

## Cultivating the Language Skills of Elementary School Students: Effective and Enjoyable Learning Styles and Strategies

Nursalim<sup>1</sup>, Ahmad Syarief<sup>2\*</sup>, Fuji Rahayu<sup>3</sup>, Tiara Trirahmayati<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Masters Study Program in Elementary Madrasah Teacher Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Indonesia

### Corresponding Author:

Author Name\*: Ahmad Syarief

Email\*: [ariefpoenya27@gmail.com](mailto:ariefpoenya27@gmail.com)

Accepted: March 27<sup>th</sup> 2025. Approved: May 8<sup>th</sup> 2025. Published: May 14<sup>th</sup> 2025

### ABSTRACT

Good language skills in elementary school children are an important factor in their academic and social development. This study aims to analyze effective and enjoyable learning styles and strategies in cultivating the language skills of elementary school students. The method used is qualitative research with a case study approach, involving five teachers and ten students as participants. Data collection techniques were carried out through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results of the study show that learning styles and strategies based on language games, the use of picture story media, project-based literacy approaches, as well as interactive and collaborative methods contribute positively to the improvement of students' language skills. In line with the indicators, students who were involved in language game-based learning showed improvement in vocabulary and speaking skills, while the use of picture storybooks helped enhance reading comprehension. The project-based literacy approach, such as daily journal writing, was also proven to improve students' writing skills. However, the implementation of these strategies involves limitations in learning facilities, differences in students' ability levels, and limited instructional time. This study recommends strengthening the variety of learning strategies, improving literacy facilities, and providing support from both the school and parents to create a more conducive learning environment. Through the implementation of innovative and experience-based methods, language learning at the elementary school level can become more engaging and effective for students.

**Keywords:** skills, language, style, strategy, learning

### INTRODUCTION

Good language skills in elementary school (ES) students are essential in supporting their learning process and social development. Language is not only a tool of communication, but also serves as the main medium for absorbing and processing information. In the current era of globalization and digitalization, mastering language skills from an early age can have a positive impact on children's intellectual and academic development. However, in reality, many elementary students still face difficulties in understanding and using language properly, both in spoken and written forms [1].

The low language skills of elementary school students can be caused by various factors, including the lack of engaging learning styles that are appropriate to children's characteristics. Monotonous language learning with minimal interaction makes children easily feel bored and less interested in improving their language skills. Ineffective learning strategies can hinder the development of children's reading and writing skills, which impacts their low reading interest and communication abilities [2].

To address this issue, more effective and enjoyable learning strategies and styles are needed. One strategy that can be implemented is the language game method. The use of this method can significantly improve children's speaking abilities [3]. Language games not only enhance speaking skills but also build children's confidence in expressing their ideas and thoughts.

In addition to language game methods, the use of picture story media has also been proven effective in improving children's language skills. Nugraheni, Harsiati, and Qohar stated that children can more easily understand language concepts through engaging visual illustrations [4]. This media also helps children develop their imagination and enhances their understanding of vocabulary and more complex language structures [5].

Students who learned using picture storybooks experienced significant improvement in their speaking and writing abilities [6]. This indicates that visual-based learning approaches have a positive impact on children's language development. With the presence of illustrations, children find it easier to understand the

content of the story and enhance their memory of newly acquired vocabulary.

In Pekanbaru, various elementary schools have begun to adopt more interactive learning strategies to improve students' language skills. A study conducted by Sueca and Suwarni found that the integration of language games into the elementary school curriculum in Pekanbaru successfully increased students' interest and participation in Indonesian language lessons [7]. In addition, Sumaryanti revealed that the use of picture book media in several elementary schools in Pekanbaru was able to enhance students' motivation in reading and writing [8].

Not only language games and visual media, but literacy-based learning strategies also serve as key factors in improving children's language abilities. Wahyuning, Gipayana, and Djatmika developed literacy-based teaching materials using the Quantum Teaching approach, which was able to optimize language learning effectively and productively [9]. This approach emphasizes active student involvement in the learning process, thereby enhancing their understanding and language skills.

In addition to learning strategy factors, a supportive learning environment also plays an important role in cultivating children's language skills. Basar revealed that during distance learning in the COVID-19 pandemic, many students experienced a decline in language abilities due to limited interaction with teachers and peers [10]. Therefore, creating an interactive and communicative learning environment is essential to support children's language development.

