

Exploring the Communication Forms of 4-6 Years Old Children at Rumah Pelangi Sant Egidio

Ni Putu Della Prasanthi Dewi¹, Ni Luh Nyoman Seri Malini², I Wayan Arka³
^{1,2,3}Universitas Udayana

E-mail: dellaprasanthii@yahoo.com¹, seri.malini@unud.ac.id², wayan_arka@unud.ac.id³

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***Abstract:** This study explores how 4-6-year-old children at Rumah Pelangi Sant Egidio use verbal, nonverbal, and multimodal communication to express themselves and engage with their environment. Using qualitative methods like observation and interviews, the research applies Fleming's VARK model and Bruner's theories on active learning. At Rumah Pelangi Sant Egidio, communication includes verbal language, gestures, and body language, each enhancing understanding and interaction. Visual aids, storytelling, and multimodal approaches, integrating various sensory channels, are crucial for young learners. These methods foster language development, social skills, and cognitive growth. Children naturally use diverse communication styles, including activities like puzzle-solving and interactive technology, to develop teamwork, critical thinking, and creativity. By integrating these communication forms, educators can create effective and inclusive learning environments.*

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a fundamental aspect of human interaction, encompassing a wide array of methods used to convey information, thoughts, and emotions. These methods can be broadly categorized into verbal and nonverbal forms. Verbal communication includes spoken and written words, such as conversations, speeches, and written documents. Nonverbal communication, on the other hand, involves body language, facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice, adding layers of meaning and context to verbal messages. Additionally, written communication relies on text-based mediums like emails, reports, and letters, while visual communication uses images, graphs, and presentations. Digital communication leverages electronic devices for exchanges like emails, instant messaging, and video calls. The selection of communication forms depends on the context, audience, and nature of the information being shared, making it essential to understand and master different communication styles for effective interpersonal relationships, successful teamwork, and overall social engagement.

The significance of communication extends across various social and professional settings, influencing interpersonal exchanges, formal documentation, and mass communication through media channels. Mastery of different communication forms is crucial for educators, parents, and anyone interested in enhancing learning processes. By studying communication forms, one can explore ways to improve how individuals, from children to adults, learn and grow. Effective communication facilitates understanding, engagement, and

connection between individuals, promoting comprehension, retention of information, active participation, and collaboration. However, miscommunication can occur if verbal instructions are unclear or nonverbal cues are misinterpreted, and barriers such as language differences or sensory impairments can hinder effective communication.

In educational contexts, understanding and utilizing various communication forms is integral to teaching and learning. Educators must employ diverse communication strategies to convey information, facilitate learning experiences, and build relationships with students. The VARK model, introduced by Neil Fleming in 1987, emphasizes tailoring teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles: visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic. This approach is particularly relevant when working with underprivileged children, as it addresses diverse learning preferences and enhances educational outcomes.

This study focuses on the communication forms used by children at Rumah Pelangi, a learning studio in Denpasar, Bali, dedicated to educating underprivileged children. The research aims to identify and understand the verbal and nonverbal communication methods these children use, uncover patterns and preferences in their communication styles, and evaluate the effectiveness of current educational practices. The ultimate goal is to enhance teaching strategies, support linguistic and cognitive growth, and create a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Vygotsky's Social Development Theory highlights the critical role of social interaction in cognitive development, emphasizing that children's learning is profoundly shaped by their interactions with more knowledgeable others.

Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development provides insights into how children construct knowledge and develop language skills through active exploration and interaction with their environment.

Multimodal Learning Theory

The Multimodal Learning Theory underscores the importance of integrating various communication forms—visual, auditory, and kinesthetic—to cater to diverse learning styles, enhancing educational effectiveness.

Communication Forms

Communication forms encompass verbal and nonverbal methods of conveying information. Verbal communication includes spoken and written words, while nonverbal communication involves body language, facial expressions, and gestures. Written communication relies on text, and visual communication uses images and charts. Digital communication utilizes electronic devices for emails, messaging, and video calls.

