OPTIMIZING GOLDEN PERIOD THROUGH EARLY DETECTION OF LANGUAGE SKILLS AND MULTILANGUAGE STIMULATION

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Abstract

The golden period is believed to be the most important period in the growth and development of children in which the brain is developed maximally. Early detection is needed to know the children's competence and with accurate stimulation, this period can be optimized. Multilanguage stimulation is regarded to be one of the best stimulations to optimize language skills during the golden period. This study aims to find out how early detection and multilanguage stimulation can optimize the golden period. This study was descriptive qualitative research with 9 toddlers aged 1-5 years old and their mothers as the sample. The data were collected with Pre-screening Developmental Questionnaire (PDQ) to get the data of toddlers' growth and development, and using a questionnaire to get the data of Multilanguage stimulation. From the study, it is found that most of the respondents (88.9%) have good development and only a respondent (11.1%) has a development defect. Whereas, in the multilanguage stimulation it is found that all respondents learned more than one language at the same time. However, most respondents only can use the second and third language little; they use it mix or switch with their mother tongue. They use code-mixing and code-switching with their mother tongue. It can be concluded that early detection is very important in stimulating children's competence. The children's language competence however is interfered with by several factors which one of which is accurate stimulation. Multilanguage stimulation will work well if there is a consistency of the surrounding in giving the stimulation.

Keywords: golden period, early detection, language competence, multilanguage stimulation

INTRODUCTION

Language development on children's growth is a very important role in the period of growth and development. Because language development supports other developments. Language cannot be separated from human life, so it can be said that language is a communication tool to convey thoughts, feelings and as a means of communicating with other people. The language skills that are expected to be achieved by early childhood in the aspect of language development are being able to use language to be understood both passively and actively used to communicate effectively.

Speech *delay* or speech delay in children is a condition in which a child's

speech ability does not develop at the expected level for his age. Children who have speech delays sometimes have stuttering or difficulty pronouncing words the right way. In addition, children who experience *speech delay* will have difficulty expressing themselves or understanding others.

A study conducted by *National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)*, stated that in the first three years of life, the human brain will develop and become adults (Tiyastuti, 2019) This period is the most crucial period for children to acquire speaking and language skills where this period is called *the golden age*. Speaking and language skills will develop well if the child is exposed to other people's voices or speech. If this period is allowed to pass without exposure to language and sounds, it will be more difficult for the child to learn and master.

Parents should care about their child's language and speech mastery so as not to hinder the child's communication process. This can be done if parents know the stages of child development and what abilities must be mastered by children at a certain age. The role of parents in stimulating children's language development is very important because it is from them that children learn the language and speak. For this reason, early detection of speech delays can be done by parents to determine the child's condition.

The first five years of a child's life is a critical period of development because at this time the basics of human personality are formed, sensory abilities, thinking, language skills, speaking, social behavior, and so on. To reduce developmental problems, prevention efforts need to be carried out as early as possible, namely by carrying out early detection.

Detection Early childhood development is the right start to find out whether the child's growth rate is in accordance with the phase or not. This is very important so that parents can take anticipatory actions and problem solving so as not to interfere with the next phase of development.

One of the early detection methods for development that is systematic, comprehensive, effective, and efficient is a screening method that can be done informally or formally. Doctors and health workers are the professions most likely to detect early developmental delays in children. In the early stages of screening can be done by nurses or trained medical personnel using a pre-screening questionnaire for parents, then determine which children need a formal evaluation (Blackman: 1999 in Damayanti, 2006). Frankenburg et al developed *prescreening developmental questionnaire* (PDQ) developed from screening *Denver developmental screening test* (DDST), (Frankenburg: 1981 in Dhamayanti: 2006). This PDQ form was translated and modified by the Indonesian Ministry of Health team in 1996 and is being revised in 2005, known as the Developmental Pre-screening Questionnaire (KPSP).

The developmental prescreening questionnaire is a questionnaire for preliminary screening of children aged 3 months to 6 years conducted by parents. There are 10 questions regarding children's developmental abilities, which must be filled out (or answered) by parents with yes and no answers, so it only takes 10-15 minutes (Dhamayanti: 2006).

Age is considered as one of the important factors in language acquisition. *The'critical period hypothesis'(CPH) is a particularly relevant case in point. This is the claim that there is, indeed, an optimal period for language acquisition, ending at puberty* (Lenneberg: 1967). This is also conveyed by Scovel: 200 in Abello: 2008 " *there is a popular belief that children as L2 learners are 'superior' to*

adults, that is, the younger the learner, the quicker the learning process and the better the outcomes.

