

## Picture as an Expressive Language of Early Childhood

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### Abstract

Language development is one of the important aspects of early childhood, language development, in essence, is a child can accept (receptive) and express (expressive). This study aims to describe the expressive language of children in Siwi Unggul Kindergarten with the media of the images he made and to analyze and describe the results of children's drawings in terms of their nature and type. This type of research is qualitative research. This research was conducted in Siwi Unggul Kindergarten, Plantungan District, Kendal Regency. The subjects of the research were Siwi Unggul Kindergarten students. The informants consisted of children, teachers, and school principals. Data collection is done by observation, interviews, and documents. The data validity technique uses triangulation. While the data analysis is done using Marshall and Rossman's interactive model, which consists of organizing data, grouping by categories, themes, and answer patterns, testing assumptions or problems that exist with the data, finding alternative explanations for the data, writing research results. The results showed that the media images created by children based on their ideas and thoughts can provoke vocabulary and expression of children's symbols (pictures and writing) in kindergarten children. Parents and teachers are expected to accompany drawing activities to stimulate children's knowledge and expressive language.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education in the scope of early childhood is an effort to provide comprehensive services in every aspect of children's growth and development (Apriyanti, et.al, 2016). The nature of *PAUD* (Early Childhood Education) as a child growth and development service provider is expected to provide services in a climate that supports child development in all aspects of development that include cognitive, social emotional, physical motor, moral and language. Children are individuals who have certain and different patterns of development and needs (Zahro, et. al, 2018; Rahayu, et. al, 2018, Wakhidah, et. al, 2018). Children's language development has an important role in every other aspect of development, language as a means of communication can not be separated from the overall activities of children. Language can be divided into receptive language and expressive language, receptive language is the ability to receive information conveyed both orally and in writing, while expressive language ability is the ability to express information to be conveyed through oral and written.

Children's ability to accept and express language is important to develop, children's language skills are a form of life skills. Receptive language skills and expressive language skills are equally important, but during their development, children always have receptive language far ahead of expressive language skills.

Children's expressive language skills in writing and drawing according to Hipple in Jalongo (2007) are simultaneously (drawing and writing) a child's way of expressing ideas and feelings, drawings that is made by the children usually explain "communication of thought rather than the picture itself". Writing can be started by making shapes and writing letters like the letters contained in children's names, this is in accordance with what Dhieni wrote as an activity to make patterns or write words, letters, or symbols on a surface by cutting, engrave or mark with a pen or pencil.

The development of expressive language in early childhood is a basic form of

communication. Various studies have shown that the formation of speaking skills is very important both in early childhood and when children begin to enter primary education. The skill in expressing language is a very basic and important ability in social relations. Children must be encouraged to express language well. Expressive language skills are a necessity so that children can become part of social groups while at the same time balancing various developments. During early childhood is a very important time in learning children's expressive language skills. Because with good expression language skills, children will actively search for meaning and will find ways to communicate with other children.

Drawing activities as a form of expression of children's thoughts or feelings can be said as a form of expressive language of writing, this is in line with the nature of writing, Tarigan (1982: 21) says that writing is lowering or depicting graphic symbols that describe a language understood by someone, so that other people can read the symbols, if they understand the language and the picture.

The observations showed that drawing activities and children's ability to convey what they draw verbally cannot be released. From observations made there are children who rarely talk in daily activities but when he draws he is able to express what he drew with verbal language.

The beneficial relationship of drawing and expressive language development of children has not been a concern to be really carried out and researched, as evidenced from existing studies that mostly examine the development of language with certain methods that appear, while drawing activities themselves have become part of the activities everyday in kindergarten.

Drawing activities and kindergartens cannot be separated from one another. Drawing is one form of art expression which is a mandatory activity at an institution, drawing is also a written language that children can do, when children cannot recognize the letter symbols in the alphabet then the child can express what is thought and felt through the media of images. The expression images produced by

children have contents that describe certain personal and social conditions.

Based on the description above the picture can be a means of children in expressing what he feels and thinks, the picture also stimulates children to express their feelings and thoughts with verbal language. This issue will be examined in depth with the title "Picture as An Expressive Language for Early Childhood"

