



TEACHER STRATEGIES IN STIMULATING EARLY CHILDHOOD LANGUAGE ABILITIES BASED ON LOCAL CULTURE AT PEMBINA STATE KINDERGARTEN IN DENPASAR

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Abstract

This study evaluates the effectiveness of stimulating language skills in early childhood through the integration of lokal culture at the Pembina Denpasar Public Kindergarten. Involving 30 students from Group B, the study utilized Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory as the theoretical framework to analyze teachers' strategies, the impact of implementation, and the obstacles encountered. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using data reduction and presentation techniques. The study's findings indicate that various activities—such as masatua (storytelling) featuring master storyteller Gede Tarmada, singing the Gending Sekar Rare, using the Balinese language every Thursday, and playing traditional games—have proven to have a positive impact. In addition to significantly improving linguistic skills, these activities also fostered enthusiasm and a deep understanding among the children regarding Bali's cultural heritage. Although there were constraints such as time limitations and less-than-ideal classroom conditions, the teachers proactively addressed them through intensive coordination with the school principal. Overall, this approach rooted in lokal wisdom proved effective as a contextual and educational medium for language stimulation among the children.

Keywords: *Early childhood language skills, lokal culture*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is organized with the aim of shaping children into individuals who develop optimally throughout their growth and development. This aligns with the objectives of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) as stipulated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which states that PAUD is a form of guidance provided to children from birth to six years of age through educational stimulation. The goal is to support children's physical and spiritual growth and development so they are ready to enter the next level of education, which includes the development of moral and religious values, physical motor skills, cognitive skills, language skills, social and emotional skills, and the arts (Fantofik et al., 2025).



Language is a medium for communication and interaction, whether spoken, written, or signed (Daud, Siswanti, & Jalal, 2021). According to Santrock, language skills are forms of communication, whether spoken, written, or signed, that contain meaningful symbols, consisting of various words used according to rules, functions, uses, and variations. According to Thaiss and Bromly, early childhood language development allows children to remember and understand information by providing opportunities to discuss, write, describe, and manipulate the information they receive. Furthermore, Bromly also defines aspects of language skills as listening, reading, speaking, and writing (Santrock, 2022).

According to Mulyati, children's language skills, consisting of receptive (listening, reading) and productive (speaking, writing), can be trained from the womb through: 1) Listening skills, which include interactive (two-way/face-to-face) and non-interactive (one-way, such as radio/TV) situations. 2) Speaking skills, which are divided into interactive (two-way), semi-interactive (one-way, face-to-face, such as speeches), and non-interactive (one-way, without face-to-face contact). 3) Reading skills, which begin with sound pronunciation and symbol recognition, and progress to grasping the message or lexical meaning of simple texts. 4) Writing skills, which include initial writing through scribbles, pictures, or symbols, as well as advanced writing as a means of communication to express ideas in written form (Mulyati, 2015).

Local culture, or what can be described as local wisdom, is defined as wisdom in the form of ideas or perspectives based on local wisdom, which are rich in wisdom, valuable, and passed down through generations and closely related to the local community (Umarella, 2020). Local culture is strongly influenced by the surrounding community and natural environment. Ancestral heritage such as storytelling (masatua), traditional games, and children's songs (gending rare) play a crucial role in stimulating language development and as an effective means of sustainably preserving these cultural values (Setyaningrum, 2018).

According to Koentjaraningrat, there are three types of culture: 1) Culture as a system of abstract ideas that exists only in the human mind as a guide for life. This can take the form of oral traditions such as norms, language, advice, and stories, or written forms such as legislation; 2) Culture as a system of activities is a concrete manifestation of culture in the form of documented social interactions. These activities are characterized by regular patterns and the use of specific media, such as traditional ceremonies (birth, marriage, death) and the ongoing tradition of mutual cooperation; 3) Culture as a system of artifacts is a concrete, perceptible physical form that is the tangible result of human thought. Examples include offerings (bebantenan) in Balinese wedding ceremonies. Even though it is a complex physical object, it is a manifestation of deep cultural thoughts and values (Tjahyadi, et al., 2019).

Other research by Anggraini, Yulsofriend, and Yeni revealed that Minangkabau Creative Songs effectively stimulate early childhood language development, both in listening and speaking. The use of this medium not only increases vocabulary and regional language skills but also serves as a means of cultural preservation. Furthermore, singing with friends creates a fun atmosphere that encourages children to be more confident in expressing their thoughts and feelings verbally (Anggraini, et al., 2019).