VARK Model

The VARK model classifies learners by their preferred sensory modalities:

1. Visual learners prefer diagrams and images.
2. Auditory learners excel through listening.
3. Reading/Writing learners thrive on text.
4. Kinesthetic learners prefer hands-on experiences.

Social Learning Theory

Bandura's Social Learning Theory posits that individuals learn new behaviors and attitudes through observational learning, modeling, and reinforcement, emphasizing the importance of social environments in shaping behavior.

Behaviorism

Behaviorism, developed by Watson and Skinner, focuses on observable behaviors and environmental stimuli. It suggests that learning behaviors are acquired through conditioning, with external factors like rewards and punishments influencing behavior.

Multimodality

Kress's theory of multimodality highlights the use of multiple modes—such as visual, spatial, linguistic, and gestural—in communication, illustrating how these modes interact to construct meaning in various contexts, including education and digital communication.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method for this study is a descriptive qualitative approach, chosen for its ability to deeply explore real-life learning situations and focus on multimodal implementation and communication forms in cognitive studies. The research method consists of four key aspects: data source, data collection methods and techniques, data analysis methods and techniques, and data presentation methods and techniques.

Data Source

The primary data source is children aged 4-6 years old at Rumah Pelangi Sant Egidio, a period marked by significant development in both verbal and nonverbal communication skills. These children expand their vocabulary, engage in complex conversations, and enhance their narrative skills through storytelling. Nonverbal communication advances through body language, facial expressions, and gestures, while imaginative play helps them experiment with various communication scenarios and roles. Social interactions with peers and adults further hone their communication skills, providing a foundation for more sophisticated language use in the future.

Data Collection Methods and Techniques

Data collection involves a combination of documentation, observation, and note-taking techniques. The process begins with an initial visit to Rumah Pelangi Sant Egidio for observation and orientation, followed by conversations with the management to gain insights into the children's preferred learning methods. Detailed examinations include tests, evaluations, and interviews with the children to comprehensively analyze their communication forms. This multifaceted approach aims to capture a holistic and nuanced understanding of the communication dynamics within the learning environment.

Data Analysis Methods and Techniques

Data analysis involves documenting and observing the nuances of the children's learning processes. Initial observations and conversations with management provide foundational insights, while subsequent tests, evaluations, and interviews offer deeper understanding. Communication forms are categorized based on Fleming's VARK model, which identifies preferences in visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic learning. Bruner's theory of active learning through experiences and environmental interactions further emphasizes the

importance of diverse and interactive learning experiences.

Data Presentation Methods and Techniques

The results of the data analysis are presented using an informal method, focusing on descriptive explanations using words and sentences based on the applied theories. This approach ensures that the findings are conveyed in a clear and accessible manner, highlighting the communication dynamics and educational strategies at Rumah Pelangi Sant Egidio to support the cognitive and linguistic growth of the children.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Types of Communication Forms in Rumah Pelangi Sant Egidio

Multimodal

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Gunther Kress developed the theory of multimodality. Multimodal theory recognizes that individuals process information through multiple sensory channels, such as visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile modalities. This theory posits that incorporating multiple modes of communication and representation can enhance learning outcomes by catering to diverse learning styles and preferences. One characteristic of multimodal theory is its emphasis on utilizing a variety of modalities, such as text, images, videos, and interactive activities, to convey information and engage learners. By presenting information in multiple formats, educators can accommodate the diverse needs and preferences of students, enhancing comprehension, retention, and engagement in the learning process.

The strengths of multimodal theory lie in its ability to promote inclusivity, accessibility, and effectiveness in teaching and learning. By incorporating multiple modalities, educators can create dynamic and engaging learning experiences that cater to diverse learning styles and preferences, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to access and understand the content. Additionally, multimodal approaches can foster deeper understanding and retention of information by appealing to different sensory channels and cognitive processes. However, weaknesses may arise if multimodal approaches are not implemented thoughtfully or effectively. For instance, excessive use of multimedia or visual aids may overload students with information, leading to cognitive overload and decreased comprehension. Additionally, ensuring accessibility and equitable access to multimodal resources may present challenges for students with disabilities or limited access to technology.

