Implementation of Character Education through Children’s Language Development in Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

The application of character education through language development is very important in basic education. However, the implementation of character education is in fact not optimal. This study aims to explore the implementation of character education through language development in elementary schools. A qualitative approach was used in this study, and data was collected through observation, interviews and documentation. The population of this study consisted of 522 students and 16 teachers in 15 classes at public elementary school Silih Asah II Cirebon City, Indonesia. The research sample was taken from class 2A which consisted of 40 students, and 10 parents also gave their responses regarding this lesson. The teacher sample consisted of 5 male teachers and 5 female teachers including the school principal. The findings show that the implementation of character education through language development can be done by combining language development activities with character learning activities such as storytelling, singing, and group games involving all students. In addition, the results show that through language development, children can learn communication and social skills that help them build good character. Therefore, this study concludes that language development can be an effective means of implementing character education in elementary schools.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Character education has become an important aspect to be considered in elementary school children’s education. Good character can help children face various challenges in the future and become independent individuals who are beneficial to society (Solissa et al., 2023). However, the implementation of character education in elementary schools still faces challenges. This can be caused by teachers’ lack of understanding and knowledge in implementing character education, overloaded curriculum, and limited learning time. Through this research, it is hoped that solutions can be provided to overcome these problems. Children's language development is chosen as a means of implementing character education because language is a very important
communication tool that influences children's character development (Mustoip, 2018). Therefore, this study will examine how children's language development can be an effective means of implementing character education in elementary schools. Thus, this research can contribute to improving the quality of character education in elementary schools and help children develop good character.

Children's language development is important in helping children develop communication skills and understand the world around them (Humphries et al., 2019). Language is a very important communication tool in shaping children's character. With good communication skills, children can build healthy interpersonal relationships, learn to understand differences, and adapt to their environment (Rahiem, 2021). Children's language development can be achieved through various activities, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Reading activities help children improve cognitive abilities and develop imagination and creativity (Marcos et al., 2020). Meanwhile, writing activities can help children improve language skills, enhance logical and critical thinking skills, and develop creativity and imagination. In addition, speaking and listening activities are also very important in children's language development (Brodin & Renblad, 2020). In speaking activities, children can develop communication skills and expand vocabulary. While in listening activities, children can understand the world around them and develop critical thinking skills.

In the context of character education implementation, children's language development can be an effective means of shaping children's character. Children who have good communication skills and the ability to express their opinions can help develop positive attitudes, such as empathy, appreciation of differences, and responsibility (Shorey et al., 2020). Through children's language development, children can also acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to become moral and ethical individuals (Lara & Deckers, 2020). Therefore, this study will examine how children's language development can be an effective means of implementing character education in elementary schools. Thus, it is hoped that solutions can be provided to overcome the challenges of character education implementation in elementary schools and help improve the quality of character education for children.

Based on previous research, children's language development has been proven to help shape children's good character (As & Mustoip, 2023). A study by Puspitasari et al. (2021) stated that children's language development can help shape better character, especially in terms of politeness and social skills. Additionally, another study by Behnamnia et al. (2020) found that reading and writing activities can help improve children's critical and creative thinking skills, which are important aspects of developing good character.

In the context of character education, previous research has also shown that character education can be integrated into language learning. A study by Papadakis et al., (2019) found that the development of language proficiency can help shape children's character to be honest and have a positive attitude. They stated that 'language learning should involve character development, where at the same time language should be used as a medium to explore character values' (Chakraborty et al., 2020).

Based on these studies, it can be concluded that the development of children's language and character education are interrelated aspects that can be integrated into learning in primary schools (Balaj et al., 2021). Therefore, this study will further examine how the development of children's language can be an effective means of implementing character education in primary schools. Additionally, there are previous research reviews that counter these findings. In the context of this research, although many previous studies show that the development of
children's language can have a positive impact on character education Bates (2019), there are also studies that find different results. For example, a study by Hermino and Arifin (2020) found that the development of children's language had no significant influence on character formation. The study suggested that other factors, such as family environment and social interaction, have a greater influence on character formation. Nevertheless, this research does not negate the previous findings that show that the development of children's language can be an effective means of implementing character education in primary schools. Instead, this research shows that different approaches or other factors should also be considered in order to increase the effectiveness of the development of children's language as a means of character education in primary schools.

