

The Role Of Teachers In Developing Children's Receptive Language Abilities Aged 4-5 Years At Al-Hijrah Preschool In The 2025/2026 Academic Year

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the teacher's role in developing the receptive language abilities of children aged 4–5 years, the influencing factors, and their impact at PAUD Al-Hijrah in the 2025/2026 academic year. The research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data collection techniques include non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews with teachers and the principal, and documentation. The study was conducted from May to June 2026. The findings indicate that: (1) The teacher's roles include facilitator (providing a language-rich environment), model (exemplary in language use), motivator (giving praise and encouragement), evaluator (observing and recording development), and scaffolder (providing gradual assistance). Strategies used include expressive storybook reading, gradual oral instructions, concrete media, singing, role-playing, and interactive question-and-answer sessions. (2) Supporting factors: principal support, availability of simple facilities, teacher patience, children's enthusiasm, and parental support. Inhibiting factors: lack of teacher training, differences in children's abilities, excessive gadget use, and limited media. (3) Positive impacts: improved understanding of instructions, listening concentration, vocabulary, ability to follow sequential commands, courage to respond, and reduced frustration. The main contribution of this study lies in offering a holistic, multidimensional framework of the teacher's role as facilitator, model, motivator, evaluator, and scaffolder in stimulating young children's receptive language within a coastal socio-cultural context that has rarely been examined in prior research.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is the most crucial and fundamental period throughout the entire span of human growth and development. This period is marked by various crucial periods that are fundamental to a child's life, from the beginning until the final stage of development. One of the periods that characterizes early childhood is the golden age. Many concepts and facts have been discovered that explain the golden period in early childhood, where all of a child's potential develops most rapidly. Some concepts that have been compared to early childhood include the exploration period, the identification/imitation period, the sensitive period, the play period, and the early rebellious period. The impact of stimulating these various potentials during the golden age is profound; if these potentials are not optimally stimulated, it will hinder the child's subsequent developmental stages (Suryana, 2021).

Early childhood education is crucial for developing and stimulating children's potential, as they undergo rapid growth and development, both physically and mentally (Suyanto, 2021). Within the context of formal education, teachers play a central role. According to Amiruddin (in Khasanah, 2021), the general role of teachers is as educators, encompassing the tasks of educating, 994 | The Role Of Teachers In Developing Children's Receptive Language Abilities Aged 4-5 Years At Al-Hijrah Preschool In The 2025/2026 Academic Year (Zulhainah)

teaching, and training. In carrying out their duties at school, teachers must act as second parents and engage students' sympathy, ensuring that any learning provided motivates them.

One crucial aspect that needs to be developed at this age is language. Bromley (in Faridah, 2021) defines language as a system of organized symbols used to convey various ideas or information, consisting of symbols, either visually or verbally. According to Annas (2021), language is an inseparable aspect of culture and a unique identity innate to children. Therefore, language skills are a talent that must be optimally stimulated during the golden age.

Language skills are divided into expressive and receptive language. Receptive language skills play a crucial role in supporting effective interpersonal communication. Bromley (in Fitriana, 2021) emphasizes that a child's active participation in listening activities is directly proportional to their ability to construct meaning from the information received. Receptive language is a child's ability to recognize people and events in their environment, understand the meaning of facial expressions and sounds, and ultimately comprehend words (Mustika, 2021).

However, empirical conditions in the field reveal various challenges. Based on initial observations at the Al-Hijrah Early Childhood Education Center (PAUD Al-Hijrah), it was found that children aged 4-5 still experience difficulty understanding simple instructions from teachers, have poor vocabulary comprehension, low listening interest, and delays in pointing to or identifying images. These initial conditions indicate that children's receptive language skills have not been optimized due to a lack of variety in media and methods. Learning tends to be monotonous, often using written assignments without involving concrete media. As a result, listening skills, as a foundation for communication, have not been properly developed.

Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of receptive language development. Tasya Menik Nur Hanifah (2021) found that a picture-guessing game was highly effective in stimulating children's receptive language. Iska Wahyuni et al. (2023) analyzed various teacher strategies, such as storytelling and listening to fairy tales, in developing receptive language. Elan et al. (2023) focused on the use of digital flashcards. Maria Anika Hoar (2022) demonstrated the effectiveness of role-playing methods. Awaliyah Yusni Ramadhan Siregar (2024) examined the word chain game. Although many studies have addressed specific strategies, few have holistically examined the multidimensional role of teachers—as facilitators, models, motivators, evaluators, and scaffolders—particularly for children aged 4-5 in coastal areas with unique socio-cultural characteristics.

Therefore, this study aims to identify the role of teachers in developing the receptive language skills of children aged 4-5 years at PAUD Al-Hijrah in the 2025/2026 academic year, to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors, and to analyze the impact of the teacher's role on children's receptive language skills.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive approach. According to Merriam (2021), qualitative research involves observation, attempts to study something in its natural form, gaining an in-depth understanding, and interpreting the meaning of phenomena through description. This approach was chosen because the researcher wanted to examine and provide an in-depth overview of the role of teachers in developing children's receptive language skills in a natural and appropriate school environment.