The interrelation between multimodal theory and teaching children is significant in education, as it underscores the importance of adopting inclusive and effective teaching practices. By embracing multimodal approaches, educators can create inclusive learning environments that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of children, promoting engagement, understanding, and academic success. Moreover, multimodal approaches align with contemporary educational trends, such as personalized learning and differentiated instruction, which emphasize tailoring instruction to meet the individual needs of students. By leveraging multimodal resources and strategies, educators can empower children to become active participants in their learning journey, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning skills. Overall, the integration of multimodal theory into teaching practices enhances educational equity, accessibility, and effectiveness, ensuring that all children have the opportunity to thrive and succeed in the classroom.

Visual Learning

As this age group is highly receptive to sensory stimuli and learns primarily through observation and exploration. At this stage of cognitive development, children's brains are rapidly developing and are particularly adept at processing visual information. Therefore, incorporating visual learning experiences into their education can significantly enhance their understanding and retention of concepts. One key aspect of visual learning for young children is the use of visual aids and materials in educational settings. This includes colorful pictures, diagrams, charts, and illustrations that help children visualize abstract concepts and make connections between ideas. By presenting information in a visual format, educators can engage children's imaginations and curiosity, making learning more interactive and memorable.

Moreover, visual learning activities can stimulate children's creativity and problem-solving skills. For example, engaging in art and craft activities allows children to explore different colors, shapes, and textures, fostering their artistic expression and fine motor skills. Similarly, puzzles and visual games encourage children to think critically and strategize as they manipulate visual elements to solve problems and achieve goals.

Furthermore, visual learning experiences provide opportunities for children to develop important pre-literacy and numeracy skills. Exposure to letters, numbers, and symbols in a visual context helps children recognize and understand the building blocks of language and mathematics. Through activities such as storybook reading, letter recognition games, and counting exercises using visual aids, children develop foundational skills that are essential for future academic success. Overall, visual learning plays a vital role in the holistic development of 4-6-year-old children, providing them with rich and engaging experiences that foster curiosity, creativity, and lifelong learning habits.

Verbal Communication

Through verbal interactions, children learn language skills, expand their vocabulary, and develop communication abilities essential for academic and social success. For example, during storytelling sessions, educators verbally convey narratives, introduce new vocabulary, and engage children in discussions about characters, plot, and themes. Through these verbal exchanges, children not only learn new words and concepts but also develop listening skills, comprehension, and critical thinking abilities.

Moreover, activities such as circle time discussions or show-and-tell sessions provide opportunities for children to express themselves verbally, share their experiences, and practice articulating thoughts and ideas in a supportive environment. These verbal interactions foster language development, promote social interaction, and enhance cognitive abilities in young children. By engaging in verbal communication activities, children not only learn to express themselves effectively but also develop the foundational skills necessary for future academic success and social relationships.

Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication also plays a crucial role in the learning experiences of 4-6-year-old children, as it encompasses a wide range of cues such as gestures, facial expressions, and body language. Non-verbal cues convey emotions, intentions, and social cues, facilitating communication and understanding in various contexts. For instance, during pretend play activities, children use non-verbal communication to portray characters, express emotions, and engage in imaginative play scenarios. Through non-verbal interactions, children learn to interpret and respond to the emotions and intentions of others, developing empathy, cooperation, and social

skills.

Additionally, non-verbal cues such as gestures and body language can support verbal communication by providing visual reinforcement and context to spoken words, enhancing comprehension and engagement. Overall, non-verbal communication enhances social-emotional development, promotes interpersonal skills, and enriches the learning experiences of young children. By incorporating both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, educators can create dynamic and inclusive learning environments that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of children.

Body Language

The connection between body language and communication forms in teaching children is profound and multifaceted. Body language, which includes gestures, facial expressions, posture, and other non-verbal cues, plays a crucial role in conveying messages and facilitating understanding in educational settings. Albert Mehrabian (1960s), emphasized the significance of non-verbal communication in conveying feelings and attitudes.

Body language serves as a powerful means of communication, especially for young children who may not have fully developed verbal skills. It helps to reinforce verbal messages and can even convey emotions and intentions more effectively than words alone. For example, a teacher's smile and open posture can signal warmth and approachability, making children feel more comfortable and receptive to learning.

