



EFFECTIVE VERBAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES USED BY KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS IN THE CLASSROOM

Ika Sartika¹ Nurharsya Khaer Hanafie²

¹English Education Department, Graduate Program, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

²Civil Education and Law Department, Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

Correspondence email: ikasartika05019@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to analyze how kindergarten teachers use language verbal communication strategies in the teaching and learning process and to identify the characteristics of effective language in early childhood education. This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study method conducted at TK Nirwana. Data were collected through observations, interviews with teachers, and documentation. The findings reveal that effective language use includes simplicity, clarity, contextuality, affectivity, and responsiveness. Teachers who use simple sentences, clear instructions, and provide positive feedback can enhance children's understanding and confidence in communication. The findings emphasize that appropriate verbal communication strategies are essential in supporting early childhood education. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to pay more attention to their language use to create a more interactive learning environment that supports children's language development optimally.

Keywords: *Verbal communication strategies, kindergarten teachers*

Introduction

Language is the primary tool of communication and plays a crucial role in the learning process, especially in Early Childhood Education. At this stage, children experience rapid language development, where they begin to understand, process, and express their thoughts and feelings through words. Teachers, as facilitators of learning, have a significant responsibility in creating effective interactions through the use of appropriate language (Jones & Smith, 2021; Vygotsky, 1978; Anderson et al., 2020).

Teacher communication serves not only as a means of delivering material but also as an instrument for building social relationships, fostering children's self-confidence, and supporting their cognitive and emotional development (Garcia & Patel, 2023; Barus et al., 2023). Effective communication in learning, teachers must have a communication strategy. Effective language use by teachers has been shown to contribute to the creation of a positive and conducive learning environment (Fairclough, 1992; Brown & Lee, 2022).

Recognizing the significance of verbal communication strategies for students' success is essential. Effective verbal communication including clear instructions, constructive feedback, and encouraging words—not only helps students comprehend learning material but also fosters a sense of support and motivation in their educational journey (Liu, 2022; Simonds & Cooper, 2013). At the same time, non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions, body language, gestures, and eye contact, plays a critical role in conveying enthusiasm, empathy, and confidence—elements that are vital to maintaining engagement and establishing a positive classroom atmosphere (Wang & Loewen, 2015; Ayuningsih, et al., 2022).

Furthermore, several studies have shown a strong correlation between communication styles and student motivation. Teachers who exhibit strong communication skills—verbal can establish a strong classroom presence and positively influence learners' participation and performance (Agricola et al., 2019; Duta et al., 2015; Xie & Derakhshan, 2021). In fact, student motivation is highly shaped by the nature of teacher–student interactions. Interactive communication, such as asking questions, giving feedback, and initiating dialogue, is shown to enhance students' critical thinking and confidence (Bezanilla et al., 2019; Amerstorfer & Von Münster-Kistner, 2021; Kennedy, 2015).

Moreover, the role of non-verbal communication is not merely complementary—it is foundational. Research shows that deictic gestures, facial expressions, posture, and eye contact significantly impact student attention and comprehension (Beege et al., 2020; Davis, 2018). These cues help clarify messages, convey psychological closeness, and create an emotionally secure learning environment (Jakonen & Evnitskaya, 2020; Matsumoto, 2018). In early childhood settings, such multimodal communication enhances engagement and helps children build oral communicative competence (Van Der Veen et al., 2017).

However, in practice, not all teachers fully understand how to construct optimal communication for young learners. Some still use overly complex sentences or lack expressive delivery, making it difficult for children to engage effectively in the learning process (Anderson et al., 2020; Sutisna & Rohana, 2023). Research by Hoerudin (2024) found that the speaking abilities of 4–5-year-old children were significantly enhanced in classrooms where teachers used supportive and engaging communication. Similarly, Yuliani (2024) emphasized the teacher's role in developing children's vocabulary through strategic communicative interactions.

This study aims to analyze how kindergarten teachers use language verbal communication strategies in teaching and learning activities and to identify the characteristics of effective verbal communication in early childhood education. It also seeks to explore the benefits experienced by both teachers and students through these communication strategies. By understanding effective communication patterns, it is expected that teachers will be able

to improve their language skills and create more enjoyable, interactive, and supportive learning environments that enhance children's motivation and overall development (Rahmawati, 2022; Iskandar et al., 2023; Siregar, 2023; Wahyuni, 2018; Lin et al., 2016).

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach to gain in-depth insights into the verbal communication strategies employed by kindergarten teachers. This methodology allows for a rich and contextualized understanding of language use in authentic classroom settings.

Research Location and participants were conducted at TK Nirwana, selected for its diversity in teaching approaches and educator backgrounds. Participants included kindergarten teachers and their students, who were directly involved in classroom interactions.

