key aspects of development, disparities in children's language abilities are often viewed as a normal occurrence and do not require any special intervention (Sulaiman et al., 2022). This is contrary to a study which states that the inequality in students' language abilities in school is a problem involving a number of complex factors. Students who face difficulties in communicating and understanding language may encounter significant barriers in the teaching and learning process. The impact is not limited to academic achievement, but also involves social and psychological aspects that can affect their well-being and personal development (Nofitri et al., 2008). Furthermore, the impact of this disparity in language proficiency has a strong influence in the educational environment when students are faced with academic tasks that require good understanding and expression of language. For students with varying language abilities, this challenge can hinder their access to the curriculum, participation in class discussions, and the development of social skills (Embi & Chaniago, 2011).

In light of this, early childhood education becomes the appropriate platform for detecting and addressing issues of disparities in children's language abilities from an early age. A deeper exploration of the causes and consequences of inequality in children's language skills, as well as the search for effective solutions to address these problems, is absolutely necessary. In this context, inclusive education strategies are identified as the primary foundation for responding to these challenges. This is because inclusive education aims to ensure that all learners receive the best possible education, with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to 'segregation' (Sunanto, 2016). In other words, inclusive education strategies can serve as a solution for addressing students who have significant differences or special needs compared to the average students in a class, particularly concerning language abilities.

In addition, the presence of inclusive education can also serve as a solution for justice in access to education for children with special needs. This is evident from data indicating that only 12.26% of children with special needs in Indonesia receive formal education in special schools (SLB) (Syarifah, 2023). For this reason, the presence of inclusive program- organizing schools is necessary to fulfill the needs and rights of all children to receive formal education, including those with special needs. This inclusive education is also emphasized early on, particularly at the kindergarten (TK) or early childhood education (PAUD) level. The government has even specifically issued guidelines for the implementation of Inclusive PAUD, which emphasize the goal of enhancing the quality of early education in Indonesia (Supena et al., 2018).

More focus is one of the important aspects of inclusive education that is implemented from the early childhood education stage, as it allows for the early detection of children's language development. This helps to ascertain whether a child has special needs or is developing normally. It is crucial for both parents and educators to quickly seek strategies and provide interventions to address issues related to children's development. Furthermore, early detection can be easily observed from the child's language abilities. A study indicates that the main characteristics of children experiencing developmental disorders can be identified through their social interaction and communication skills (Deasianti, 2020).

This research aims to investigate inclusive education strategies that can address disparities in language skills among early childhood children through a case study approach. The importance of addressing disparities in language skills among early childhood children is not only related to

their success in linguistic aspects but also has a positive impact on all aspects of their development. Therefore, this research is expected to make a tangible contribution to enhancing the effectiveness of inclusive education at the early childhood level, ensuring that every child can experience positive learning and build a strong foundation for their future development.

Through a case study approach, this research will explore inclusive education strategies that have been implemented for preschool children experiencing disparities in language ability at Marsudi Rini Kindergarten in Karanganyar District, Demak Regency. This location was chosen because the researcher obtained initial information indicating that this kindergarten is the only provider of inclusive education available in Karanganyar District, Demak Regency (Supriyani, 2024). In addition, it was reported by *suaramerdeka.com* that currently, there are only 11 schools providing inclusive early childhood education, one of which is TK Marsudi Rini (Hamid, 2023). The selection of Marsudi Rini Kindergarten as the research site was also based on initial observations indicating a variation in language abilities among early childhood children at the institution. Furthermore, Marsudi Rini Kindergarten is committed to the development of children's language and provides a supportive environment for the implementation of the interventions designed in this study.

Thus, this research is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the successes and challenges in implementing inclusive education strategies amidst the limited number of inclusive educational institutions. Additionally, this research is anticipated to serve as a foundation for the development of more effective and sustainable inclusive education policies at the early childhood level.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative approach with the aim of discovering, describing, and explaining a phenomenon in depth. This aligns with the understanding of qualitative methods according to Harahap (2020), which is a type of research intended to investigate, discover, describe, and explain a social influence that cannot be elucidated or measured through quantitative approaches. Furthermore, according to Musianto (2002) qualitative approaches aim to construct theories or facts, develop a synthesis of interactions between theories and fundamental facts, enhance understanding, and so forth. This means that every step in research utilizing a qualitative approach prioritizes the process, as it is, and is not constrained by specific norms or formulas. In accordance with these theories of qualitative approaches, this study also aims to reveal empirical facts regarding the implementation of inclusive education strategies in addressing disparities in language abilities among young children.