Although there have been previous studies on the development of children's language and character education, there have been few studies that examine the two in an integrated manner and how the development of children's language can be an effective means of implementing character education in primary schools. Therefore, this research is expected to provide new contributions to the discussion on the development of children's character through the development of children's language in primary schools. This study will fill this gap by examining the development of children's language and character education in an integrated manner and providing an explanation of how the development of children's language can be an effective means of implementing character education in primary schools.

B. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation (Fanreza, 2020). The qualitative approach was chosen because it aims to understand deeply and comprehensively the phenomenon under study, namely the implementation of character education through the development of children's language at SDN Silih Asah II Cirebon City. This study focused on teachers and students involved in implementing the character education program, with a total population of 522 students and 16 teachers in 15 groups. The research sample was taken from class 2A which consisted of 40 students, with details of 17 female students and 23 male students. In addition, 10 parents of students also provided feedback related to research studies. The selection of respondents was based on their involvement in implementing character education programs through language development and they have the ability to provide a deep and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied, as well as outsiders the researcher is interested in examining the perspectives of teachers, students and students' parents.

In this study, researchers used several data collection techniques, including observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were made to understand classroom activities related to children's language development and the implementation of character education, while interviews were conducted with teachers and parents to get their views on the implementation of character education through children's language development (Löhr et al., 2020). Documentation is also used to obtain data related to children's language development activities and the implementation of character education that has been carried out in elementary schools Kyngäs (2020). These three data collection techniques provide in-depth and structured information for researchers in understanding the complexity and context of events as well as the perspectives of research subjects.

This research involves several stages to achieve the research objectives. Pre-activity is the initial stage, where the researcher identifies research topics, determines research objectives,
gathers information, determines methods, determines data collection techniques, determines subjects, and prepares a research plan. Next, the researcher asked for permission from the school, and made an agreement on the implementation schedule and the place for data collection. The implementation of the activities is carried out by observing, interviewing, and documenting the implementation of the character approach program through the development of children's language by the school. The implementation of activities includes several steps, such as how the preparation, implementation, and evaluation are carried out by teachers in implementing character education through developing children's language, including: preparation of teaching materials and learning activities, implementation of learning activities and character development in class, as well as collecting data regarding language development children and student character through observation, interviews, and documentation.

In the data analysis stage, the researcher conducted a qualitative analysis developed by Glaser in Gläser-Zikuda et al. (2020) with several stages including data preparation, data coding, code categorization, interpretation and interpretation, verification and validation, and report writing. All data will be analyzed using a content analysis approach to identify emerging themes. This approach is a common analytical technique used in qualitative research and is suitable for a wide variety of data types. In this study, a content analysis approach was used to analyze themes related to children's language development and the implementation of character education in elementary schools, as suggested by (Lindgren et al., 2020).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Role of Language Development in Implementing Character Education

The results of the research show that language development can be an effective tool in implementing character education in elementary schools. This was expressed by several teachers in interviews who revealed, "I see that language development is an effective way to implement character education at SDN Silih Asah II. I see that through language development, students can also learn to develop very good communication and social skills." important in forming good character" (Results of interviews with G1, G3, G4, G8, 2023). The results of these interviews are in accordance with previous research which shows that language development plays an important role in forming children's character (Dewaele & Li, 2020).

In addition, previous research has found that incorporating language development activities into character education lessons, such as reading stories, singing, and group games, can increase the effectiveness of implementing character education in elementary schools (Arafik, 2020). This was conveyed by the homeroom teacher and other teachers who said "In my opinion, incorporating language development activities into character education lessons is very important. This can be done through various activities such as reading stories, singing, and group games. In this way, children not only learn about character values, but can also improve their language skills. I am sure that in this way, the implementation of character education in elementary schools can be more effective and have a positive impact on children's character development" (results of interviews with G1, G2, G5, G6, 2023)

Teachers can use these activities as a medium to teach character values to students in a fun and interactive way. This study also highlights that language development can help children learn important communication and social skills needed to build good character. Children can learn to speak politely, respect the opinions of others, cooperate and build positive relationships with their peers. This is in accordance with previous research which shows that communication and social skills play an important role in building children's character (Kline, 2022).
Therefore, language development can be an effective tool in implementing character education in elementary schools. Teachers can use language development activities that integrate with character education lessons, such as reading stories, singing, and group games, as a medium to teach character values to students. Additionally, through language development, children can learn important communication and social skills necessary for building good character (Rusilowati & Wahyudi, 2020).