## METHOD

The type of this research was qualitative research. This research was conducted in Kindergarten Siwi Unggul, Plantungan District, Kendal Regency. The research subjects were students of Kindergarten Siwi Unggul, Plantungan District, Kendal Regency, which were determined using purposive sampling technique. The informants consisted of children, teachers, and school principals. Data collection was done by observation, interviews and documents. The data validity technique used triangulation. While the data analysis was done using Marshall and Rossman's interactive model, which consists of organizing data, grouping by categories, themes and answer patterns, testing assumptions or problems that exist with the data, finding alternative explanations for the data, writing research results.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Early childhood is a very important period for the growth and development of children. Mansyur, et al (2009: 48) stated that early age is a golden age in which the child will easily accept, follow, see, and hear everything that is exemplified, heard and demonstrated. Therefore, early childhood education must pay attention to all the potential it has to be developed as optimal as possible in a fun, joyous, caring and affectionate, patient and sincere. Also explained in Mansyur, et al. (2009: 48) that in developing all of this potential, it must also pay attention to social conditions, culture, faith, and beliefs, religion and values that apply in the community where they are. Early childhood learning in its

own way. However Suyanto (2003: 7) explains that teachers or parents often teach children in accordance with the way adults think. As a result, what is taught by parents is difficult for children to accept. Furthermore Suyanto (2003: 7) explains that this symptom is seen from the many things that are liked by children is prohibited by parents, and conversely many things that parents like are not liked by children.

In general, all children love play activities. According to Tedjasaputra (2005: 91) play is a world of work for preschoolers. Through play, children can reap benefits for the development of physical, intellectual, social emotional aspects. These three aspects support one another and cannot be separated. Referring to this, therefore the process of early childhood education must be created in a playful situation. In line with this opinion Musfiroh (2009: 16) also stated that early childhood education must refer to the principle of learning while playing or learning while playing.

One of the lessons in early childhood education in kindergarten is drawing. In general, drawing is an activity of doodling to form an image. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (1990: 250), drawing is making a picture. Sumanto (2006: 13) stated that drawing is the process of making a picture by scribbling sharp objects (such as pencils or pens) on a flat surface (for example the surface of a blackboard, paper, or wall). Drawing and painting is a manifestation of wishful thinking or a desired statement of feelings / expressions and thoughts. The embodiment can be a mock object or fantasy complete with lines, fields, colors, and textures with a simple. Drawing included in aesthetic education for children (Rondhi, 2017).

Drawing activities that was done by kindergarten children were the expressive language of every child. The expressive language of the child referred to here was the child's verbal expressive language, it means that the child's skills say something through the mouth (speaking). When viewed from the data obtained, the 41 children that was studied have entered the criteria for the child's ability to speak correctly and not just 'parrot' according to Hurlock (2001). This can be seen from the child's ability to

connect the meaning of words with images and the child's ability to pronounce words that are understood easily.

The points that represent the speech development of children would be linked to verbal expression data through the media of pictures. There were 4 points that represent the child's speech development a) Children's interest in speaking, b) Rich words (vocabulary), c) Pronunciation (pronunciation), and d) Simple sentence recognition.

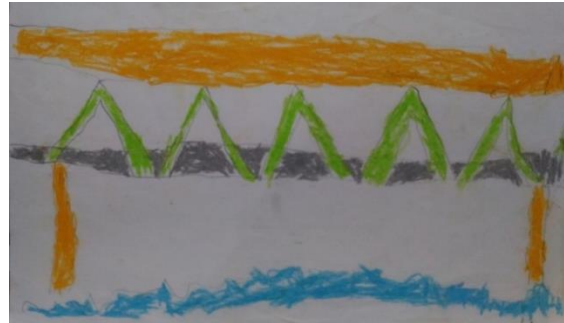
The results of research in the form of verbal speech notes about the pictures they made and the results of images of children to be analyzed in terms of the nature and type of images. The first objective in this study was to find out the children's expressive language using drawings that they made by himself. The research point was verbal expressive language or the ability to speak the children in conveying ideas and feelings through nouns, adjectives or verbs that come out of the children's mouth with the media they made. Speaking is not just the pronunciation of words or sounds, but is a tool to express, convey, or communicate thoughts, ideas, and feelings. The research data were taken from students in Siwi Unggul Kindergarten who entered when the study was conducted, obtained 41 data.

The expressive language of the children referred to here was the children's verbal expressive language, meaning that the children's ability to say something by mouth (speaking). When viewed from the data obtained, the 41 children studied have entered the criteria for the children's ability to speak correctly and not just 'parrot' according to Hurlock. This can be seen from the children's ability to connect the meaning of words with pictures and the children's ability to pronounce words that were understood easily.

Research data showed that from 41 children who expressed their pictures in verbal language, there was only 1 child who did not show interest in speaking. Children who did not show interest in talking only smile when others discussed the results of their pictures. This child's interest in speaking did not emerge because the pictures that he made were imitations. From this fact obtained information that the child does not

have the intention to talk about the picture he made because the picture that he made was not an expression of his own thoughts or feelings. Meanwhile, 40 other children showed interest in speaking with a number of vocabulary that was not the same as the other one.

