



Analysis of Elementary School Students' Language Ability in Facing Environmental Challenges: A Case Study at MI Raudlatul Ilmiyah Jakarta

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the development of elementary school students' language skills, especially in the context of speaking, as well as the role of the social environment and teaching methods in shaping student communication at MI Raudlatul Ilmiyah, South Jakarta. Speaking ability is considered crucial as a means of socialization and achieving independence, and is strongly influenced by the social interaction environment which can shape the students' language variations. The challenge of the research location is the diverse background of students from upper-middle-class and lower-middle-class communities. The research method used is qualitative with a social experiment model. Data collection was carried out through questionnaires to measure students' understanding of language skills, direct observation of social interactions, and interviews with teachers and students. The research results indicate a development in the teacher's teaching methods from lectures to interactive techniques such as role play to develop students' imagination. Teachers demonstrate good language flexibility, able to switch between formal and informal/everyday language according to the class condition. In informal interactions outside the classroom (canteen and field), students tend to use casual everyday/non-standard language. However, there was a minor finding of instances where a small group of students in the corners of the classroom used inappropriate language. Generally, the questionnaire results show that students' language skills in socialization are very good, where students have the sensitivity and understanding to appropriately place the use of formal and non-formal language according to the communication context (with teachers, friends, or parents).

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ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis perkembangan kemampuan berbahasa siswa sekolah dasar, khususnya dalam konteks berbicara, serta peran lingkungan sosial dan metode pengajaran dalam membentuk komunikasi siswa di MI Raudlatul Ilmiyah, Jakarta Selatan. Kemampuan berbicara dianggap penting sebagai sarana sosialisasi dan pencapaian kemandirian, dan sangat dipengaruhi oleh lingkungan interaksi sosial yang dapat membentuk variasi bahasa siswa. Tantangan dari lokasi penelitian adalah latar belakang siswa yang beragam dari kalangan menengah ke atas dan menengah ke bawah. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan model eksperimen sosial. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui kuesioner untuk mengukur pemahaman siswa terhadap kemampuan berbahasa, observasi langsung terhadap



interaksi sosial, dan wawancara dengan guru dan siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya perkembangan dalam metode pengajaran guru dari ceramah menjadi teknik interaktif seperti bermain peran untuk mengembangkan imajinasi siswa. Guru menunjukkan fleksibilitas bahasa yang baik, mampu beralih antara bahasa formal dan informal/sehari-hari sesuai dengan kondisi kelas. Dalam interaksi informal di luar kelas (kantin dan lapangan), siswa cenderung menggunakan bahasa sehari-hari yang santai/bukan bahasa baku. Namun, ada temuan kecil di mana sekelompok kecil siswa di sudut-sudut kelas menggunakan bahasa yang tidak pantas. Secara umum, hasil kuesioner menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan berbahasa siswa dalam bersosialisasi sudah sangat baik, di mana siswa memiliki kepekaan dan pemahaman untuk menempatkan penggunaan bahasa formal dan non formal secara tepat sesuai dengan konteks komunikasi (dengan guru, teman, atau orang tua).

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INTRODUCTION

Language ability is very important for elementary school children. The most visible language ability in daily life is speaking. Children in early childhood have a very strong desire to speak because: (1) It serves as a means of socialization. If they cannot speak, they cannot be accepted as group members. (2) They learn to speak as a means of gaining independence. If they cannot speak, parents do not understand the child's desires, so the child is always helped like a baby, resulting in a lack of independence (Sri Rumini and Siti Sundari, 2004: 43). According to Syamsu Yusuf (2001: 118), language is the ability to communicate with others. In this sense, it includes all ways of communicating, where thoughts and feelings are expressed in the form of symbols to convey meaning, such as by using speech, writing, gestures, numbers, paintings, and facial expressions.

Society has a major influence on students' speaking ability. Sumaryanti (2017) states that in socializing and interacting with friends and the surrounding environment, a student needs language to communicate. The ability to communicate with language is fundamental and very important in a student's development. With language, students will be able to develop social skills with others. A person will not be able to communicate without the important role of language. Students can express and actualize what is on their minds through language so that others can understand what the student is thinking. In establishing a relationship, language plays an important role, which can help students interact with others.