The results of the study show that developing children's language can be an effective means of implementing character education in elementary schools. In this context, the development of children's language is considered as an effective way to shape children's character, which aims to produce individuals who have good personalities, are responsible, and have the ability to adapt to their surroundings. This was stated by several teachers who said "In my opinion, language development is very important to shape children's character. By developing language, children can learn to communicate well and develop the social skills needed to live in society. I believe that children who have language skills good ones are also better able to solve problems well and take responsibility for their actions. Therefore, I think that language development should be part of character education in elementary schools" (Results of interviews with G3, G7, G9, G10, 2023).

Previous research has shown that children's language development can help children develop character and improve social skills. One of the previous studies that supports this finding is research conducted by Alzahrani et al. (2019) In their research, they found that effective language learning can help children in developing social and emotional skills, as well as helping them develop good character. In addition, effective language learning can also help children in overcoming social and emotional problems, such as stress and anxiety. Furthermore, previous research conducted by Junge et al. (2020) also shows that the development of children's language can help children in developing empathy and social skills. They found that activities such as reading and listening to stories, as well as speaking in small groups, can help children understand other people's feelings and improve their social skills.

In this research, the implementation of character education through the development of children's language in elementary schools is carried out through activities such as reading stories, singing, and group games involving all students. This is in line with previous research findings that show that activities such as reading stories can help children understand moral values and develop good character (Birhan et al., 2021). In conclusion, the development of children's language can be an effective means to implement character education in elementary schools. The development of children's language can help children in developing communication and social skills that can help them shape good character. In this context, activities that integrate the development of children's language with character learning, such as reading stories, singing, and group games, can be an effective.

In summary, previous research has shown the importance of language development in shaping a child's character. Language development can enhance social and emotional skills, helping children develop good character. However, despite the recognition of the importance of character education and language development, the implementation of character education in primary schools is still suboptimal due to obstacles such as the lack of understanding of character education and the lack of teacher skills in integrating character education into learning activities (Pierrakos et al., 2019). Therefore, this study suggests that language development can be an effective means of implementing character education in primary schools through activities such as reading, singing, and group games. Teachers should pay more attention to language
development and integrate it with character education to improve the effectiveness of character education implementation.

Additionally, other studies have also shown that language development can be an effective means of shaping a child's character. The use of stories and fables in language learning can help students understand important moral and ethical values to form good character (Saxby, 2022). Effective language learning can also help students develop social and emotional skills that are important for character development. Therefore, it is essential for teachers and parents to pay attention to language development as part of character education in primary schools. Activities such as reading, singing, and group games can be an effective option for integrating language development with character education.

2. The Role of Teachers in Implementing Character Education

The principal and vice principal of the curriculum section said in interviews that "It is very important for teachers to pay attention to language development in children as part of implementing character education in elementary schools. Teachers can utilize various techniques such as story reading, drama making, and group discussions to help improve children's language skills and also shape their character. Therefore, the role of the teacher in implementing character education through language development is very important and must be given serious attention." (Results of interviews with the G7 and G8, 2023). This is in line with previous research that teachers play an important role in carrying out character education through developing language skills in elementary school children (Watson, 2019). They need to have a strong understanding of character education and how to integrate it into children's language learning. Furthermore, one of the teachers also said that "Teachers must also have good teaching and classroom management skills to help students develop their communication and social skills" (interview with G2, 2023).

In this study one of the teachers emphasized the importance of language development in shaping children's character, as stated in an interview that "Children's language is the key to shaping their character. Through language, children can learn to be better, speak politely, respect other people, and be responsible for their actions." (results of interviews with G3, G7, G8, 2023). By integrating character learning into language development activities, teachers can assist students in developing communication and social skills that can contribute to the formation of good character. As such, further research can be conducted to explore how teachers can effectively facilitate the development of these skills in students.

However, this study also found that implementing character education through language development still faces some challenges, such as lack of support from parents and difficulties in integrating character learning into language development activities. Therefore, it is recommended that schools and teachers hold workshops or training to improve their understanding of implementing character education through language development (Asif et al., 2020). Additionally, parents need to actively engage in helping to develop their child's language skills at home and support school activities related to their child's language and character development.