The type of qualitative research used in this study is a case study. This is because the issues highlighted in this research correspond with the characteristics of case study research, which is a scientific activity aimed at gaining in-depth knowledge about a particular event. In this study, the in-depth aspect that is intended to be understood through scientific activities is the implementation of inclusive education strategies in addressing the disparity in language abilities among early childhood children at TK Marsudi Rini in Karanganyar District, Demak Regency. The aspects to be explored regarding this matter include the profile of language ability disparities in early childhood, the implementation of inclusive education strategies, as well as the challenges and obstacles faced in the application of inclusive education strategies to address language ability disparities among early childhood children at TK Marsudi Rini in Karanganyar District, Demak Regency.

The type of case study research is also based on the opinion that a case study is a series of scientific activities that are conducted intensively, detail-oriented, and in-depth regarding a program, event, or activity, whether at the level of individuals, groups, institutions, or

organizations, in order to gain a profound understanding of the event. Events commonly chosen for case studies are those that are current, ongoing, and not something from the past (Rahardjo, 2017).

The respondents in this study were selected purposively with the following criteria: Early Childhood Educators, namely teachers with a minimum of two years of experience in teaching at Marsudi Rini Kindergarten and who are directly involved in the early childhood learning process; parents/guardians of students, meaning the parents or guardians of children experiencing disparities in language abilities; and the school principal, as the party responsible for policy and the implementation of inclusive education strategies at Marsudi Rini Kindergarten. The selection of respondents based on these criteria is expected to provide comprehensive information regarding the implementation of inclusive education strategies in addressing disparities in language abilities among young children. Data were collected through several techniques, namely observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted through direct observation of classroom learning activities to see the interaction between teachers and students as well as the implementation of inclusive education strategies. In-depth interviews were conducted with educators, school principals, and parents/guardians of students to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences and perspectives regarding language ability disparities and the strategies implemented. Documentation studies involved the analysis of documents such as Daily Learning Implementation Plans (RPPH), children's development records, and school policies related to inclusive education.

Data analysis in this study was conducted qualitatively using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction was carried out by selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming the raw data obtained from the field. Data presentation involved organizing the reduced data in the form of descriptive narratives to facilitate understanding of the information gathered. Conclusion drawing and verification were performed by formulating initial conclusions that were then verified through data triangulation to ensure the validity of the research findings. The data analysis process was carried out iteratively and continuously throughout the research to ensure that the interpretations produced were accurate and trustworthy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Disparity in Language Skills of Early Childhood

To understand the actual conditions related to the profile of language ability disparities in Marsudi Rini Kindergarten, a series of data collection processes were carried out through observations, interviews, and questionnaires. From the 5 observed classes, 3 of them have children with limited language abilities. Thus, the data collection for interviews and questionnaires was focused on these 3 classes, namely class A3, B1, and B2. Interviews were conducted with the respective class teachers and guardians of students who have children with limited language abilities, while the diagnostic questionnaire regarding the language ability profile of children with disparities was completed by their classroom teachers. More detailed information is presented in the table related to the language ability disparity profile of children in Marsudi Rini Kindergarten.

Table 1. Profile of Language Ability Disparities Among Children at Marsudi Rini Kindergarten, Karanganyar District, Demak Regency

No.	Child Identity	Aspects Under Study	Observation	Interview	Questionnaire
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1.	FDM (Class A3)	Speaking Ability	The child appears not to communicate with peers or teachers during the learning process.	The child's parents are aware that their child's speaking ability is delayed compared to that of their peers.	Children rarely can name objects around them, construct simple sentences, and narrate events they have experienced in a coherent manner.
		Communication Skills	The child appeared to not understand the teacher's instructions, as their worksheet remained blank until the teacher approached and guided them in completing the assigned task.	Children often only express signals when they desire something.	The child has difficulty in understanding simple instructions, responding appropriately to commands, and following conversations in a group.
		Reading Skills	The child does not appear to be reading.	The child is not yet able to recognize letters to be spelled into words. Parents assist and accompany the child in reviewing what has been taught by the teacher through the child's worksheets.	The child does not recognize the letters of the alphabet and shows a lack of interest in books. Furthermore, the child also struggles to identify simple words.
		Writing Skills	The child is unable	Children can only	The child does not show
			to independently arrange letters into words as per the task assigned by the teacher.	write simple vocabulary with the assistance of their parents.	interest in writing, including in attempting to recognize the shapes of letters to write their own name or simple words.
		Social Interaction Through Language	The child appears to be silent without displaying any interaction through language, either with the teacher or peers.	At home, children can communicate quite fluently with their family members.	The child does not understand the rules of turn-taking in group discussions and lacks the ability to use verbal language to resolve conflicts.
2.	MAZ (Class B1)	Speaking Ability	The child does not appear to engage in conversation with peers or with the teacher during the learning process.	The parents admit that their child's speaking ability is quite normal for a child of his/her age. However, the teacher states that the child is not yet able to communicate fluently with peers.	The child is quite proficient in naming objects around them, but struggles to construct simple sentences with the correct structure. Furthermore, the child tends to have difficulty narrating simple events they have experienced in a coherent manner.