Data collection techniques were collected through three main techniques: Observation, Real-time documentation of verbal and non-verbal interactions during classroom activities. Interviews, Semi-structured interviews with teachers to explore their perspectives on effective communication. And also, Documentation and Audio-Visual Recording: Collection of supplementary materials to support discourse analysis.

Data analysis used a thematic analysis based on Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) was used, involving the following steps, Data Reduction: Selecting, simplifying, and coding data from observations and interviews, and Data Display: Organizing data into narrative and visual formats for interpretation.

Results and Discussion

Results

Based on direct observations and interviews conducted at TK Nirwana, the collected data were analyzed using discourse analysis techniques to identify patterns and characteristics of effective language use by kindergarten teachers.

1. Observations

Table 1. Classroom observation on teachers' effective language use

No	Strategy Observed	Description	Example from Observation	Impact on Students
1	Use of Teaching Aids	Teachers used games and visual aids to introduce learning activities, supporting understanding through concrete, visual representations.	Block-stacking game: <i>"Today we are going to stack blocks... stacking means placing one block on top of another like this..."</i>	Helped students grasp abstract concepts more easily through clear examples.

2	Clear Verbal Instructions	Short and direct instructions were more effective than complex or lengthy sentences.	Instead of <i>"Don't run or you might fall"</i> , teacher said <i>"Play slowly."</i> Or used <i>"Put it away for a while"</i> to cue cleanup time.	Improved student focus and reduced misunderstanding.
3	Student-Teacher Agreements	Teachers involved students in setting classroom rules to foster responsibility and discipline.	<i>"Can we listen to the teacher at school?" / "If not, the punishment is extra tasks."</i>	Students became more aware of expectations and demonstrated cooperative behavior.
4	Praise and Positive Feedback	Teachers consistently acknowledged students' efforts and provided encouraging comments.	After coloring: <i>"Wow, I really love your picture!"</i> , <i>"It's beautiful,"</i> <i>"That's awesome!"</i>	Boosted children's confidence and motivation to participate in learning activities.

Classroom observations revealed that teachers at TK Nirwana employed effective verbal communication strategies to deliver instructions prior to beginning learning activities. The following are some of the key findings:

a. Use of Teaching Aids

Teachers frequently initiated lessons through games or guessing challenges involving words or images, supported by teaching aids. For example, during a block-stacking game, the teacher used clear and simple language: *"Today we are going to stack blocks. Who wants to stack blocks? Stacking means placing one block on top of another like this, until it gets as tall as possible."* Such simple instructions and explanations make it easier for children to understand the task.

b. Clear Verbal Instructions

Short and clear sentences were found to be more effective than long or complex ones. For instance, instead of saying *"Don't run around or you might fall,"* it was more effective to say *"Play slowly."* Another example was when instructing students to clean up after playtime; rather than saying *"Put everything away when you're done playing,"* the teacher simply said *"Put it away for a while."* The phrase *"put it away"* became a memorable cue for children to tidy up after playing.

c. Student-Teacher Agreements

Before starting lessons, teachers encouraged students to make behavioral agreements as a way of fostering responsibility and rule-following. Teachers often asked, *"When we're at school, can we listen to the teacher?"* followed by, *"If someone doesn't listen to the teacher, the punishment is extra work."* Children would usually respond enthusiastically with, *"Yes, teacher!"* Teachers also reinforced acceptable behavior by asking questions like, *"Is it okay to throw toys around?"* or *"Can we hit our friends?"* These questions were always followed by an explanation, helping children understand why certain actions were prohibited.

d. Providing Praise and Positive Feedback

Teachers consistently acknowledged students' efforts and provided encouraging feedback. For example, when a student completed a coloring task, the teacher would respond with phrases such as, *"Wow, I really love your picture," "It's so beautiful,"* or *"That's awesome!"* These affirmations helped build the children's confidence and independence in showcasing their work.

2. Interviews

Table 2. Interviews on effective verbal communication strategies used by kindergarten teachers

No	Theme	Description	Example / Teacher Quote	Benefits Observed
1	Simple and Clear Language	Use of simple vocabulary to ensure children's understanding; rephrasing unfamiliar words with concrete examples.	"We use techniques involving the selection of simple vocabulary... put the block here, then another one on top..." (Interview, Feb 25, 2025)	Children better understand instructions and learning activities.
2	Contextual Language	Use of language that aligns with children's daily environment and experiences; avoiding abstract or unfamiliar terms.	"We might provide words that are more familiar— words they use in daily life." (Interview, Feb 25, 2025)	Increases comprehension; language feels familiar and relatable for students.
3	Affective Language	Use of emotionally engaging communication; integrating games and positive tones; building mutual respect between teacher and students.	"If children are given clear and logical explanations, they understand and follow instructions." (Interview, Feb 25, 2025)	Builds emotional connection, supports empathy, and strengthens teacher-student relationships.
4	Responsive Language	Providing praise and consistent feedback to student actions and questions; encouraging verbal interaction.	"Children become more confident and aren't afraid to ask questions." (Interview, Feb 25, 2025)	Boosts student confidence, encourages active participation, and fosters open communication.
5	Overall Benefits of	Teacher reflections on benefits of using effective language	—	Improved comprehension, increased confidence,