Language acquisition at the age of 1-3 years occurs naturally. This means that a child unconsciously acquires language for communication. The process of acquiring language before the age of 5 is known as *the Golden period* (Hutauruk: 2015) This period shows the progress of language development from one stage to another. With the optimization referred to as *the golden period* or *critical period,* It is hoped that a child will be able to master more than one language at the same time.

Some research on *Golden Period* has been done which shows how important it is *golden period* this:

"Brain Mechanisms in Early Language Acquisition" by Patricia K. Kuh mentions that *"continuity in linguistic development from infants' earliest brain responses to phonetic stimuli is reflected in their language and pre-reading abilities in the second, third and fifth year of life, a finding with theoretical and clinical impact. There is evidence that early mastery of the phonetic units of language requires learning in a social context. Neuroscience on early language learning is beginning to reveal the multiple brain systems that underlie the human language faculty.*

Research conducted by Bertaria Sohnata Hutauruk *"Children First Language Acquisition At Age 1-3 Years Old In Balata"* explained that *"… parents' the role is important to develop the children language. The parents should build interaction with their child to know their child's language development.*

Meanwhile, the results of research conducted by Christian Abello-Contesse *"Age and the critical period hypothesis"* States that " *It indicates that age effects of all kinds depend largely on the actual opportunities for learning.*

None of these studies have discussed in detail optimization efforts *golden age* through early detection of language skills and Multilanguage stimulation. For this reason, the authors are interested in researching optimizing the golden age through the early detection of language skills and multilanguage stimulation.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative descriptive study. According to Sugiyono (2011), qualitative research methods are research methods based on post-positivist philosophy, used to examine the condition of natural objects, where the researcher is the key instrument, the sampling of data sources is carried out purposively and snowball, the collection technique is tri- angulation (combined), data analysis is inductive or qualitative, and qualitative research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization.

In this study, the researcher also acts as a respondent, where he will make observations on the research subjects directly and as an actor. To obtain accurate and detailed data, researchers conducted in-depth observations of research subjects that were carried out naturally and over a long period.

The sample of this study was a total population of 9 children under five from 7 mothers in Posyandu Cemara, Anugerah Housing, Ngijo Village, Gunung Pati District, Semarang. Samples were taken by total sampling.

Data were obtained by screening children under five to obtain data on language development in toddlers and a questionnaire was given to mothers of toddlers to obtain data on the use of multilingual stimulation in toddlers. Screening is done to detect whether there is a delay in language development or not in toddlers. For early detection, the Developmental Pre-Screening Questionnaire (KPSP) was used. Respondents were screened based on age

one by one by the researcher, documented, and obtained a total score. In addition to early detection data, other data is in the form of a questionnaire distributed to mothers of toddlers to find out their language development with Multilanguage stimulation for one month.
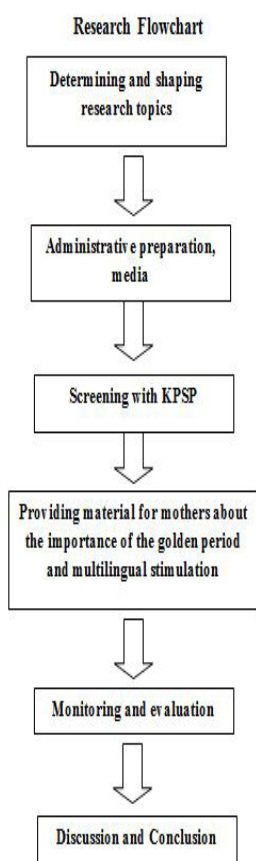
Research Flowchart

Figure 1. Research Flowchart

The study begins with the early detection of children's speech and language development using the Developmental Pre-Screening Questionnaire (KPSP). The early detection process was carried out on 9 children under five at the Cemara Posyandu, Perum Anugerah, Ngijo Village, Gunungpati District, Semarang City which was carried out on Sunday, December 13, 2020, after obtaining approval from the toddler's parents in the form of *informed consent*. In this Early Detection, the researcher interacts directly with the respondent accompanied by the respondent's parents.

The results of this Early Detection will be kept by the researcher and kept confidential.

The next stage is to provide material to mothers of toddlers regarding the importance of *the golden period* in the period of child development and how to stimulate child development, especially language. In stimulating multilingual language development, respondents will be given a stimulation pocketbook *multilanguage* as a guide for child stimulation.