		Communication Skills	The child follows what is instructed by the teacher, even with more guidance than his or her peers.	The child is not yet able to perform tasks correctly as per the given instructions.	Children rarely understand simple instructions and grasp newly introduced words. Furthermore, they are unable to comprehend the stories that are read to them. However, they are sufficiently capable of participating in conversations with others.
		Reading Skills	The child did not demonstrate their reading ability during the learning process.	The child has not yet acquainted themselves with the alphabet and therefore is unable to read words.	The child does not show interest in books, is unfamiliar with the alphabet, and is unable to identify simple words, including their own name.
		Writing Skills	The child is unable to arrange the letter cards into words as instructed by the teacher.	The child has not yet learned the alphabet, hence has not been able to arrange letters into words.	The child does not appear to have an interest in attempting to write or scribble using writing instruments. The child also does not recognize letter shapes and is unable to use symbols or images to express ideas.
		Social Interaction Through Language	The child does not interact through verbal language, but moves in accordance with the commands given by the teacher.	Children tend to be passive and rarely use verbal language to request or express something.	Children tend to be passive because they are unable to initiate conversations with peers, struggle to respond appropriately when engaged in conversation, do not understand turn-taking rules in dialogue, and do not utilize verbal language to express feelings and emotions.
3.	MDJT (Class B2)	Speaking Ability	The child is already able to speak quite fluently to express their desires.	Parents admit that their child's speaking ability is quite slow, prompting them to take various measures, including counseling with experts.	Children are sometimes able to name objects around them and can adequately narrate simple events in sequence. However, they still lack the ability to construct simple sentences with the correct structure.
		Communication Skills	The child uses verbal language to communicate with the teacher and peers, although his vocabulary is still limited.	The child is able to comprehend simple instructions provided.	The child demonstrates a sufficient understanding of simple instructions, comprehends newly introduced words, and engages in conversation. However, the child tends to struggle with understanding read-aloud stories and responding appropriately to verbal questions or commands.

		Reading Skills	The children's reading skills have not yet manifested in the learning process.	The child is not yet able to read.	Children sometimes show interest in books and request to be read to. They can also point to pictures that correspond with the words being spoken. However, the child's knowledge of recognizing alphabet letters is still limited.
		Writing Skills	The child is now able to arrange the letter cards into words with the assistance of a supporting teacher.	The child has not yet become familiar with the letters of the alphabet and tends to show little interest in writing.	Children often attempt to write or doodle with writing instruments and try to form recognizable letters. However, they are not yet able to independently write simple words.
		Social Interaction Through Language	Children are able to respond to questions or initiate conversations.	Children can initiate the conversation first, particularly when making a request.	Children can initiate conversations and occasionally use verbal language to express their feelings and emotions. However, they still struggle to respond appropriately when engaged in dialogue.

Based on the table, it can be seen that the language proficiency disparity profiles of the three children in different classes have some similarities and differences. Here is a more detailed explanation. In terms of speaking ability, both the observational data, interviews, and questionnaires show consistent results, indicating that FDM (class A3) has a slower speaking ability compared to children of the same age. Observational results show that the child does not seem to speak a single word to either the teacher or their peers. This condition is reinforced by the parents' statement that their child's speaking ability is delayed compared to their peers. Similarly, the questionnaire results specifically indicate that the child rarely can name objects around them, construct simple sentences, and convey experiences in order.