Children who have shown an interest in speaking have shown their verbal expression (speaking) through a variety of vocabulary. In addition to children who did not show interest in talking through the media they drew, there were children who only say 2 vocabulary words "this is a bridge". Vocabulary that was spoken in accordance with the child's image expression, the following picture:



**Figure 1.** R17: "This is a bridge"

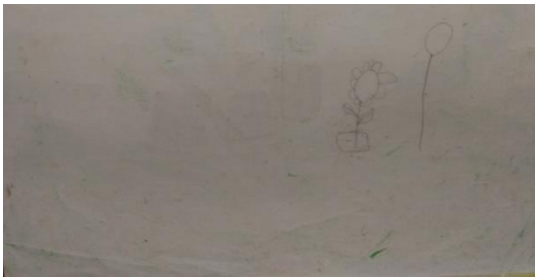
Based on the picture the child can communicate symbolically on paper (writing) that the child will convey that what he drew was a bridge.

The amount of vocabulary that was spoken by one child is different from one another, and the many pictures did not affect the amount of vocabulary that was spoken by children, such as the following picture R10 which has a considerable amount of vocabulary:



**Figure 2.** R10: "This flying car has a propeller, given a rocket so that the flight can be fast, this is pretending that it's already in the wide sky, the sky is white"

From an adult's perspective, the R10 image is not a picture that has broad meaning, but it turns out that in our opinion a simple picture can be used as a medium for expressing children's verbal language with a large amount of vocabulary.



**Figure 3.** R19: "Pictures of flowers in the park, wide grass can run freely no cars, no Honda"

As R10, the R19 picture also has verbal language expressions with many syllables. It showed that the pictures that was expressed from the thoughts and feelings of children have a broad meaning of language. Based on the description above, pictures as a medium of expression of ideas and feelings were able to bring up a lot of vocabulary as an important part of speaking skills (expressive language).

To express ideas in the form of language, children need to master a number of words, then arrange them into units that is called sentences. To be able to arrange words into sentences, people (including children) must master the rules of arranging words and choosing the tenses. Verbal expressions of pictures that were made by the children, children were able to bring up a lot

of vocabulary that had been arranged into clear sentences that could be understood and separated vocabulary. From the 41 children, most of the verbal expressions that appeared have been strung together into quite understandable sentences, such as R6: " Aku main sendirian di pantai, ini dipantainya siang lo jadi terang" even though the structure did not meet the standard language, but what the child communicated through language expressive verb can be understood in general. There were some children who expressed their verbal language with separate vocabulary or have not strung together into a sentence, such as R9: " ini pantai, ini ombak, ini bunga, ini gunung" or R16: " Bunga matahari di atas bukit-bukit, ada orangnya ada mataharinya". So the vocabulary that emerged was a separate vocabulary that did not yet show a unified sentence, even if the recipient of the language was an adult already able to understand what was meant.

The fact was that kindergartners were able to express their verbal expressive language into simple sentences that can be understood. Children's pictures bring up a lot of vocabulary as a form of verbal expression and vocabulary that has not been strung clearly can be understood with the help of drawings made.

Pictures as an expression of art and expressions of ideas and feelings, have meanings that can be read or classified with certain features or ways. From a picture we can describe many things, starting from here the children's picture would be analyzed based on the nature of the picture and in terms of topology or type.

Children produced expressive images in order to communicate with people around them, so that they have several characteristics that were part of one type of work. The nature of images of children's expressions, described by Soesatyo (1994: 32-33) to: Ideographism, Steorotif or automatism, Symptoms of finality, Beekeeping or folds, Transparent, Juxtaposition, Symmetrical, Proportion (size comparison), Character (narrative).

In 41 images the children have represented the nature of the expression of the images presented, but of all the nature of the images of



expression, the nature of the narrative and the symptoms of finality were the characteristics that most often appeared from all the images, from 41 images, 21 of them have the nature of the symptoms of finality. In addition to the nature of the finality symptoms, there was a narrative nature that appeared 27 of 41 pictures. For more details, the following were the number of pictures that have certain properties. 11 Ideographism pictures, 2 Stereotif or automatism pictures, 21 pictures Symptoms of finality, 2 pictures of Beekeeping or folds, 4 Transparent pictures, 1 Juxtaposition pictures, 4 Symmetrical pictures, 5 Proportion pictures (size comparison), 27 pictures were narrative.

Traits that often appear in children's pictures were the symptoms of finality and narrative. Images that were symptoms of finality depict events that contain elements of space and time. Some pictures of children showed the existence of time markers such as the sun or stars and showed certain places as the background of the picture. The following is one picture of a child who was symptomatic of finality.