	Effective Language	strategies in the classroom.		enhanced motivation, better classroom behavior, and stronger social skills.
--	--------------------	------------------------------	--	---

Interviews with teachers revealed that the use of effective language plays a significant role in supporting the learning process in kindergarten classrooms. Several important themes emerged from the interview data, as described below:

a. Simple and Clear Language

During the interview, teacher NP emphasized the importance of using simple vocabulary. As she explained, *“We use techniques involving the selection of simple vocabulary”* (Interview, February 25, 2025). She noted that choosing simple words is essential because not all terms used by teachers are readily understood by students—especially those that are rarely or never heard in their everyday environment. For example, she explained:

“Zaky, please arrange the blocks like this. If he doesn’t yet understand what ‘arrange’ means, I say: put the block here, then place another one on top, and another one above that, and so on.” (Interview, February 25, 2025)

This interview demonstrates that using simple and clear language involves careful vocabulary selection. The teacher also highlighted the importance of re-explaining instructions to ensure that students truly understand the activity being carried out.

b. Contextual Language

The use of familiar, everyday language was also noted as crucial during the interview. Avoiding complex or unfamiliar terms in instructions helps children understand more easily. Teacher NP stated:

“We might provide words that are more familiar—words they use in daily life.” (Interview, February 25, 2025)

This aligns with the view of Mahadi and Ujang (2021), who argue that teachers must understand students’ backgrounds, including their environment and culture, in order to facilitate successful communication during learning. This finding indicates that the use of contextual language—language that reflects the children’s surroundings—enhances comprehension and supports more meaningful interactions.

c. Affective Language

The interviews also revealed that teachers often incorporated games and interactive activities to build positive emotional connections with students. These moments were accompanied by encouraging and responsive language. For instance, when students successfully completed a task, teachers provided verbal affirmations and positive feedback. This emotional engagement helps students understand classroom roles—respecting the teacher and recognizing their own responsibilities. As one teacher expressed, using emotionally resonant and logical language makes it easier for children to understand and follow instructions.

“When playing games, if children are given clear and logical explanations, they understand and follow instructions.” (Interview, February 25, 2025)

This highlights how emotionally resonant and comprehensible communication strengthens the teacher-student relationship. Affective language allows children to feel respected and secure, which in turn supports their willingness to follow instructions. Building emotional bonds with students not only increases their engagement but also supports the development of communication skills and empathy. As children grow more confident, they become more expressive and better at understanding others' emotions.

d. Responsive Language

Another significant strategy identified was the use of responsive language—such as praise and direct feedback to students' questions or actions. According to the teacher:

“Children can become more confident, and they won't be afraid to ask their teacher questions.” (Interview, February 25, 2025)

The findings suggest that positive reinforcement, including verbal praise and acknowledgment, plays a pivotal role in boosting children's self-confidence. When teachers respond consistently to students' contributions or questions, it fosters a sense of being valued and heard. As a result, children feel more comfortable expressing themselves and are more likely to engage in positive behaviors.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm the crucial role of teachers' verbal communication strategies in shaping effectiveness and engaging learning experiences for children. Consistent with the theoretical Vygotsky explains that children are able to change their perspective on situations depending on their past experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). More recent scholars the data demonstrate that teacher talk functions not only as a medium for instructional delivery but also as a tool for building emotional connections, fostering social interaction, and enhancing cognitive engagement (Papadopoulos, 2024).

One of the most prominent strategies found was the consistent use of simple and clear language. Teachers at TK Nirwana often employed short. Direct sentences and demonstrated instructions through example, enable children to grasp concepts more easily. Clarity and simplicity of verbal communication play a critical role in minimizing misunderstanding and maximizing students' focus in young children (Swari et al., 2020).

In addition, the implication of contextual language. which involves using familiar vocabulary drawn from the children's daily environments, proved to be effective in enhancing comprehension. This approach aligns with Mahadi and Ujang (2021), who emphasized that language should be tailored to the learners' sociocultural backgrounds to foster meaningful communication and engagement. By avoiding abstract terminology and choosing contextually grounded expressions, teachers made learning more relatable and accessible.

Furthermore, responsive language—teachers’ practice of providing immediate feedback and acknowledging students’ efforts enhanced interaction and built learners’ confidence. Responsive communication not only scaffolds language development but also strengthens students’ sense of being heard and respected (Jakonen, 2016). In this study, praise such as “Good job!” or “I love your picture!” fostered an affirming atmosphere that encouraged verbal expression and curiosity among students.