Next, in terms of communication skills, the observation results show that FDM seems to not understand the instructions given by the teacher. This is evidenced by his blank worksheets until the teacher came to guide him in completing his tasks. Through interviews, parents also mentioned that the child often only uses gestures when wanting something. In line with this, the questionnaire results indicate that the child struggles to understand simple instructions, respond appropriately to commands, and follow conversations in groups. In terms of reading skills, FDM does not recognize the alphabet letters and shows little interest in books. Additionally, FDM also struggles to identify simple words. This impacts his writing ability as well. Through observational data, FDM was unable to arrange letters into simple words as assigned by the teacher. The questionnaire results also indicate that he does not demonstrate an interest in writing, including in trying to recognize letter shapes to write his own name or simple words.

In the aspect of social interaction through language, the observation results show that FDM does not engage in verbal interactions, either with teachers or peers. However, parents say that FDM can communicate quite fluently with family members. This contrasts with the questionnaire results which indicate that FDM does not understand the rules of taking turns in conversation within a group and is less able to use verbal language to resolve conflicts.

Next, for children at the larger kindergarten level, namely MAZ (class B1). In the aspect of

speaking ability, the observation results show that MAZ does not appear to speak with friends or teachers during the learning process. However, based on interviews, MAZ's parents stated that their child speaks quite normally for his age. This is in contrast to the questionnaire results which show that MAZ is unable to construct simple sentences with the correct structure and cannot narrate simple events experienced in a coherent manner. In terms of communication skills, based on the questionnaire data, MAZ rarely understands simple instructions and the new words that are introduced. Additionally, he cannot comprehend the stories that are read to him. However, he is able to somewhat engage in conversations with others. The results of observations and interviews also indicate consistency in this regard. Furthermore, regarding reading and writing skills, MAZ does not yet recognize the letters of the alphabet, which prevents him from reading or forming letters into words. The results of the questionnaire also show that MAZ does not exhibit an interest in books, does not recognize the letters of the alphabet, and is unable to identify simple words, including his own name.

In terms of social interaction through language, MAZ does not appear to interact using language, but is able to perform tasks according to the teacher's instructions. This is evident from the observation data. Furthermore, the results of the questionnaire also indicate that MAZ tends to be passive as he cannot initiate conversations with peers, struggles to respond appropriately when engaged in conversation, does not understand turn-taking rules in speaking, and does not use verbal language to express feelings and emotions. In contrast, with FDM and MAZ, MDJT (class B2) demonstrates a slightly superior capability. In terms of speaking ability, he is already able to use verbal language to express his desires. Interviews with his parents also indicate that MDJT's speaking ability has improved, thanks to one of the efforts made by the parents to provide counseling and guidance for the child from a child psychologist. The results of the questionnaire also show that MDJT can occasionally name objects around him and is fairly able to narrate simple events in a coherent manner. However, the child still struggles with constructing simple sentences in the correct order.

In terms of language comprehension, the results of the questionnaire indicate that MDJT has a reasonable understanding of simple instructions, comprehends newly introduced words, and follows conversations. However, the child tends to struggle with understanding stories that are read aloud and responding appropriately to verbal questions or commands. Consistent results were also obtained from observation data and interviews. Similar to two other children, MDJT has not yet been able to recognize the alphabet letters, thus is unable to read or write simple words. However, MDJT occasionally shows interest in books and requests them to be read aloud. The child is also able to point to pictures that correspond with the words spoken. In addition, MDJT often attempts to write or doodle with writing tools and tries to form recognizable letters.

Finally, regarding the aspect of social interaction through language, MDJT is already able to respond to questions or initiate conversations. More specifically, the questionnaire shows that MDJT can start conversations and sometimes uses verbal language to express his feelings and emotions. However, he is still quite weak in responding adequately when being spoken to. From the analysis of language proficiency profiles in three different classes (A3, B1, and B2), there is a significant variation in language abilities among them. In class A3, FDM exhibits delays in speaking skills and language comprehension, as well as a lack of reading and writing skills, and rarely engages in verbal social interactions. In class B1, MAZ also experiences similar limitations in speaking, understanding instructions, and demonstrating an interest in reading and writing, although he is sufficiently able to follow the teacher's instructions in social interactions. In class B2, MDJT shows better language abilities, demonstrated by simple speaking skills, basic understanding of instructions, interest in books, and the ability to initiate conversation, although there are still deficiencies in sentence structure and understanding of the stories being read.

Overall, MDJT exhibits a more positive development compared to FDM and MAZ, supported by parental efforts in providing psychological guidance.