By implementing enjoyable and interaction-based learning methods, it is expected that children will be able to develop their language skills more easily. Windarto added that the use of illustrated journals as a learning medium can also significantly improve elementary students' writing skills [11]. This is because illustrated journals encourage children to express their ideas through writing more creatively and engagingly.

Overall, enjoyable learning strategies, such as language games, picture story media, as well as literacy- and interaction-based approaches, are effective solutions for improving the language skills of elementary school children, including those in Pekanbaru. By applying appropriate strategies, children can become more motivated in learning language, enabling them to develop their reading, writing, speaking, and language comprehension skills more effectively.

In addition, digital technology also plays an important role in improving the language skills of elementary school children. The use of digital learning applications, such as interactive e-books and language-based educational games, has been proven effective in increasing children's learning interest [12]. Interactive digital media can help children understand language structures better than conventional methods. With broad access to technology, teachers and parents can utilize it as a tool to support the development of children's language skills.

However, despite the significant benefits of digital technology, the challenges in its use also need to be taken into account. Not all students have equal access to digital devices and the internet, especially in areas with limited technological infrastructure. The digital divide can become an obstacle to equitable access to quality education, including in language learning [13]. Therefore, a learning approach that combines conventional and digital methods needs to be implemented so that all students can obtain optimal benefits.

In addition to learning media, the role of the teacher is also a key factor in the success of developing children's language skills. Teachers who apply innovative and experience-based teaching methods are able to create a conducive learning environment. The Quantum Teaching method implemented by teachers can increase students' participation in language learning [14]. With this approach, teachers can encourage children to be more active in speaking, reading, and writing.

Recent studies have shown a new perspective in the examination of the family's role in children's language development. One important aspect that has now become the focus is the quality of interaction between parents and children, rather than merely the frequency of communication [15]. Parents who are actively involved in meaningful conversations and provide opportunities for children to respond in two-way dialogues have been proven to support better language development. In addition, activities such as reading books together and discussing the content of the stories have also been shown to improve children's vocabulary and language comprehension [16]. Early language stimulation, especially from parents, has been significantly associated with improvements in children's receptive and expressive language skills [17]. Children who are regularly engaged in verbal interaction at home show more optimal language development compared to those who receive less stimulation [18]. Moreover, several recent studies have also highlighted the influence of socioeconomic and cultural factors in determining the intensity and quality of communication within families, which indirectly affects children's language development [19].

By considering various learning strategies, technology, the role of teachers, and family environment support, the development of language skills in elementary school children in Pekanbaru can be carried out more effectively. A combination of language game methods, picture story media, digital technology, and the active involvement of both parents and teachers can create a more enjoyable and meaningful learning process for children. Therefore, this study aims to analyze various effective and enjoyable learning styles and strategies for improving the language skills of elementary school children in Pekanbaru, in order to provide the best recommendations for educators and parents in supporting children's language development optimally.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with a case study method to analyze effective and enjoyable learning styles and strategies in cultivating the language skills of elementary school children in Pekanbaru. The research was conducted by collecting data through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and documentation involving five teachers and ten students from various elementary schools in Pekanbaru. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon from the perspectives of teachers and students regarding the language learning methods they experience. The case study was used to obtain a more contextual and comprehensive depiction of the learning strategies implemented in elementary schools.

This study involved 15 participants, consisting of five Indonesian language teachers and ten elementary school students in Pekanbaru. The teachers were selected based on their teaching experience in the field of language, while the students were purposively selected based on the variation in their language proficiency levels. Through this approach, it is expected that rich data can be obtained regarding the effectiveness of learning strategies implemented by the teachers as well as the learning experiences perceived by the students. Data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach. The data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were categorized into main themes that reflect effective and enjoyable learning strategies. The data were then reduced, presented in narrative form, and validated through triangulation to enhance the validity and reliability of the research findings. To ensure data credibility, this study employed source and method triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from teacher and student interviews, while method triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. Thus, the research findings can provide a more accurate depiction of the effectiveness of language learning strategies in elementary schools in Pekanbaru.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings obtained from interviews with five Indonesian language teachers revealed that they employed various learning strategies, including: All teachers stated that language games such as word guessing, chain stories, and vocabulary quizzes were effective in increasing students' learning interest and enriching their vocabulary. One of the teachers stated: *I often use language games such as word guessing and chain stories. The children seem more enthusiastic and do not get bored easily. They also remember new words more easily.*