The next stage of this research is to monitor and evaluate children's language development by adding children's vocabulary for 2 months.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Early Detection of Children's Language Development

Early detection of early childhood development is aimed at detecting developmental disorders in children. Detection using the Developmental Pre-Screening Questionnaire (KPSP) not only detects language development disorders in toddlers but also fine motor development, gross motor skills, and socialization and independence in toddlers. KPSP is adjusted to the age of the toddler based on the age group. For the test results in the form of scores with a range of 1-10 where the range of scores is divided into 3 categories, namely: Score 9-10: appropriate; Score 7-8: doubt; Score 6-1: deviation

Each item from the KPSP was asked directly to the toddler or the mother of the toddler and given a score. Each question item has a score of 1, so the total score for all items is 10.

From the results of the KPSP screening of 9 toddlers, the following data were obtained:

Table 1. The Results of the KPSP Screening

Respondents	Score	Interpretation
R1	9	In accordance
R2	10	**In accordance**
R3	10	**In accordance**
R4	10	**In accordance**
R5	9	**In accordance**
R6	10	**In accordance**
R7	9	**In accordance**
R8	10	**In accordance**
R9	5	Outlier

From the data above, it is obtained that 88.89% of the total respondents have appropriate development and only 11.11% of respondents have developmental deviations, where the deviation is not in language development, so it can be concluded that all respondents have language development that is in accordance with their age and can be optimized for development. According to Sukmara (2017) in Azzahroh (2021), that Stimulation, detection, and early intervention on child growth and development are very important to know and understand because, through early detection of toddler growth and development, abnormal growth and development deviations can be detected early so that appropriate early action can be taken to overcome these growth and development deviations.

Multilingual Stimulation
Stimulation of child development aims to help children achieve optimal levels of development according to their age. Harlock (2016) asserts that stimulation or stimulation greatly determines the development of the quality of human brain cells even from the time they are in the womb. The results of Hati's research (2016) found a relationship between the provision of stimulation and the development of children's language. The earlier the stimulation is given, the better the child's development will be. The more stimulation that is given, the knowledge of the child will be broad so that the child's development will be more optimal. Multilingual stimulation means stimulating children to learn more than one language at the same time. In this case, the role of parents, especially mothers who are the closest people to children, is to consistently use the language that is expected to be mastered by children.

From the results of a survey of children's language development in 9 toddlers for two (2) months, it was found that children were stimulated by 2 or 3 languages at the same time, namely Javanese, Indonesian and English. It is hoped that children can master all three languages well. It is based on the statement Morford and Mayberry (2000) in Hu (2016) that *"individuals exposed to language at earlier ages consistently outperform individuals exposed to language at earlier ages for first and second languages of both signed and spoken languages"*.

It is said that in Indonesia almost everyone is bilingual; regional languages and Indonesian (Nurjaleka, 2021). So this does not rule out the possibility that children can be stimulated to master multiple languages.

However, the results of a survey of 9 toddlers show that children tend to do *code-switching* and *code-mixing*.

Code-Switching and Code-Mixing
Code-switching is interpreted as the use of more than one language variation in a sentence or utterance. This was also conveyed by Meyerhoff (2011) in Silaban (2020) that *code-switching is, "In its most specific sense, the alternation between varieties, or codes, across sentences or clause boundaries and often used as a cover term. Temporary code-mixing* is to transfer linguistic elements from one

language to another and use them simultaneously.

In this study it was found that toddlers use *code-switching* and *code mix* . Some of the utterances that emerged included:

> *ok* …come on *jump-jump* .
> You *happy* ?
> I want to *banana* .
> Want to buy *ice cream*… two.

Code-switching and *code mix* occurs because to meet the needs of vocabulary that sometimes fails to appear in the child's brain. So to fulfill this, children will use equivalent words that appear in their brains. It was emphasized by Siroj (2020) that children who learn more than one language will tend to do *code-switching* and *code-mixing.*

on the other hand, Schwartz et al, 2009 in Kalisa (2014) stated *"when children are engaged in being bilinguals, they could not perform both languages well since they do not maximize the use of the first or the second language as* there was a delayed acquisition *due to the lack of frequency in using languages"*

CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that parents need to conduct early detection of children's language development before overstimulating their children. If there are deviations that are not in accordance with their language development, parents do not need to force their children to become bilingual or even multilingual. Early detection of children's language development is very necessary as an effort to find early solutions to the deviations that occur. The earlier the stimulation given, the better because the child has more time to master a language coupled with optimal brain abilities in children. *golden period. Code-switching* and

code-mixing may occur at the beginning of a child's learning in language acquisition due to the lack of use of two or more languages. With exposure to one, two, or more languages effectively and consistently will produce the best language skills of children.

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