To strengthen the analysis regarding the variation of language abilities among students in classes A3, B1, and B2, and to highlight the significance of appropriate interventions, Lev Vygotsky's theory of language development can serve as a relevant theoretical foundation. According to Vygotsky, a child's language development is greatly influenced by social interactions and the surrounding environment. The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) he proposed explains that children can achieve higher levels of development with assistance from more competent adults or peers. In this context, a child's language ability not only develops naturally but also through the support and guidance provided by their social environment (Newman & Latifi, 2021).

Furthermore, Vygotsky emphasizes the importance of scaffolding, which is the temporary support provided to children during the learning process. This support enables children to accomplish tasks that are initially beyond their capabilities, until they are ultimately able to perform them independently. In the case of MDJT in class B2, the improved language skills compared to FDM and MAZ can be associated with the psychological guidance from parents, who act as scaffolding in the child's language learning process (Newman & Latifi, 2021).

Thus, the significant variation in language abilities among students in classes A3, B1, and B2 indicates a gap in social interaction and the support received by each child. This underscores the importance of the social environment, particularly interactions with responsive adults, in supporting the language development of young children. Implementing inclusive education strategies that consider the principles of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding can be an effective approach to address disparities in language abilities in early childhood education settings.

Implementation of Inclusive Education Strategies

This section presents an analysis of the data collected from observations, documentation, and interviews with the parties involved in the implementation of inclusive education strategies to address the disparities in language abilities among early childhood children at TK Marsudi Rini, Karanganyar District, Demak Regency.

The implementation of inclusive education strategies to address the disparities in language abilities among early childhood children at TK Marsudi Rini, Karanganyar District, Demak Regency can be understood through the data from the described research findings. The description of the research results refers to the triangulation of research techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. The data collection for the research through these observations, interviews, and documentation was conducted from Monday, August 5 to August 10, 2024. The observation and documentation processes were carried out from the preparation phase until the learning process concluded. The observations were conducted in five classes, namely A1, A2, A3, B1, and B2. However, in accordance with the research requirements, the analysis was focused on three classes that included children with disparities in language abilities. These three classes are A3, B1, and B2. Subsequently, interviews were conducted with the teachers from these three classes. More specifically, a table is presented below that illustrates inclusive education strategies to address disparities in early childhood language abilities based on the research data collected.

Table 2. Implementation of Inclusive Education Strategies to Address Language Ability Disparities Among Children at Marsudi Rini Kindergarten, Karanganyar District, Demak Regency

No.	Class	Research Aspects	Observation	Interview	Documentation
1.	A3	The learning strategies that are utilized.	The teacher combines simulation methods and assignments.	The teachers have agreed upon a common learning strategy to be implemented across all classes.	The teacher demonstrates the completion of the assignment that will be given to the students in front of the class by utilizing the whiteboard and the students' worksheets.
		Teacher	The teacher	The teacher	The teacher
		interaction with children.	interacts in a classical manner with all the children; however, at certain stages, the teacher provides assistance to children with limited language skills.	admits that it is quite difficult to engage the child in communication because the child is passive and uses very little verbal language.	appears to frequently approach the children and pose questions as well as clarify instructions. However, the children still exhibit passive responses, merely nodding or shaking their heads.
		Utilization of learning media.	The teacher uses visual media and letter cards.	The media used by the teacher is standardized for all children in the class.	The teacher uses paper media containing uncolored images and pieces of letter cards for the children to arrange to form the word 'ice cream'.
		Collaboration with other children.	The teacher collaborates with other children to build interactions and stimulate the child with varying language abilities.	Collaboration with other children to stimulate language skills in children with varying language abilities significantly assists teachers.	The teacher calls several students to join those with varying language abilities to work on their respective tasks collaboratively.

		Response of children with disparities in language abilities.	Children tend to be passive and are unable to follow instructions from the teacher accurately.	Children rarely respond to questions or instructions from the teacher.	The child tends to be passive and does not hurriedly complete tasks like his or her peers.
		Children's social interactions in the classroom.	The child did not respond to the questions posed by the teacher or their peers.	Children tend to be solitary rather than engaging in play with their classmates in class.	The child does not initiate conversations with friends or teachers and does not respond to questions posed with verbal language.
2.	B1	The learning strategies that are utilized.	The teacher combines several learning methods, namely storytelling, simulation, and assignments.	The teachers have agreed upon a common learning strategy to be implemented across all classes.	The teacher demonstrates the completion of the assignment that will be given to the students in front of the class
					by utilizing the whiteboard and the students' worksheets.
		Teacher interaction with children.	The teacher provides special guidance to the child by reiterating the given instructions, providing examples, and assisting the child in completing their tasks.	Teachers strive as often as possible to encourage children with limited language skills to communicate verbally.	The teacher often approaches the students to ask questions and clarify instructions.
		Utilization of learning media	The teacher uses visual media and letter cards.	The media used by the teacher is standardized for all children in the class.	The teacher uses paper media containing uncolored images and pieces of letter cards for the children to arrange in order to form the word 'ice cream'.