Three out of five teachers utilized picture storybooks to help students understand sentence structure and improve their reading and writing skills. Teacher 3 stated: *Children understand texts more quickly when they are presented with pictures. I usually read*

*them picture stories and ask them to guess or retell the content of the story.*

Two teachers implemented project-based literacy activities, such as writing daily journals and short stories. Teacher 5 stated: *I ask students to write daily journals about their activities. This helps them get used to writing and using a richer vocabulary.* Teacher 2 explained: *Small group discussions help shy students become more confident in speaking. I also often ask them to take turns sharing stories.*

Interviews with ten students indicated that they were more enthusiastic and motivated when learning a language through enjoyable methods. Most students preferred language game methods because they provided challenges and a fun atmosphere during learning. One student said: *I like word guessing games, especially when I can play with my friends. Learning becomes more exciting and less boring.*

Students with low reading ability were more interested in learning using picture storybooks compared to plain texts. Student 7 stated: *If there are pictures, I enjoy reading more. I can understand the content of the story better.* Five students stated that lecture-based methods and excessive written exercises made them feel bored quickly. Student 5 said: *If I just listen to the teacher talking continuously, I often get sleepy and find it hard to remember new words.*

Classroom observations showed that interactive and visual methods had a positive impact on students' language skills. Students who were more active in language games demonstrated better development in speaking and sentence construction. Students who were accustomed to reading picture storybooks experienced improvements in text comprehension and reading speed. Students who were assigned to write stories or daily journals exhibited higher creativity in composing sentences and using more varied vocabulary. Although the learning methods used were proven effective, several challenges were encountered: limited facilities and infrastructure, differences in students' abilities, and limited instructional time.

Based on the research findings, it is concluded that more interactive and experience-based learning strategies have a positive impact on the development of language skills among elementary school students in Pekanbaru. Through a combination of language game methods, picture story media, and literacy-based approaches, the learning process becomes more enjoyable and effective. Therefore, schools and teachers are expected to optimize the implementation of these strategies and provide more adequate facilities to improve the quality of language learning for elementary school students.

The results of this study indicate that interactive and enjoyable learning strategies have a significant impact on the development of language skills among elementary school students in Pekanbaru. In this discussion, the research findings are examined with reference to existing theories and previous studies. The findings show that language game methods such as word guessing, chain stories, and vocabulary quizzes

are effective in improving speaking skills and enriching students' vocabulary. Game-based learning methods can increase student engagement and help them understand language concepts more effectively. The results of this study show that game-based and visual media learning strategies are effective and enjoyable approaches for improving students' language skills, particularly in vocabulary mastery, sentence structure, and speaking confidence. Several students stated that they found it easier to remember new words when learning through group games. The strategies applied included simple role-playing and word guessing using picture media. These activities created an interactive learning atmosphere and made students more active in speaking. Social interaction plays an important role in helping children develop language skills through the zone of proximal development (ZPD) [20].

In addition, the use of picture storybooks in learning has been proven effective in helping students understand sentence structure and improve reading skills. The books used present stories with simple plots and engaging illustrations, making it easier for students to understand the content of the story and connect words with visual context. Visual media, such as images in storybooks, can enhance reading comprehension among elementary school students because they help link the text with visual representations [21].

In practice, students showed high enthusiasm when learning was conducted using enjoyable media and methods. They were more confident in speaking, especially when working in small groups. In this context, the teacher acts as a facilitator who encourages active student participation, rather than merely serving as a content deliverer. This approach makes learning more participatory and meaningful. Nevertheless, this study also found certain challenges, namely, limited time in the learning process and the lack of variety in games that can be practically used in the classroom.

To address this issue, it is recommended that teachers develop a variety of educational games that are not only engaging but also feasible within a limited time, such as vocabulary card games or sequential short story reading. With efficient planning, this strategy allows for a balanced integration of play and learning activities [22]. Overall, game-based and visual media strategies not only improve students' language abilities but also significantly foster their learning interest and motivation.

