

## STRATEGIES OF PARENTS IN INTRODUCING LANGUAGE TO CHILDREN FROM AN EARLY AGE

Natasya Aprilia Setiana<sup>1</sup>, Chusna Apriyanti<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> STKIP PGRI Pacitan

[setiananatasya05@gmail.com](mailto:setiananatasya05@gmail.com), [chusna.apriyanti@gmail.com](mailto:chusna.apriyanti@gmail.com)

### Abstract

The paper explores parents' strategies to introduce language to their children from an early age. The research is conducted through a descriptive qualitative approach. To gather data, the researcher utilized an online questionnaire via Google Forms, with a sample of 30 parents selected through purposive sampling. The findings indicate that parents commonly use four main strategies to introduce language to their children: interactive games, electronic media (such as TV, tablets, and educational applications), reading storybooks, and enrolling their children in lessons. In addition to these, parents also employ other strategies, including the use of educational videos, picture storybooks, and educational games. However, the research also highlights several challenges parents face when implementing these strategies. These challenges include time constraints, a lack of interest from the child, and a lack of knowledge on effectively introducing language.

Keywords: Strategies, Implementation, Parents

### Introduction

Early introduction of language is one of the essential aspects of child development. At this time, children have extraordinary curiosity. Children tend to learn something related to their desire to fight and develop new skills, including language. During this time, experiences and interactions support children's language skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This early age is an ideal time for learning a language.

Suyadi (2013.9) states that children's intellectual development at 0-4 years has reached 50%, and at 8 years, intellectual development has reached 100%. Data on the presentation of child development shows that early childhood is a golden period for developing all the potential in children. Experts argue that children's age is a golden age.

This time is the right time to put the basics of capacity language. Besides, many aspects of language and language development must be explained. Chomsky is one of the leading theorists in the nativist approach to language development (Cole and Cole, 1996). Primary arguments addressed the inability of such a theory to explain that children know more about language that can be learned since they do not merely understand what children listen to. Children reconstruct the basic grammar rules (Chomsky, 1972).

Early language development involves many issues, including cognition, play skills, social interaction, and oral-motor development. As children awaken to the world at birth, they start a long language development cycle involving the understanding (receptive) and production (expressive) of language. In line with this, Cole and Cole (1996) present Bruner's term of a language acquisition support system, which explores how parent behaviors structure a child's language environment to support language development.

Parents need to understand their duties or roles as parents in introducing or developing children's language so that one day, no problems occur to hinder language development. Parents can do many things to stimulate their children's language skills, including inviting them to watch rhythm, accompanying them to watch television, training them to pronounce new vocabulary, and storytelling.

The role of parents in Children's linguistic development cannot be taken for granted and cannot just be ignored. According to Papalia et al. (2008: 248-249), parents play an essential role in every language development. Parents can communicate since the children are still

babies, including listening to soft music that can stimulate the child’s hearing function and provide comfort for the child and the mother.

## Method

This research used descriptive qualitative. The research design aims to qualitatively describe the strategies used by parents in introducing language to their children from an early age. The data were gathered by implementing an online questionnaire through Google Forms for 30 parents with children aged 2 to 6 years in some villages in Pacitan. Parents were chosen as the sample because parents are the prominent figures who interact with children the most at home. The strategies used directly affect children’s language development. This research can evaluate the different strategies used and understand the inhibiting factors that influence these strategies by involving parents. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique. Twenty main questions in the questionnaire indicate the introduction of language strategies, such as frequency of book reading, use of electronic media for education, and daily verbal interaction. The questions in this questionnaire also involve obstacles to implementing the strategy. The data analysis in this study followed a systematic approach, beginning with the collection of questionnaires. Once the data were gathered, they processed raw data to prepare them for further analysis. This was followed by data coding, where the responses were organized into categories for more straightforward interpretation. A descriptive study was then conducted to summarize the key findings, providing a clear picture of the parents’ strategies for introducing language to their children. Finally, the results were interpreted, drawing conclusions reflecting the overall trends and insights from the research.

## Results

### Strategies for Introducing Language

Based on the questionnaire “Strategies of Parents in Introducing Language to Children from An Early Age” collected through Google Form, the strategies of language introduction by parents to children can be seen in Figure 1.