		Collaboration with other children.	The teacher collaborates with other children to build interactions and stimulate the child with varying language abilities.	The teacher involves other children to establish communication with the child, taking into account the disparities in language proficiency.	The teacher invites children with limited language skills to join the group of children who are sufficiently capable in completing their tasks.
		Response of children with disparities in language abilities.	With special attention from the teacher, the child who was initially reluctant to complete the assigned tasks ultimately agreed to work on them, even though it required assistance from the teacher.	Children rarely respond to questions or instructions from teachers using verbal language.	The child tends to be passive and does not hurriedly complete tasks like his or her peers.
		Children's social interactions in the classroom.	Children tend to be passive and do not use verbal language to interact with their teachers or peers.	The child does not focus on communicating well with peers or teachers.	The teacher occasionally approaches the student to guide them in completing the assigned tasks.
3.	B2	The learning strategies that are utilized.	The teacher combines several learning methods, namely storytelling, simulation, assignments, and presentations.	The teachers agreed on the same learning strategy to be implemented in all classes. However, each teacher may develop it by combining several methods to attract the children's attention.	At the initial stage, the teacher provides an overview by narrating stories about the children's favorite foods. Subsequently, the teacher assigns tasks related to this topic. After the children complete their assignments, the teacher asks several of them to present their work.

		Teacher interaction with children.	The teacher is assisted by a co-teacher to specifically support children with language capability disparities.	The teacher feels at ease with the presence of the assistant teacher who helps to support children with disparities in language abilities and also assists in organizing the classroom to maintain a conducive learning atmosphere.	The class teacher provides the same instructions to all the children in the classroom. There is no special treatment from the class teacher for children with varying language abilities. This is due to the presence of a supporting teacher.
		Utilization of learning media	The teacher uses visual media and letter cards.	The media used by the teacher is standardized for all children in the class.	The teacher uses paper media containing uncolored images and pieces of letter cards for the children to arrange to form the word 'ice cream'.
		Collaboration with other children.	The teacher does not involve other children extensively to build interaction with the child with a disparity in language skills. However, there is one accompanying teacher who	The presence of other children with average language skills appropriate to their developmental level is considered important by teachers to stimulate the	The interaction between children with varying language abilities and other children is allowed by teachers to occur naturally. Interaction is further cultivated between the accompanying

			focuses on supporting the child with the disparity in language abilities.	language abilities of children with limited language skills.	teacher and the child.
		Response of children with disparities in language abilities.	The child actively communicates with the accompanying teacher to ask questions or respond to answers.	Children are able to respond to questions or commands from teachers, albeit with limited vocabulary and less coherent sentences.	The child appears to be responsive in following the teacher's instructions, particularly in completing their assignments.
		Children's social interactions in the classroom.	In the final stage of learning, the child confidently presents their work in front of the class.	By allowing children to interact with their peers in the classroom, it actually fosters their social interactions positively.	Children tend to be more active in interacting with their classroom teachers or teaching assistants compared to their peers.

Based on the data in Table 2, although teachers agree on the use of the same strategy, differences in the application of learning methods are evident in each class (A3, B1, and B2). This is done as an effort by each teacher to support children with disparities in language abilities. Below is a detailed analysis for each aspect of the research. In the aspect of the learning strategy employed, classes A3 and B1 utilize a combination of methods such as simulation, assignments, and storytelling. In class B2, presentation methods are also introduced to enable children to be more engaged through the delivery of their works. This provides an opportunity for the children to further refine their speaking skills and build self-confidence. Although the learning strategies are agreed upon to be the same for all classes, B2 is more flexible as the teacher incorporates other methods to capture the children's attention.