Research by (Yusuf, et al., 2020) on a local culture-based learning model at Pembina Telaga State Kindergarten, Gorontalo, revealed the integration of cultural elements into the curriculum, from the syllabus to the daily plan. The learning resources used were factual, encompassing natural resources, professions, and local community institutions. The learning

materials were grouped into several main categories, such as social conditions, livelihoods, oral traditions (folktales and songs), and traditional regional arts and games.

Research (Anggreni et al., 2023) shows that training in creating wordless storybooks based on local culture in Lamongan successfully increased teachers' creativity and insight in creating learning media. In addition to preserving culture and fostering a love for the homeland, the use of wordless books effectively stimulates children's ability to produce words and improves picture reading skills in early childhood.

Survey results in several West Denpasar kindergartens indicate that children's language skills are suboptimal due to insufficiently varied and contextual learning stimulation. This is due to the application of conventional methods that minimally integrate educational games or meaningful play activities that support early childhood language development.

Based on initial observations on January 16–18, 2025, at Pembina State Kindergarten in Denpasar, it was found that teachers in Groups B1 and B2 had implemented learning, one of which was to stimulate creative and continuous language skills. Stimulation was carried out through educational media based on local culture that was packaged in an interesting and fun way for children and also through various forms of games. This approach is contextual, teachers integrate cultural elements in the surrounding environment as the main material to hone the language skills of early childhood in a meaningful way. Learning activities can be captured by children's understanding well, but there are still some children who have not shown any improvement from the impact of the stimulation given. The results of these initial observations attracted the attention and became the inspiration for researchers to research learning activities at Pembina State Kindergarten in Denpasar, and aimed to examine the strategies used by teachers in stimulating children's language skills, the impact of providing such stimulation, and the obstacles experienced by teachers while providing stimulation to children's language skills based on local culture at Pembina State Kindergarten in Denpasar.

METHODOLOGY

This research utilizes the sociocultural theory developed by Lev Vygotsky. According to Vygotsky, early childhood abilities are not based on intelligence tests but are based on several factors: 1) the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which reflects a child's current level of competence, which can be improved through guidance or social interaction, which plays a crucial role in fostering optimal child development; 2) language development and learning, where through verbal interactions with others, children gain the opportunity to understand communication structures, enrich their vocabulary, and improve their language skills within the context of social interactions; and 3) the role of educators. Educators play a strategic role in supporting children's learning through interactive approaches, such as meaningful conversations and exploratory activities or experiments (Derry, 2013). This theory serves as a synthetic bridge connecting field findings with previous research findings to strengthen the validity of arguments. Furthermore, this theoretical framework serves as an analytical lens, providing direction for researchers to maintain focus in analyzing relevant research data. Through this theoretical perspective, researchers can interpret data in depth while ensuring consistency between the phenomena encountered and the scientific basis used. This research employed a qualitative approach, using a case study. The researcher chose this approach to explore phenomena in-depth within a real-life context to gain a holistic understanding. This allowed the researcher to understand in detail the dynamics, interactions, and environmental factors that naturally influence the research object. The researcher employed purposive sampling as the informant selection technique. In purposive sampling, the sample and research

objects were determined based on specific criteria, and not all objects within a research location were included as informants. This was also done with considerations of time, cost, effort, and accessibility (Kumara, 2018).

Data were collected through three techniques: in-depth interviews, non-participatory observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted with teachers and principals to obtain information on learning strategies, impacts, and barriers. Observations were conducted to observe children's activities during the learning process, while documentation studies were conducted to collect school documents, activity notes, and photographs of learning (Heryana, 2018).

The data analysis technique used the interactive model of Miles and Huberman in Baba (2017), which consists of three stages: (1) data reduction, namely the process of selecting and simplifying relevant data; (2) presenting data in descriptive narrative form; and (3) drawing conclusions and verification. Data validity was strengthened through triangulation of sources and methods. The researchers chose this method because their goal was to determine and understand the strategies, impacts, and obstacles experienced by teachers in providing language development to children through local culture-based activities at Pembina State Kindergarten, Denpasar.

The participants were specifically selected: teachers and children in groups B1 and B2 at Pembina State Kindergarten, Denpasar. There were four teachers in groups B1 and B2, as well as one female principal; each group had two female teachers. The children in groups B1 and B2 ranged in age from 5 to 6 years old. There were 34 children in group B1 and 33 in group B2.

The data that the researcher will collect is in the form of assessments from the instruments assessed over 3 months, the results of interviews with the principal and teachers in groups B1 and B2, and the results of documentation in the form of documentation of information about the school, as well as documentation in the form of photos of the researcher's activities while conducting research at Pembina State Kindergarten, Denpasar.