Another noteworthy finding was the emphasis on student-teacher agreements, where teachers involved students in establishing classroom rules through guided questions. This participatory approach mirrors (Xie & Derakhshan, 2021) findings that teacher-student interaction significantly affects motivation and behavior. Involving students in behavioral expectations not only clarified classroom norms but also promoted accountability and cooperation.

Taken together, these findings underscore that effective verbal communication in early childhood classrooms must be multidimensional combining clarity, contextual relevance, emotional support, and responsive interaction. These strategies do not merely deliver content; they actively construct a communicative environment that nurtures cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional growth (Fairclough, 1992; Wang & Loewen, 2015; Brown & Lee, 2022). As previous studies have suggested (Hoerudin, 2024; Yuliani, 2024), when communication is intentional and child-centered, students become more confident, motivated, and capable of expressing themselves, laying a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Conclusion

This study at TK Nirwana emphasizes the significance of verbal communication strategies in early childhood education. Observations and interviews reveal that the most effective communication approach employed by teachers involves using language that is easily understood by students. Clear and simple language is essential to support the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Instructions are straightforward and comprehensible, students can follow them more easily, thereby minimizing the risk of miscommunication between teachers and students. To ensure effective communication, teachers should avoid ambiguous or unclear instructions and instead use language that aligns with the students’ everyday speech, facilitating better understanding. The benefits of employing effective language include enhanced comprehension, increased student confidence, and active participation in the learning process.

This study has limitations due to its small sample size, making the results less generalizable. Data collection methods like classroom observations and teacher interviews may introduce subjectivity. Future research should involve larger and more diverse samples across various educational settings to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Longitudinal studies can provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of communication strategies on student engagement and learning outcomes. Expanding the use of surveys and

interviews may also offer a more comprehensive understanding of student perceptions regarding the effectiveness of various communication methods.

References

- Anderson, J., Brown, K., & Lee, P. (2020). *Effective Communication Strategies in Early Childhood Education*.
- Barus, R., Purba, F. A., Sijabat, N., & Puteri, A. (2023). Keterampilan Guru PAUD dalam Mengulas Teks: Menyemai Bakat Bahasa Indonesia pada Anak Usia Dini. *Jurnal Generasi Ilmiah*, 1(11).
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Polity Press.
- Garcia, M., & Patel, S. (2023). *Child-Centered Language Approaches in Early Education*. Springer.
- Hoerudin, C. W. (2024). Analisis Kemampuan Berbicara Bahasa Indonesia Anak Usia 4-5 Tahun di PAUD. *Jurnal Plamboyon Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 1(2024): Februari.
- Jakonen, T. (2016). Managing multiple normativities in classroom interaction: Student responses to teacher reproaches for inappropriate language choice in a bilingual classroom. *Linguistics and Education*, 33, 14-27. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2015.11.003>
- Jones, D., & Smith, R. (2021). *The Role of Language in Early Childhood Development*. Oxford University Press.
- Mahadi, U. (2021). Komunikasi Pendidikan (Urgensi Komunikasi Efektif dalam Proses Pembelajaran). *JOPPAS: Journal of Public Policy and Administration Silampari*, 2(2), 80–90. <https://doi.org/10.31539/joppa.v2i2.2385>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. SAGE Publications.
- Papadopoulos, I. (2024). LITERACY OF COMMUNICATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: INVESTIGATING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN GREECE. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 11, 26-51. <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejes.v11i7.5375>
- Pakpahan, T. R. S., Fadila, J., & Ginting, H. S. G. B. (2024). Pentingnya Komunikasi Efektif dalam Pendidikan bagi Anak Usia Dini. *Ta'rim: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Anak Usia Dini*, 5(3), 37-44
- Routledge. Brown, K., & Lee, P. (2022). *Discourse Analysis in Educational Settings: A Practical Guide*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sarnoto, A. Z. (2022). Komunikasi Efektif pada 'Anak Usia Dini dalam Keluarga Menurut Al-Qur'an. *Jurnal Obsesi : Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 6(3), 2359–2369
- Swari, S. G., Tantra, D. K., & Pratiwi, N. P. A. (2020). Classroom communication in early childhood education. *Journal of Education Research and Evaluation*, 4(4), 328-335.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjf9vz4>
- Xie, F., & Derakhshan, A. (2021). A conceptual review of positive teacher interpersonal communication behaviors in the instructional context. *Frontiers in psychology*, 12, 708490.

Yuliani, S. M. (2024). Peran Guru dalam Mengembangkan Kosakata Bahasa Anak Usia Dini.
RGAP (Research of Early Childhood and Parenting), 3(2024): November.