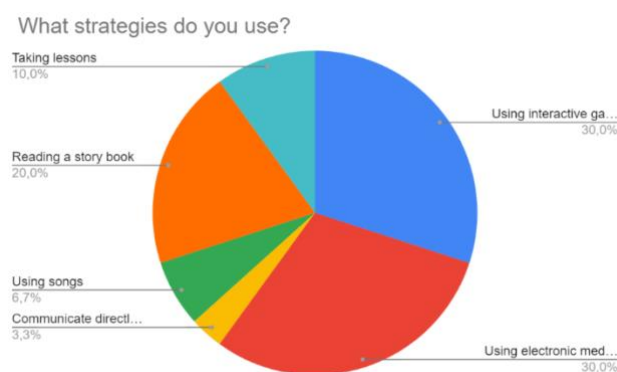


Figure 1: Parents Strategies

The strategy implementation section of the survey provides insights into the various methods parents use to introduce language to their children. The results show that the most commonly used strategies are interactive games and electronic media, chosen by 18 respondents, making up 30% of the total responses. These strategies appeal to parents due to their ability to engage children in a fun and educational manner. Reading storybooks was the next most popular strategy, selected by 6 parents. While not as prevalent as interactive games or electronic media, this method is still valued for its traditional approach to language learning, offering children exposure to new vocabulary through narratives and illustrations.

Taking lessons was a less common choice, with only 3 respondents indicating that they used formal instruction to teach their children a new language. This suggests that while structured education is recognized, it may be seen as less accessible or convenient compared to other methods. Using songs was chosen by 2 respondents, indicating its niche role in language learning. Music can be an effective tool due to the repetition and rhythm, which can help children remember new words and phrases.

The least popular strategy was direct communication with the child using Indonesian, chosen by just 1 respondent. This low number suggests that despite the potential benefits of direct interaction, it may not be perceived as the most effective or practical approach by many parents, possibly due to time constraints or other challenges. The survey also explored the reasons behind parents' choice of strategies, which were grouped into three main categories: effectiveness, ease of use, and child enjoyment. Effectiveness was mentioned by 12 parents, who found the strategies particularly helpful in improving their children's pronunciation and familiarity with languages often heard in educational content.

Ease of use was a significant factor for 10 parents, who appreciated the practicality of strategies like electronic media, which could be easily integrated into their daily routines. The accessibility of online learning materials also contributed to these methods' popularity. 8 parents highlighted child enjoyment as a crucial factor in maintaining their children's interest in learning. Fun and engaging strategies, such as storybooks and interactive games, were more likely to keep children motivated and attentive, which parents noted as necessary for effective language learning.

In conclusion, the survey results reveal parents' preference for engaging, practical, and effective strategies in helping their children learn new languages. The emphasis on balancing these factors suggests that parents are looking for methods to educate and entertain their children, making the learning process enjoyable and successful. The data presented in the graph highlights the varying frequencies at which parents apply different learning strategies for their children, as well as the references they rely on when implementing these strategies. The survey reveals that most respondents (60%) apply their chosen strategy with a moderate frequency, specifically 2-5 times per week. This indicates that 18/30 respondents prefer to use these strategies semi-regularly, balancing between not overusing them and ensuring consistent practice. On the other hand, 5 respondents, or 16.7%, use the strategies more frequently, applying them 7-8 times per week, which suggests a daily or near-daily routine. Meanwhile, 7 respondents (23.3%) apply these strategies only once a week, indicating a more occasional use, possibly due to time constraints or differing educational philosophies.

Regarding the references or guidelines parents use to implement these strategies, the survey shows that a significant majority (73.3%) prefer social media as their primary source of information. This reliance on social media could be attributed to the accessibility, variety, and up-to-date nature of content available on these platforms. Fewer respondents read articles or blogs for guidance, seeking more in-depth and possibly expert-led advice. Additionally, some parents rely on recommendations from friends or relatives, reflecting a preference for trusted, personal advice in applying these strategies.

In summary, the survey results indicate that while parents generally apply learning strategies several times a week, their choice of reference is heavily influenced by the convenience and accessibility of social media. This trend underscores the importance of easily accessible, reliable information sources in supporting parents in their role as educators. Based on the results of the respondents' responses on the Google form, parents apply various strategies to educate their children. Most parents read storybooks every night before their children go to bed to build reading habits and strengthen bonds with 8 people. In addition, parents often engage their children to be active and interested in learning in educative games. They seek out interactive games from social media and the internet and apply them to their children's play

activities to promote creativity and interaction. They also train their children in conversation to develop communication skills and language understanding. Parents also use the song strategy by playing their child’s favorite song. These strategies show parents’ efforts to interact and develop children’s abilities in language.