This research was conducted at the Al-Hijrah Early Childhood Education (PAUD) in Teluk Komba, Pemenang District, North Lombok Regency. This location was chosen based on the characteristics of the coastal community and the need to directly observe how children's receptive language develops within this social context. The research took place during the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, specifically from May to June 2026.

The subjects in this study consisted of three informants selected purposively: two group A teachers who directly teach children aged 4-5 years, and the principal of Al-Hijrah Early Childhood Education (PAUD). These informants were selected because they possess direct and comprehensive knowledge of the daily learning process and language stimulation strategies

applied to the children, with the teachers serving as the primary implementers of classroom interaction and the principal providing managerial oversight and institutional policy context. Primary data were obtained directly from informants through interviews and observations. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from institutional documentation, literature studies, RPPH (preschool planning plan), school profiles, and child development records.

The data collection technique used consists of three main methods. First, non-participant observation (Zuriah, 2021), where researchers directly observe teacher and child interactions in the classroom without being involved in learning activities, in order to obtain objective data about teacher strategies and roles. Second, semi-structured interviews with teachers and principals to explore conceptual understanding, strategies, and challenges faced. Third, documentation (Sugiyono, 2021) to supplement data through photos, curriculum documents, and child assessment track records.

Qualitative data analysis refers to the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (2021), which includes the stages of data reduction (selecting and focusing raw data), data presentation (developing descriptive narratives), and drawing conclusions. To ensure data validity, the researchers used triangulation techniques (Mekarisce, 2021), which included source triangulation (comparing teacher and principal data), technical triangulation (combining observation, interview, and documentation results), and time triangulation (collecting data at different times during the research period).

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Research Results

The research conducted from May to June 2026 at PAUD Al-Hijrah produced comprehensive findings regarding the description of children's abilities, the description of teachers' roles, strategies used, handling of obstacles, and the surrounding factors.

3.1.1 Overview of Children's Receptive Language Abilities

Based on observations and interviews, the receptive language skills of 4-5-year-old children at Al-Hijrah Preschool generally show positive development. The children are able to understand simple commands from the teacher, such as "take the book," "sit on the chair," or "put the pencil on the table." They also respond well to basic questions about identity and surrounding objects.

The principal stated, "The general picture of children's receptive language abilities at Al-Hijrah PAUD shows that they can understand and accept commands they hear. There are bound to be differences in ability, as children's development and growth vary." The aspect considered easiest to master is simple one-step commands, while the biggest challenge for children is responding to compound instructions (two to three consecutive steps). This observation was further corroborated by the class teacher, who noted, "Most children respond quickly to single instructions like sitting down or putting away their things, but when I give two or three instructions in a row, some children get confused and only follow the first one." This additional account illustrates that the children's receptive language ability is still emerging rather than fully consolidated, particularly for multi-step instructions.

3.1.2 The Role of Teachers in Developing Receptive Language

Teachers at Al-Hijrah Early Childhood Education (PAUD) have been identified as fulfilling five primary roles. First, as facilitators, teachers create a language-rich environment by providing a reading corner ('pojok baca') stocked with picture books and concrete media. Teachers position themselves not simply as sources of information but as designers of a conducive learning environment.

Second, as a role model or example. Teachers recognize that young children learn through imitation. "As a role model, teachers not only teach language but also serve as a mirror for children. Every word, tone, and sentence used daily will be recorded

by the children," said the class teacher. Observations showed that the teacher spoke slowly with clear articulation and was supported by relevant body gestures.

Third, as a motivator. Teachers consistently offer specific praise (e.g., "Wow, that's so clever! You were able to get that red book.") to stimulate children's courage. Praise and applause are effective in transforming children from passive to more willing participants.

Fourth, as evaluators, teachers conduct ongoing observations. Rather than focusing solely on final assessments, teachers record children's daily progress through anecdotal notes and checklists, which are then used to adjust subsequent learning interventions.

Fifth, as a scaffolder. The teacher provides assistance tailored to the child's needs (for example, holding the child's hand to guide) and gradually reduces this physical assistance as the child's understanding improves, until the child can independently respond to verbal instructions alone.

3.1.3 Strategies, Methods, and Handling of Obstacles

The most dominant strategy employed is expressive story reading. The use of dynamic intonation and facial expressions helps children understand the storyline and maintain listening focus. Other strategies include providing gradual verbal instructions (from one to three steps), using real objects to teach abstract concepts (such as size and position), and incorporating singing and role-playing.

To address children with low receptive abilities—marked by confusion or silence when given instructions—teachers employ an individualized approach. They allow longer pauses to allow the child to process information, repeat instructions, and use more intense visual cues, without overwhelming the child.