In reality, many in society consider students who talk a lot to be a reflection of smart children without paying attention to the language development that the students possess. The lack of a language filter gained from the environment causes a less desirable influence on the students themselves. This will be evident when they socialize and communicate with others. The language used depends on the environment where they frequently interact. For example, if students often gather with people who use polite language, the students will be shaped into polite speakers. Conversely, if students are in a less desirable language environment, the students' language will also be less desirable. The reason is that students can easily record what



they hear and see without considering the consequences (Sumaryanti, 2017).

In accordance with its function, language is a tool for communication used by a person in their social interaction or relationship with others. Language is a social tool. The use of language becomes effective when an individual communicates with others. Language development begins by imitating sounds or noises without meaning, followed by one-syllable words, two-syllable words, constructing simple sentences, and so on. By using language, children connect socially, reflecting their level of social behavior.

With language, all humans can know themselves, fellow humans, the surrounding nature, science, and moral or religious values. Elementary school age is a period of rapid development in the ability to recognize and master vocabulary. Children's language ability can certainly be influenced by their social environment. The social environment can increase a child's vocabulary. Children can learn good words as well as bad ones. If a child learns bad words, it will negatively affect their communication in the social environment. Therefore, it is a challenge for this research to contribute to addressing this environmental challenge.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative design with a social experiment model, where the data collection process directly intersects with the research object. The research subjects this time are students of MI Raudlatul Ilmiyah South Jakarta. This school was chosen because of the diverse environmental challenges, especially the school's location being situated between lower-middle-class and upper-middle-class communities, resulting in an overlap in communication that causes social class differences in society. This challenge is the basis for conducting this research at MI Raudlatul Ilmiyah South Jakarta. The research instruments to be used in this study are, first, questionnaires. Students will be instructed to fill out questionnaires related to language ability to measure the extent of their understanding of the theory of language ability. The second is observation, direct observation of students' social interaction while at school. The third is the interview process with teachers and students to measure and explore their experiences regarding the social process within the environment of MI Raudlatul Ilmiyah.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results conducted at MI Raudlatul Ilmiyah show that the teaching methods used by the teachers have evolved. Teachers do not only lecture in the classroom but also invite students to play role-playing games to develop their imagination. The observations conducted show that the teachers at MI Raudlatul Ilmiyah use everyday or informal language in their teaching. On some occasions, the teachers also use formal language, meaning they are able to use language appropriate to the class conditions. During the learning process, the language used by the students is quite good and polite. Observations were also carried out during recess when students sometimes communicate more freely and openly when playing with their friends. Observations were conducted at several points including the canteen, the field, and several classroom corners often used as gathering spots for students during recess. The results show that when observations were conducted in the canteen, students interacting with their friends and the canteen staff mostly used informal or everyday language such as *elu* (you), *gua* (I), *buset* (wow/damn), *emang ngapa* (what's wrong), *berapean* (how much), *enak ape kaga* (is it good or not), *beloman* (not yet), and others. Likewise, when observations were conducted on the field, the words used were almost the same as in the canteen. However, there was a slight difference when observations were conducted in the corners of the classrooms, which were often used as gathering spots by some boys. Two students, in their communication, occasionally uttered unpleasant language, such as *awas lu* (watch out), *bege* (stupid), and *njir* (a



mild expletive).

The results of interviews with class teachers found the fact that students from upper-middle-class environments and students from lower-middle-class environments mingle well in studying, playing, and other activities. There is no noticeable gap among students from the two different environments. This indicates that the social environment at MI Raudlatul Ilmiyah has successfully created a harmonious and humane environment without regard to background. Thus, MI Raudlatul Ilmiyah has successfully addressed the environmental challenges where the diverse language abilities of its students are able to unite students and dissolve the barriers among students from different backgrounds.

Furthermore, the results of the questionnaire filled out by students show that their language ability in socializing with the environment is very good. The indicator is that students understand when to use formal language and everyday language. This means students have sensitivity and can place themselves well when communicating with teachers, friends, and parents.

CONCLUSION

The results of the research conclude that MI Raudlatul Ilmiyah shows progress in teaching methods and language flexibility from both teachers and students. Students demonstrate high sociolinguistic adaptation ability (using language according to context), which correlates positively with the school's success in creating a harmonious and inclusive social environment, although there is a slight note regarding the use of less desirable language in certain informal contexts. This confirms that MI Raudlatul Ilmiyah is capable of overcoming environmental challenges in social interaction, especially in the use of language among its students who come from contrasting backgrounds.

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