The teachers in this study also stated that picture stories are effective in attracting students' attention, especially for those who have difficulties reading long texts. This is consistent with Mayer's research on multimedia learning, which emphasizes that the integration of visual and verbal elements can enhance understanding and information retention. However, limitations in resources, such as the lack of picture storybooks, present obstacles in the implementation of this strategy. Therefore, support from schools and parents is needed to provide more illustrated reading materials so that students can continue to develop their reading skills both inside and outside the classroom.

Project-based literacy approaches, such as writing daily journals and short stories, help students develop their writing skills. This is in line with the research of Graham and Perin, which shows that regular writing practice can improve students' ability to construct sentences and use more varied vocabulary. One teacher stated that students who wrote daily journals showed improvement in their language creativity. This aligns with Emig's writing-to-learn theory, which states that writing is not only the outcome of learning but also a tool for thinking and understanding language more deeply.

However, some students experience difficulties in writing due to a lack of vocabulary and limited sentence structure. Therefore, teachers can provide further guidance through gradual writing exercises and offer constructive feedback to improve students' writing skills.

Although the various learning strategies implemented by teachers have proven effective, this study also identifies several challenges in their implementation. One of the main challenges is the limitation of facilities and infrastructure, such as the lack of picture storybooks and interactive learning media. This finding is also supported by Basar's research, which highlights that limited access to learning resources can hinder the effectiveness of instruction.

In addition, the variation in students' abilities within a single class also poses a challenge for teachers. Some students with higher language abilities can easily understand the material, while others require more time. This is consistent with Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory by Vygotsky, which states that each child has a different level of development and requires different levels of guidance [23].

Teachers stated that limited instructional time becomes an obstacle in implementing more interactive learning strategies. A solution that can be applied is to integrate these strategies into various learning activities so that language learning is not conducted only in one subject, but also across other subjects such as science and mathematics.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study have important implications for the development of language learning in elementary schools in Pekanbaru. The findings show that enjoyable approaches, such as educational games and the use of picture storybooks, can improve students' vocabulary, sentence structure, and speaking confidence. Therefore, teachers are advised to enhance the variety of learning strategies by combining language games, picture story media, and literacy-based approaches to make learning activities more engaging and effective. In addition, the provision of more adequate learning resources is an urgent need. Schools and relevant stakeholders should increase the availability of picture reading materials and other visual learning tools that are suitable for the age and



developmental level of students to support optimal language learning.

Furthermore, teacher training in innovative learning methods also needs to be given attention. Teachers need to be equipped with training that focuses on the use of interactive, creative, and technology-based methods, thus, they are able to deliver material using approaches that align with the characteristics of 21st-century students. In addition to support from schools, parental involvement is also highly important. Parents are expected to take an active role in their children's language learning at home, such as by reading stories regularly, engaging in light dialogues, and providing other forms of verbal stimulation. With the synergy between effective learning strategies at school and consistent support at home, the language skills of elementary school students in Pekanbaru can be improved more comprehensively and sustainably.