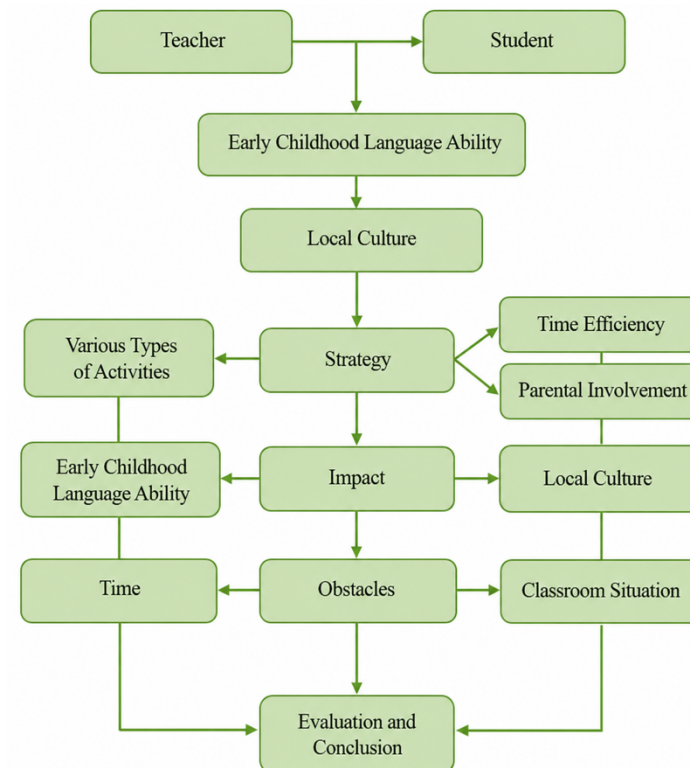


Figure 1. Thinking Framework Chart

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research confirm that the application of local culture in early childhood learning is not only pedagogically relevant, but also has a strong theoretical basis. Based on Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective, social interaction in a cultural context is the basis for language development. Children acquire language skills through a process of imitation, dialogue, and active participation in meaningful activities involving adults. In this context, local Balinese culture provides a social environment rich in symbols and values, which facilitates the formation of language meaning for children.



Figure 2. Activities of the Balinese Masatua by Mr. Gede Tarmada

From a developmental psycholinguistic perspective, the use of regional songs and traditional games strengthens children's phonological, syntactic, and pragmatic abilities. Songs like "gending rare" (gending rare) help children recognize sound patterns and rhymes, while traditional games foster pragmatic abilities through direct communicative interaction. These findings align with research by Anggraini et al. (2019) and Lestari & Prima (2023), which found that a local culture-based approach is effective in strengthening language skills because it involves strong emotional and social elements.



Figure 3. Bali Magending Activities

Furthermore, the research findings also demonstrate the importance of teachers' roles as cultural facilitators. Teachers serve not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as guardians of local cultural values passed down through learning. Therefore, teachers need to possess multicultural competence and high creativity in designing learning strategies that adapt to children's cultures. In line with Tjahyadi et al. (2019), culture-based education should be viewed as an acculturation process, namely an effort to foster children's personalities through the values, language, and cultural symbols that exist in society.