Furthermore, regarding the interaction between teachers and children, in classes A3 and B1, teachers engage in more intensive interactions with children who have limited language abilities through specialized support and repeated explanations of instructions. In B2, the presence of a teaching assistant significantly facilitates this process. The teaching assistant plays a role in providing attention to children who require further assistance. This creates a more conducive classroom atmosphere, while the class teacher can focus more on all the children. In other words, classes A3 and B1 have more direct interactions between teachers and children with limited language abilities compared to B2, which involves a teaching assistant for that role.

In terms of the utilization of teaching media, all classes employ the same teaching media, namely images and letter cards. This is done to construct simple words such as 'ice cream.' However, no specific adaptations have been made for children with language limitations. This indicates that the media used is general and uniform. The use of media in this context tends to not provide significant differences between classes.

In the aspect of collaboration with other children, classes A3 and B1 demonstrate more intensive collaboration efforts with peers to stimulate children with limited language abilities. Teachers actively encourage other children to interact with those who face language difficulties to enhance their motivation to communicate. In class B2, interactions are managed more naturally, with the support teacher taking on a guiding role for the children. This approach aids children with limited language skills in B2 to integrate more freely without coercion.

In the aspect of child responsiveness with disparities in language abilities, children in class A3 and B1 tend to be passive in responding to instructions or questions from the teacher, often requiring assistance to complete tasks. However, with special attention from the teacher, children in class B1 are beginning to respond, albeit with limitations. In class B2, children's responses are more active, and they can respond to instructions or questions, although with simple sentences. The presence of a supporting teacher in class B2 appears to play a significant role in enhancing children's engagement. In the final aspect, namely the children's social interaction in class, children in classes A3 and B1 exhibit limited social interaction with a tendency to be passive and rarely initiate conversations with either teachers or their peers. In class B2, children appear to be more active in their interactions, both with the accompanying teacher and the class teacher. Children in class B2 are also beginning to show courage in speaking in front of the class, particularly when presenting their work.

Overall, a more collaborative approach and specialized guidance in class B2 appears to yield better results in facilitating children with language limitations to be more active, both in response to instructions and social interactions. Meanwhile, in classes A3 and B1, challenges persist, particularly in the aspect of verbal communication, which still requires intensive attention from teachers to stimulate children's participation. Based on the findings in classes A3, B1, and B2, the differences in the implementation of learning strategies reflect the teachers' efforts to adjust their approaches to support children with varying language abilities. Strategies such as scaffolding—temporary support provided to children during the learning process—can explain these differences. According to Mihai & Classen (2023), scaffolding in meaningful interactions between teachers and children can support children's language development in a more structured and responsive manner. In classes A3 and B1, intensive direct interactions between teachers and children with limited language abilities, facilitated through specialized assistance and repeated instructional explanations, reflect the effective application of scaffolding. Meanwhile, in class B2, the presence of assistant teachers who provide additional attention to children needing further assistance also demonstrates the application of scaffolding that supports children's language development. This approach is in line with the findings of Mihai & Classen (2023) which emphasize the importance of meaningful interactions in supporting children's language development. Although the learning media used is uniform across all classes, the differences in interaction approaches and the support provided by teachers and facilitators indicate that scaffolding responsive to the individual needs of children can facilitate more optimal language development.

Challenges and Obstacles Encountered in the Implementation of Inclusive Education Strategies

Overall, the implementation of inclusive education strategies to address the disparities in language abilities of children at Marsudi Rini Kindergarten in Karanganyar District,

Demak Regency, has been carried out successfully. However, during the data collection process for the research and after the data analysis was conducted, several challenges and obstacles were also identified. The following table presents the challenges and barriers to the implementation of inclusive education strategies in addressing the disparities in language abilities of early childhood based on the data obtained from the research.

Table 3. Challenges and Obstacles in the Implementation of Inclusive Education Strategies to Address Disparities in Language Abilities of Children at Marsudi Rini Kindergarten, Karanganyar District, Demak Regency

No.	Obstacles Aspect	Observation	Interview	Documentation
1.	Facilities	The availability of learning media (educational aids) is minimal.	The school strives to meet the learning needs with sufficiently spacious classrooms and adequate teaching aids. However, due to natural disasters (floods), many school facilities and infrastructure have been damaged and lost.	The entire classroom appears spacious and tidy. However, the learning media used by the teacher is relatively simple.
2.	Educator Human Resources	Among the three classes with children who have limited language abilities, the teachers of classes B1 and B2 handle the children more effectively than the teacher in class A3.	Out of the 5 classroom teachers, only 2 teachers have ever received training related to inclusive education, namely the teachers of class B1 and B2.	The teaching module being used is not yet available.
3.	Understanding of Parents/Guardians of Students	-	There is one guardian of a student who is not aware of inclusive education, and even does not know for certain that their child has limited language abilities compared to their peers.	-
4.	Internal and External Support Capacity	The teachers discussed and agreed upon the implementation strategies for inclusive education that will be carried out.	The school organizes parenting activities for the guardians of students by inviting child psychologists or practitioners in the field of education as speakers. In addition, teachers and parents maintain communication both directly and through WhatsApp regarding	-