## REFERENCES

- [1] N. N. Benu, L. P. N. K. V. Kusumaningrum, P. A. S. Pratama, and F. I. N. Abida, "Pemerolehan Dan Perkembangan Bahasa Anak Usia Lima Tahun (Studi Kasus)," *Sosiologis Kaji. Sociol. Klasik, Mod. dan Kontemporer*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 46–55, 2023, [Online]. Available: <https://www.ojs.ycit.or.id/index.php/KTSK/about>
- [2] M. Mofid., *PSIKOLOGI BAHASA (TEORI DAN PRAKTIK)*. Jawa Timur: Institut Agama Islam Sunan Kalijogo Malang Redaksi, 2020.
- [3] E. B. Yusuf, "Perkembangan dan Pemerolehan Bahasa Anak," *Yin Yang J. Stud. Islam. Gend. dan Anak*, vol. 11, no. 01, p. 50, 2016, [Online]. Available: <http://ejournal.iainpurwokerto.ac.id/index.php/yinyang/article/view/826>
- [4] L. Nugraheni and M. N. Ahsin, "Pemerolehan Bahasa pada Anak Usia Dini di Desa Hadiwarno Kecamatan Mejobo Kabupaten Kudus," *J. Educ. FKIP UNMA*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 375–381, 2021, doi: 10.31949/educatio.v7i2.1025.
- [5] E. Hasim, "PERKEMBANGAN BAHASA ANAK," *PEDAGOGIKA*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2018.
- [6] S. S. Safikri Taufiqurrahman, "ANALISIS ASPEK PERKEMBANGAN BAHASA ANAK USIA DASAR DALAM PROSES PEMBELAJARAN," *PIONIR (Jurnal Pendidikan)*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2019, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22373/pjp.v8i2.6234>.
- [7] I. N. Sueca and N. K. Suwarni, "Peningkatan Kemampuan Literasi Dasar Dengan Pemanfaatan Permainan Bahasa Pada Siswa Sd Negeri 5 Besakih," *J. Elem.*, vol. 6, no. 1, p. 59, 2023, doi: 10.31764/elementary.v6i1.13260.
- [8] L. Sumaryanti, "Menumbuhkan minat baca anak MI/SD dengan media buku bergambar seri," *AL-ASASIYYA J. Basic Educ.*, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 173, 2020, doi: 10.24269/ajbe.v4i2.2699.
- [9] S. Ramdani *et al.*, "Perkembangan Bahasa dan Komunikasi pada Anak Tahap Awal," *Al-Furqan J. Agama, Sos. dan Budaya*, vol. 2, no. 6, pp. 740–753, 2023.
- [10] A. M. Basar, "Problematisasi Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh Pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19," *Edunesia J. Ilm. Pendidik.*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 208–218, 2021, doi: 10.51276/edu.v2i1.112.
- [11] H. K. Windarto, "Kajian Keterampilan Menulis Menggunakan Media Jurnal Bergambar Di Sekolah Dasar," *Elem. Sch. J. Pendidik. dan Pembelajaran ke-SD-an*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 303–311, 2020, doi: 10.31316/esjurnal.v7i2.775.
- [12] C. E. Hmelo-Silver, R. G. Duncan, and C. A. Chinn, "Scaffolding and achievement in problem-based and inquiry learning: A response to Kirschner, Sweller, and Clark (2006)," *Educ. Psychol.*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 99–107, 2007, doi: 10.1080/00461520701263368.
- [13] Erisa Kurniati, "Perkembangan Bahasa Pada Anak Dalam Psikologi Serta Implikasinya Dalam Pembelajaran," *J. Ilm. Univ. Batanghari Jambi*, vol. 17, no. 3, p. 4, 2017.
- [14] H. Purnamasari and R. Awaliyah, "PELATIHAN LITERASI DIGITAL : PEMANFAATAN MEDIA," pp. 810–815, 2025.
- [15] K. A. Harras and A. Dutha Bachari, *Dasar-dasar Psikolinguistik*. Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia Press VI, 2009.
- [16] A. Krissandi, Widharyanto, and R. P. D. Dewi, *Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia untuk SD: Pendekatan dan Teknis*. 2018.
- [17] C. Yanuari, "Perkembangan Bahasa Pada Anak," *PENTAS J. Ilm. Pendidik. Bhs. dan Sastra Indones.*, vol. 3, no. 2, p. 59, 2017.
- [18] A. B. Kusuma, "PEMEROLEHAN BAHASA PERTAMA SEBAGAI DASAR PEMBELAJARAN BAHASA KEDUA (Kajian Psikolinguistik)," *Al-Manar*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2018, doi: 10.36668/jal.v5i2.10.
- [19] E. Rohayati, "Buku Psikolinguistik Kajian Teoretik." 2018.
- [20] Sukatin Sukatin, Helen Fasya Sabrina, Khryisma Septiana, Nur Aisyah, and Nur Hafizi, "Psikologi Kepribadian dalam Pendidikan di Sekolah," *J. Pendidik. Dan Ilmu Sos.*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 282–290, 2023, doi: 10.54066/jupendis.v1i3.545.
- [21] R. R. Siregar, "Perkembangan Bahasa Pada Anak Sekolah Dasar/ Mi," *J. Sains Student Res.*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 376–382, 2024, [Online]. Available: <https://doi.org/10.61722/jssr.v2i1.586>
- [22] D. Desrinelti, N. Neviyarni, and I. Murni, "Perkembangan siswa sekolah dasar: tinjauan dari aspek bahasa," *JRTI (Jurnal Ris. Tindakan Indones.*, vol. 6, no. 1, p. 105, 2021, doi: 10.29210/3003910000.
- [23] D. Amelia, *Pengembangan Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di Sekolah Dasar*. Intelektual Edu Media, 2024.