Furthermore, body language provides important cues for comprehension and engagement during instruction. By using gestures and facial expressions, educators can clarify concepts, emphasize key points, and maintain children's attention. For instance, a teacher may use hand gestures to demonstrate the size or shape of an object, helping children better grasp abstract concepts.

Body language also contributes to creating a positive learning environment by fostering rapport and building relationships between educators and students. Through their non-verbal cues, teachers can convey empathy, encouragement, and support, which are essential for nurturing a sense of belonging and trust in the classroom. This aligns with the socio-emotional development theories proposed by psychologists like Lev Vygotsky, who emphasized the importance of social interactions and relationships in children's learning and development.

Moreover, body language can be used strategically to manage classroom dynamics and behavior. Teachers can use their posture, proximity, and gestures to establish authority, set boundaries, and redirect attention when needed. By being attuned to students' non-verbal cues, educators can also better understand their needs, emotions, and learning preferences, allowing for more effective differentiation and individualized support. Body language serves as a powerful tool for conveying messages, fostering engagement, building relationships, and managing classroom dynamics. By understanding and leveraging the significance of non-verbal cues, educators can enhance communication, create a positive learning environment, and support children's holistic development.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research discussed understanding how 4-6-year-old children prefer to apply verbal, nonverbal, and multimodal communication in their learning is essential for creating engaging and effective educational experiences. At this stage of development, children are curious, energetic, and eager to explore the world around them. They naturally gravitate towards a variety

of communication styles to make sense of their environment and interact with others.

Verbal communication plays a significant role in children's learning during these formative years. They enjoy engaging in conversations, asking questions, and sharing their thoughts and experiences with others. For example, during circle time in preschool, children often participate in group discussions led by the teacher. They take turns speaking, sharing stories, and expressing their ideas about a particular topic. These verbal interactions not only enhance language skills but also promote socialization and cooperation among peers.

In addition to verbal communication, nonverbal cues are crucial for children's understanding and expression. Young children rely heavily on gestures, facial expressions, and body language to convey meaning and emotions. For instance, during a dramatic play activity, children may use hand gestures and facial expressions to role-play different characters or act out a story. Nonverbal cues enhance their communication and help them interpret the feelings and intentions of others, fostering empathy and social awareness.

Furthermore, multimodal communication, which integrates various modes such as verbal, nonverbal, and visual elements, is highly effective for engaging 4-6-year-old children in learning. They thrive in environments that offer a multisensory approach to education, allowing them to explore and interact with materials in different ways. For example, during a science lesson about animals, children may engage in a hands-on activity where they match pictures of animals with their corresponding sounds or movements. This multimodal approach combines visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements to reinforce learning and cater to children's diverse learning preferences.

Moreover, problem-solving activities provide valuable opportunities for children to apply verbal, nonverbal, and multimodal communication skills in real-life contexts. For instance, during a group puzzle-solving activity, children use verbal communication to discuss their strategies, nonverbal cues to convey their ideas and emotions, and multimodal approaches to manipulate puzzle pieces and visualize solutions. These collaborative experiences not only enhance children's cognitive skills but also foster communication, teamwork, and critical thinking.

Additionally, incorporating technology and digital media into learning experiences can further support children's engagement with verbal, nonverbal, and multimodal communication. Educational apps, interactive games, and multimedia resources offer opportunities for children to explore concepts, express themselves creatively, and interact with content in meaningful ways. For example, a storytelling app may allow children to narrate their own stories using voice recording features, incorporate illustrations through drawing tools, and share their creations with others, combining verbal, visual, and digital communication modes.

4-6 year old children naturally apply verbal, nonverbal, and multimodal communication in their learning experiences as they explore, interact, and make sense of the world around them. Educators can capitalize on these preferences by providing diverse and interactive learning opportunities that incorporate a variety of communication styles. By fostering a rich learning environment that integrates verbal, nonverbal, and multimodal communication, educators can enhance children's engagement, comprehension, and overall development during these critical early years.

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