**Figure 4.** R12 showed the time marker in the form of the sun and showed the background of the beach as a space. In addition to drawing the symptoms of finality, most of the images of children were narrative in nature, where the picture was an expression of feelings/mental turmoil where the child told his ideas or feelings.

Here was one picture of a child that was narrative.



**Figure 5.** R23 revealed what was the idea of the child's fear if it got rained on because his friend's house was already raining. The picture was also a symptom of the finalists.



**Figure 6.** R20. The picture above is stereotypical or automatic



**Figure 7.** R31. The picture above is stretching or folding, this property is seen from the direction of the image of the car and swimming pool.



**Figure 8.** R5. The picture above is transparent, where the fish in the truck are visible from the outside (transparent)



**Figure 9.** R6. The picture above is proportional, where the size of the image of people as a more important part in the picture has a size larger than the image of other objects.



**Figure 10.** R7. The picture above is ideographic, the child's image is an expression based on understanding and logic. Images as expressive media of children show an effort to communicate or show what is thought or felt through the pictures they make, such as in proportion images that show a larger size in images that he thinks are more important.

This research showed that children can express what they think or feel through the pictures they make, this was also one of the first steps of children express in written form (symbols / pictures).

Read (1958: 140) divides the typology of children's work into several parts, they are: *Organic, Lyrical, Impressionist, Rytmical Pattern, Structure Form, Shematic, Haptic, Expressionist, Enumeratif, Decorative, Romantic dan Literary*. From the 41 images the child did not bring up the type of lyrical, impressionist, rhythmical pattern, structure form, shematic, and haptic. The types seen in children's pictures were 3 organic types, 5 expressionist types, 6 types, 17 decorative types, 18 romantic types and 30 literary types.

Children's pictures showed the tendency of organic, expressionist, decorative, enumerative, romantic and literary types. Most children's drawings were literary, where the children presented an imaginary theme that came from a sense that arises from memory and imagination to be conveyed to others.



**Figure 11.** R1. The picture above has a type of Literary where the child illustrated the idea of playing outside the house with the imagination of a rainbow. In addition to rainbows and other realistic objects, there were pictures of pineapple house and stone house (petrik house and spongbob).

In the picture above the child conveys a theme that comes from the memories he has about playing outside the home and combining it with the picture of objects in his imagination.



**Figure 12.** R32 Besides being included in the literary type, the picture above was also included in the romantic and decorative type.

In this picture the child drew a theme from life that was sharpened by the child's fantasy which means the child's image was included in the romantic type. Children describe the house as part of their lives and fantasize about apple and rainbow trees. In addition to romantic, the picture has a decorative type, where children display two-dimensional shapes with colorful patterns and cheerful patterns.



**Figure 13.** R28. The picture above was included in the enumerative, decorative and literary types. The image was controlled by the object and cannot connect with the sensation of wholeness, so that all the small parts that it saw in the plane of the image without exaggeration.

Image perception was not an artist's perception but an architect's perception.



**Figure 14.** R40. The picture above was included in the Expressionist type. The pictures included decorative, romantic, literary and expressionist types.

The pictures expressed egocentric sensations, but also objects of the world from the outside. Where the child expressed the beauty of the rainbow with a decorative type and expresses his egocentric sensations with a picture of a heart that shows his liking. The type in the picture was used to facilitate understanding of the pictures made, in essence, children's drawings were made as expressions of ideas and feelings to be communicated or just expressed.

## CONCLUSION

Children's pictures as part that cannot be released from kindergarten can be a means of children's expressive language, both verbal expressive language (speaking skills) and expressive language through pictures. Drawing activities as activities that are often carried out at the Siwi Unggul Kindergarten can be used as a place to explore in-depth information about pictures as a medium for expressive language in early childhood.

Based on the results of the research and discussion above, children who drew based on their ideas and feelings bring up vocabulary and sentences with various variations in the number and form of sentences. Vocabulary that appeared in the form of nouns, adjectives, and verbs, vocabulary. Vocabulary that appeared in the form of a series of sentences or separate vocabulary that was not assembled into a sentence (such as



pointing or mentioning the name of an object). From these facts it can be concluded that the children's media image has a good influence in bringing up verbal expressive language of early childhood.

Beside as a medium of verbal expressive language, the picture itself was an expression of the children's thoughts or feelings. The picture as a symbol of the pouring of thoughts and feelings on paper can be one of the expressive languages written by the children before the children wrote in alphabetical order. Like writing as a form of communication or expression, picture can also be understood (read) in various ways. In this study, children's drawings were seen in terms of their nature and type. The type and nature of the results of children's drawings can be concluded that the children's picture was a form of expression of children's ideas and feelings.

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