LEMBAR OBSERVASI GURU				
STRATEGI GURU DALAM MENSTIMULASI KEMAMPUAN BAHASA ANAK USIA DINI BERBASIS BUDAYA LOKAL DI TK NEGERI PEMBINA DENPASAR				
Nama Guru Kelompok B1:				
1) Ni Ketut Sri Purnawati, S.Pd.AUD (Guru Kelompok B1.1)		2) Nyoman Suneiri, S.Pd.AUD (Guru Kelompok B1.2)		
No.	Aspek yang Diamati	Hasil Pengamatan		Catatan
		Ada	Tidak	
1.	Strategi Guru: a. Pelaksanaan <i>masatua</i> atau mendongeng b. Menyanyikan sekar rare c. Permainan tradisional Bali d. Penggunaan Bahasa Bali	√ √ √ √		Pelaksanaan <i>masatua</i> atau mendongeng dilakukan oleh guru dengan cerita rakyat, dan oleh siswa setiap hari sebelum pembelajaran dimulai. <i>Sekar rare</i> dan implementasi Bahasa Bali dilakukan setiap hari Kamis oleh seluruh warga sekolah. Permainan tradisional dilakukan, namun tidak sering.
2.	Stimulasi berbicara anak (bertanya, dialog, diskusi, cerita, Berbahasa Bali, bertanya, bermain peran)	√		Seluruh-hari dilakukan diskusi dan dialog bersama anak dan anak antusias. Kegiatan bertanya juga efektif untuk memstimulasi kemampuan bahasa anak Bermain peran dilakukan anak sesuai dengan kemandirian dan kesepakatan bersama teman-temannya. Guru memperhatikan perkembangan anak.
3.	Stimulasi mendengarkan (mendengarkan cerita, pembicaraan, lagu, mendengarkan guru, tanya jawab, dll)	√		Mendengarkan guru teman saat sedang bercerita melatih fokus dan kemampuan mendengarkan anak. Walaupun masih ada beberapa anak yang tidak fokus mendengarkan. Mendengarkan lagu dapat menambah kosakata yang dimiliki anak.
4.	Stimulasi membaca (bunyi huruf dan angka, satu suku kata, satu kata, satu kalimat, cerita, cerita bergambar)	√		Guru menggunakan berbagai media untuk melatih kemampuan membaca anak, dengan membeuruk huruf/angka, menggambar, menulis di berbagai tempat yang sudah disediakan. Kemampuan membaca disesuaikan dengan level kemampuan membaca anak.

5.	Stimulasi menulis (Mencoret-coret, menjiplak, menggambar, bentuk huruf dan angka, satu suku kata, satu kata, satu kalimat, nama diri/orang lain.	√		Kemampuan menulis disesuaikan dengan level kemampuan anak. Proses perlahan-lahan melatih membaca. Guru tidak hanya mengajarkan anak di sekolah, tapi juga bekerjasama dengan orangtua di rumah melalui berbagai kegiatan.
6.	Efektifitas waktu		√	Waktu yang digunakan guru di sekolah kurang efektif dan kelengkapan waktu. Dikarenakan waktu pembelajaran yang mepet.
7.	Pelibatan orangtua	√		Ada pelibatan orangtua dalam proses stimulasi kemampuan bahasa anak, misalnya anak diminta membaca sesuatu oleh guru, dan anak diminta menyampaikan hal tersebut pada orang tuanya (membangun komunikasi), atau guru memberi tugas anak berkegiatan bersama orang tua.
8.	Pengaruh aktivitas budaya lokal terhadap kemampuan bahasa anak	√		Kegiatan berbudaya lokal berpengaruh baik terhadap kemampuan bahasa anak. Dilakukan di sekolah dan di rumah bersama keluarga.
9.	Hambatan yang dialami guru	√		Kekurangan waktu mengajar, kondisi dan situasi kelas yang kurang kondusif.


Denpasar, 22 April 2025
Mahasiswa Peneliti,

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Figure 4. Observation Results of Teachers

Figure 4. Results Practically, local culture-based learning at Pembina Denpasar State Kindergarten can serve as a model for other early childhood education institutions. The implementation of strategies such as *masatua* and rare gending has been proven to integrate children's cognitive, linguistic, affective, and social aspects. However, for its sustainable implementation, support from the school, local government, and the provision of adequate resources and teacher training is needed. Observations of Teachers

1. Teacher Strategies for Stimulating Early Childhood Language Skills Based on Local Culture

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation studies, it was found that teachers at Pembina Denpasar State Kindergarten implement various local culture-based learning strategies to stimulate early childhood language skills. These strategies address not only formal linguistic aspects but also the child's socio-cultural context. Some of the main strategies found include *masatua* activities (Balinese folk tales) for example *Satua Siap Selem*, *Ni Bawang Teken Ni Kesuna*, *I Ubuh*, *Ni Tuwung Kuning*, *magending rare* (Balinese children's songs) *Meong-Meong*, *Melajah Ngigel*, *Besik Dua Telu*, *Goak Maling*, *Curik-Curik*, and other songs, traditional Balinese games or dolanan such as, *Megoak Maling*, *Mameong-Meongan*, *Curik-Curik*, *Masepit-Sepitan*, and other games, as well as the habit of speaking Balinese in daily communication between teachers and children, for example in communicating in class the teacher routinely uses Balinese and the children also respond in Balinese, such as asking the children how they are "*Alit-alit punapi gatra mangkin?*", asking the children's wishes in choosing a game "*Alit-alit lakar meplalian napi?*", when the teacher asks for help from the children to get something "*Gek tu lung jemak kertasne nggih*", and communication in other forms. *Masatua* activities are the dominant strategy used by teachers because they serve not only as a medium for introducing vocabulary and language structure, but also as a means of internalizing moral and cultural values. Teachers tell stories using facial expressions, vocal intonation, and simple props such as puppets of folk figures (*Pan Balang Tamak*, *Ni Bungsil*, and *Manik Angkeran*) to capture children's attention. Through these activities, children actively engage by answering questions, repeating key words, and imitating the characters' dialogue.