			the child's development. There is one guardian who is aware of the limitations of their child's language abilities, and therefore, outside of school, the child receives routine counseling independently from a child psychologist. However, the school does not receive support or supervision from the education department or local government regarding the implementation of inclusive education.	
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From the data in Table 3, it can be concluded that there are several obstacles in the implementation of inclusive education in schools, particularly regarding facilities, human resources (HR) of educators, parental understanding, and internal and external support. Below is a detailed analysis of each identified obstacle. Regarding facilities, the main constraint is the limited availability of resources, particularly in the provision of learning media. Observations indicate that educational props are still very limited. Although schools strive to provide spacious and organized classrooms, natural disasters (floods) have damaged many infrastructures, thereby reducing the availability of adequate learning aids. Documentation shows that the media used tends to be simple and may be insufficient to optimally support inclusive learning. This may hinder the learning process, especially for children with special needs who require additional media to support their language and communication development.

The next barrier relates to the aspect of educator resources. In this regard, there is a noticeable difference in addressing children with language limitations among the three classes. Teachers in classes B1 and B2 are considered more skilled in handling children with language limitations compared to the teacher in class A3. This is because the two teachers in B1 and B2 have received training related to inclusive education, while the teacher in class A3 has not received such training. The lack of appropriate training and teaching modules for inclusive education further widens the gap in educators' skills in addressing the needs of children with disparities in language abilities. This indicates the need for additional training for other teachers, especially in class A3, so that all teachers can provide equitable educational services.

Furthermore, the understanding of parents regarding inclusive education remains limited. Based on interviews, it was found that at least one parent is not fully aware that their child has language limitations and does not comprehend the concept of inclusive education. This lack of understanding may lead parents to be unproactive in supporting their child at home or collaborating with the school. This indicates the necessity for more intensive education

for parents about inclusive education, especially for those whose children require special support. Lastly, on the internal side, the school has been striving to enhance cooperation between teachers and parents through discussions on inclusive educational strategies and regular communication, both in person and via WhatsApp. Additionally, the school organizes parenting activities by inviting child psychologists to assist parents in better understanding their children's development. Nevertheless, external support from the education department or local government appears to be minimal. This poses a significant challenge for the school. Without external support and oversight, such as assistance for infrastructure or guidance in implementing inclusive education, the school must work independently to address the existing challenges. This can impact the sustainability of the inclusive program at the kindergarten.

Overall, the main constraints faced by TK Marsudi Rini in implementing inclusive education strategies to address the disparity in language abilities among early childhood children are the limited facilities and resources, a lack of understanding among parents, and minimal external support. The efforts made by the school, such as teacher training and parenting activities, have shown progress, but further support and coordination are still needed to optimize the implementation of inclusive education.

CONCLUSION

This research identifies the profile of language ability disparities, the implementation of inclusive education strategies, and the obstacles in their application at Marsudi Rini Kindergarten. Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that there are significant variations in the language abilities of children in classes A3, B1, and B2. Children with language limitations, such as those found in FDM (class A3) and MAZ (class B1), tend to experience difficulties in speaking, language comprehension, reading, writing, and social interaction. In contrast, MDJT (class B2) demonstrates better language development, supported by psychological guidance from parents. The implementation of inclusive education strategies in each classroom demonstrates differences in learning approaches, teacher interaction with children, media utilization, inter-collaboration, responsiveness to instructions, and social interactions. Class B2, which employs a more diverse learning method and has specialized support teachers, shows better outcomes in enhancing children's engagement. This indicates that more flexible methods and supportive assistance can improve the effectiveness of inclusive education practices.

This research also identifies the main challenges in the implementation of inclusive education at Marsudi Rini Kindergarten, namely the limited facilities, the shortage of trained human resources, the low understanding of parents regarding inclusive education, and the minimal support from external parties, such as the education department or local government. These constraints affect the optimization of inclusive education strategies, particularly in meeting the needs of children with language limitations.

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