3.1.4 Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The success of the teacher's role is supported by several factors: (1) Support from the principal who provides autonomy in methods and facilitates supervision and parenting; (2) Availability of facilities such as reading corners; (3) Teacher patience and creativity; and (4) Cognitive support from enthusiastic children.

However, there are several significant obstacles: (1) Lack of formal training for teachers related to language development specifically; (2) Variations in children's abilities that require extra classroom management; and (3) External factors such as high exposure to gadgets at home and lack of two-way communication in parenting patterns.

3.2 Discussion

Based on field findings, the role of Al-Hijrah PAUD teachers aligns closely with the concept of modern early childhood education. The role of facilitators, who prioritize a language-rich environment, has been shown to accelerate receptive language acquisition, aligning with Hartono's (2021) opinion that teachers must provide conditions and resources that enable meaningful learning experiences. The provision of a "reading corner" represents crucial visual stimulation during the golden age (Suryana, 2021).

The teacher's role as a model and scaffolder confirms Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The gradual assistance provided by teachers when children struggle to respond to complex instructions ensures that they don't become frustrated. This is supported by the findings of Iska Wahyuni et al. (2023), who emphasized the need for habituation strategies and structured support to increase receptive capacity. While these findings align with previous research in emphasizing structured scaffolding, a notable difference also emerged: whereas Iska Wahyuni et al. (2023) emphasized teacher-directed habituation through repetition, this study found that motivational reinforcement in the form of specific praise played an equally critical role in sustaining children's willingness to respond to gradually complex instructions within the unique coastal socio-cultural context of Al-Hijrah. This suggests that the effectiveness of scaffolding techniques may be context-

dependent, requiring adaptation to local socio-cultural characteristics rather than uniform application across settings.

The strategy of reading stories with expressive intonation has been proven to be a primary tool for vocabulary acquisition. This supports the results of a study in the DIDIKA Journal (2024), which stated that the storytelling method is highly effective in stimulating listening skills and understanding the flow of information. At PAUD Al-Hijrah, this method is combined with concrete media that successfully contextualizes adjectives (big-small) visually, an approach recommended by Fitriana (2021). Furthermore, this finding is also supported by research by Ilawati, Rahayu, & Alawiyah (2024), which emphasizes the importance of the storytelling method, as well as Kanedi, Ramzi, & Alawiyah (2026), which demonstrates the effectiveness of using serial visual media. Both strategies, which combine expressive narratives with concrete visualizations, are empirically able to optimize children's interest, participation, and understanding (both receptive and expressive) in absorbing linguistic information.

External factors, such as excessive exposure to gadgets at home, are the most difficult structural challenge for teachers to control. According to Novia & Hayati (2025), learning barriers originating from the family environment require intervention in the form of collaborative guidance. Therefore, the parenting program initiated by the principal of Al-Hijrah Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is an essential strategic step. Overall, the teacher's dedication in carrying out multiple roles (motivator, model, evaluator) has had an empirical impact in the form of significant improvements in children's listening concentration, vocabulary comprehension, and fluency in executing sequential instructions.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the descriptive qualitative research conducted, it can be concluded that the role of teachers in developing receptive language skills in children aged 4-5 years at PAUD Al-Hijrah is realized through five main functions in an integrated manner. Teachers act as facilitators who create a language-rich classroom ecosystem, role models who use precise articulation, motivators who provide psychological support (specific praise), evaluators who record progress through anecdotal notes, and scaffolders who provide gradual guidance (physical/verbal assistance) until the child achieves independence.

The dominant strategies used included expressive storybook reading, graded oral instruction, exploration of concrete objects, and integration of singing and role-play. Despite the challenges of limited teacher professional training and high exposure to gadgets at home, supporting factors such as teacher dedication and the principal's managerial support were able to optimize children's outcomes. Consequently, children experienced substantial improvements in vocabulary differentiation, following serial commands, and focusing during literacy sessions.

4.2 Suggestions

- 1) For Teachers: It is recommended to integrate simple, interactive digital media alongside conventional storybooks to enrich children's stimulus repertoire. Teachers also need to increase the frequency of structured communication with parents regarding tolerance limits for gadget use at home.
- 2) For School Principals: It is hoped that this can bridge the limitations of teachers' pedagogical competence by allocating a budget for special training (In-House Training) related to the latest receptive language stimulation methods, as well as increasing the collection of literature in the reading corner.
- 3) For Parents: We encourage you to proactively implement a pattern of intense two-way communication at home, read stories regularly, and reduce the duration of children's passive interactions with gadgets.

- 4) For Further Researchers: It is recommended to conduct cyclical classroom action research (CAR) or use mixed-methods methods to measure the specific level of effectiveness of each media instrument (e.g., the effectiveness of big books vs. digital animation) on children's receptive language mastery.

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