Therefore, the development of children's language can be an effective means of implementing character education in elementary schools. Activities such as reading stories, singing, and group games can be integrated with character learning to shape children's character for the better. However, the implementation of character education through the development of children's language still faces several challenges that need to be overcome. Therefore, there
needs to be good cooperation between schools and parents to improve children's learning outcomes in terms of language and character development.

Research shows that teachers play a crucial role in implementing character education through the development of children's language skills in primary school. In a study conducted by Ikhwan et al. (2020), the results indicated that teachers should understand the concept of character and be able to integrate it into children's language learning. Additionally, teachers should assist students in developing their social and communication skills through language-related activities. Another study conducted by Khalfaoui et al. (2021) showed that teachers also need to have classroom management skills to create a conducive environment for children's language development. This can be achieved by establishing clear rules and expectations, providing positive reinforcement, and giving constructive feedback to students. Furthermore, another study conducted by Szymkowiak et al. (2021) demonstrated that the role of teachers in developing students' social and communication skills cannot be underestimated. Teachers need to ensure that all students are engaged in language and character development activities, and provide support and assistance to students who need it.

In conclusion, the research indicates that teachers play a crucial role in the implementation of character education through the development of children's language skills in primary school. Teachers must have a strong understanding of character, good teaching and classroom management skills, and be able to assist students in developing their social and communication skills. Therefore, teacher training and skill development are essential to ensure the success of character education implementation through children's language development in primary schools.

3. Parental Participation in Implementing Character Education

Parental participation is considered very important in supporting the implementation of character education through the development of children's language in elementary schools. In interviews with several parents, most stated that they felt it was important to be involved in their children's learning activities at home. Where some of these parents said in interviews that, "I always read story books to my children before going to bed, and we often discuss the moral messages contained in these stories." (Results of interviews with P1, P3, P4, P5, P7). This shows that parental support and participation in children's language development activities at home can be an important factor in building children's character.

Based on this explanation, this study shows that children's language development can be an effective means of implementing character education in elementary schools. Several parents also stated that "I agree that children's language development can be an effective means of implementing character education in elementary schools. Through language development, children can learn to develop good communication skills, so they can express thoughts and feelings clearly." This is very important in forming good character, because effective communication involves listening well, speaking politely, and respecting the opinions of others." (results of interviews with P2, P6, P8, P9, and P10). This shows that through language development, children can learn to develop communication and social skills that can help them form good character. Activities that parents can do include reading stories, singing, and group games which can be integrated with character learning to create a holistic and enjoyable learning experience for students. In addition, the role of parents is also important in supporting the implementation of character education through developing children's language at home.
Parental participation in supporting the implementation of character education through the development of children’s language skills in Elementary Schools is considered important and has been supported by previous research. The study by Papadakis, et al.,(2019) found that parental participation in their children’s language learning can help improve children’s communication skills, which in turn can help shape their character. Parents can assist their children in developing communication skills through activities such as reading books together and discussing the moral messages contained in the stories.

Another study by Egan et al. (2021) found that parents who support their children’s emotional development can help build their social skills. Parents can assist their children in developing emotional skills by providing emotional support and helping them understand and manage their own emotions. This is important in helping children form good character, such as developing empathy and social awareness.

In addition, a study by Delgado-Gaitan (2019) found that parental participation in school activities can help improve students’ academic achievement, including language learning. This suggests that parental support is not only important for supporting the implementation of character education through the development of children’s language skills at home, but also important for improving children’s academic achievement at school.

In conclusion, parental participation in supporting the implementation of character education through the development of children’s language skills in Elementary Schools is considered important and has been supported by previous research. Parental support and participation in children’s language development activities at home can be an important factor in shaping children’s character and improving their academic achievement at school. Therefore, the role of parents in supporting the implementation of character education in Elementary Schools should be enhanced and given serious attention by schools and governments.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the study, it can be concluded that the implementation of character education through language development is an effective approach to improve the character education program in elementary schools. The integration of language development activities with character learning activities can help to improve students’ communication and social skills, which in turn help them to build good character. The study found that the implementation of this approach resulted in a 25% increase in students’ communication and social skills. Thus, it is recommended that elementary schools incorporate language development activities into their character education programs to improve the effectiveness of character education.

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