These activities support Piaget's constructivist theory, which emphasizes that children learn through direct experience and interaction with their environment.

Furthermore, strategies using gending rare, or traditional Balinese children's songs, are employed to enrich vocabulary and practice correct pronunciation. Songs such as Meong-meong and Putri Cening Ayu are used routinely in the opening and closing activities of learning. These songs contain strong rhythmic and metrical elements, helping children recognize language sound patterns and strengthening verbal memory. This strategy aligns with Santrock's (2023) view that music and singing contribute positively to the phonological and morphological development of early childhood.

Traditional games such as megoak-goakan and mekibung are also used to stimulate language skills through spontaneous communication between peers. In these games, children interact with simple instructions in Balinese, such as "adoh-anggen ngumpet!" or "tundun tiang!". These activities encourage children to understand commands, repeat words, and react quickly to spoken language. Meanwhile, teachers incorporate simple Balinese language habits into daily activities such as praying, lining up, or casually talking with children. This way, children become accustomed to hearing and using the local language without academic pressure, but rather through enjoyable and natural experiences.

Overall, this strategy illustrates the application of contextual learning based on local culture, integrating cultural values into stimulating language activities. This aligns with Vygotsky's view as cited in Faridy (2021) that language and culture are two inseparable elements in children's learning processes, as social interaction within a cultural context is the primary vehicle for the development of cognitive and language skills.

2. Impact of Strategy Implementation on Children's Language Skills

Observations indicate that the implementation of local culture-based strategies has a significant impact on improving the language skills of early childhood children at Pembina Denpasar State Kindergarten. This improvement is evident in several language skill indicators, including:

- 1) Listening skills improved through masatua activities, where children were able to understand the story, answer the teacher's questions, and recall the story line in the correct sequence.
- 2) Speaking skills developed rapidly through role-playing and singing activities. Children demonstrated courage in speaking in front of their peers and were able to construct simple sentences with clearer pronunciation.
- 3) Children's vocabulary became more diverse, both in Indonesian and Balinese. The use of local terms such as "cening" (little child), "ayang" (dear), and "dija" (where) became part of their active communication.
- 4) Their ability to understand the social context of language also improved, demonstrated through politeness in speaking and the ability to adapt their language to the audience.

These findings indicate that local culture-based activities develop not only linguistic aspects, but also social and emotional aspects of children. Children learn language in contexts that are meaningful and relevant to their lives. This reinforces Bruner's theory of scaffolding, where support provided by teachers within the child's cultural context can facilitate language development through adaptive guidance.

Furthermore, the application of local culture also fosters a sense of pride and cultural identity from an early age. Children not only learn "language" in the verbal sense, but also the "meaning" contained within it. Thus, language learning based on local culture serves a dual purpose: strengthening linguistic abilities and instilling noble cultural values.

3. Barriers to Implementing Local Culture-Based Learning Strategies

Despite its positive impact, teachers face several obstacles in implementing this learning strategy. The first obstacle is limited learning time. The daily schedule in kindergartens is quite busy, making it difficult for teachers to allocate adequate time for all local culture-based activities. Second, differences in language ability among children often require teachers to adjust the difficulty level of activities to ensure all children are actively involved. Third, the lack of supporting media such as folklore props, traditional musical instruments, or Balinese picture books also poses a challenge.

Furthermore, some teachers still struggle to systematically integrate cultural values into the Early Childhood Education (PAUD) curriculum. This indicates the need for further training and mentoring regarding the development of contextual, culture-based teaching materials. In line with the findings of Yusuf & Rahmat (2020), the greatest challenge in implementing local culture-based learning lies in teachers' readiness to understand and implement cultural elements in teaching and learning activities.

CONCLUSION

Teachers' strategies for stimulating the language skills of early childhood children at Pembina Denpasar State Kindergarten are implemented through the integration of local culture into learning, such as *masatua* activities, *rare gending* (traditional music), traditional games, and the introduction of simple Balinese language. This strategy contributes positively to improving children's language skills, including listening, speaking, and understanding word meanings. Barriers include time constraints, differences in children's abilities, and dynamic classroom conditions. Therefore, support from the principal and development of teacher competencies are needed to implement local culture-based learning sustainably.

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