### Implementation of Strategies in Introducing Language

Strategy implementation must be supported by tools or media supporting the mentioned strategies. The following are the results of the table regarding the tools or materials used in the implementation of educational strategies from Google Forms:

Table 1: Strategy Implementation

Strategy Implementation	Total	Percentage (%)
Picture Storybooks	13	43,3
Flashcards	6	20
Educative Videos	15	50
Language learning app	4	13,3
Songs	8	26,7
Educative games	12	40
Communicate in Indonesian	1	3,3

Based on the results of a survey of 30 respondents regarding the tools or materials used in implementing educational strategies, educational videos were the top choice chosen by 15 respondents. Illustrated storybooks and educational toys were also popular choices, with a selection of 13 people respectively. The dominating use of educational videos shows that visual and interactive approaches are considered very effective in delivering learning materials to children.

Picture storybooks and educational toys also support active engagement and the development of motor and cognitive skills through fun learning. On the other hand, tools such as flashcards or learning cards, learning apps, and songs or music have lower usage, with percentages of 20%, 13.3%, and 26.7%, respectively. Flashcards and learning apps, while useful for repetition and digital interaction, seem less desirable than other tools. Songs or music, which can help with memorization and create a fun learning atmosphere, are less popular than videos or educational toys.

### Obstacles in implementing the strategy

The questionnaire also identified some challenges in the implementation of the strategy used by parents, as shown in the table below from Google Form:

Table 2: Parents Obstacles

Strategy Implementation	Total	Percentage (%)
Time constraints	13	43,3
The child is not interested	12	40
Lack of resources	4	13,3
Lack of support	3	10
Lack of knowledge	9	30
Financial constraints	3	10
Technology constraints	5	16,7

The results summarized above highlight the primary obstacles parents face when implementing language introduction strategies for their children. The most frequently reported challenge is time constraints, with 13 respondents identifying this as a significant issue. The second most common obstacle is a lack of interest from the children, mentioned by 12

respondents. Additionally, 9 respondents indicated that a lack of engagement is a notable barrier to the successful application of these strategies. Other challenges include a lack of resources, cited by 4 respondents, and technological constraints, which were mentioned by 5 respondents. Furthermore, both a lack of support and financial constraints were reported by 3 respondents each.

From this data, overcoming time constraints and child disinterest are critical to the successful implementation of language introduction strategies. While these are the most significant barriers, the issues of engagement and technological limitations also play a considerable role and should not be overlooked. Addressing these challenges could lead to more effective and widespread use of the strategies by parents.

## **Discussions**

### **Strategies for Introducing Language**

#### **Using Interactive Games**

9 parents used the interactive game strategy. Interactive games are games that involve many participants in the game process. Interactive games can entertain as well as educate the public. Interactive games can hone children's motor skills, train children's skills, and can be used as learning tools. According to Clegg (2006), interactive Games involve many participants in the game process, so interactive games maximize the nurturing child's growth and development. The interaction can hone children's motor skills and train children's skills. In line with the opinion of Clegg (2006), interactive games can also build their abilities, especially in terms of. Parents who use interactive games in language learning may tend to be more absorbed into the child's brain and make the child understand faster. The source of interactive games can be very much from the internet, or maybe parents use online learning games such as Kahoot, Duolingo, etc. The interactive games can be made using flashcards or game-based interactive media.

#### **Using electronic media (TV, Tablet, Education applications)**

As seen in the questionnaires as attached to the questionnaire, the second popular strategy is using electronic media, which includes gadgets, TV, and learning apps. A total of 9 parents chose this strategy because all information about learning using electronic media is readily available, and children can choose the way and type they like. Parents also keep up with the times, and a wide range of learning is available through app learning that is provided and easy for children to understand. Supervision and guidance from parents to children must always be done using digital technology. In addition to providing supervision and guidance, parents also need to educate children in using digital technology so that children do not fall into the adverse effects of existing digital technology.

#### **Reading a storybook**

The strategy of reading storybooks to children emerged as a significant method for language acquisition, which six respondents selected. Storybooks offer a structured yet engaging way to introduce new vocabulary, sentence structures, and cultural contexts. Through stories, children can immerse themselves in different scenarios and characters. Some parents choose the storybook reading strategy because of the characteristics of picture storybooks that contain illustrations to explain the narrative. With storybooks or stories accompanied by illustrations, children will more easily understand and absorb the story's content and information, which contains knowledge. It will help them understand and remember new words and phrases. Picture storybooks are very important for children's lives, enriching concepts and providing information through stories with a combination of words and pictures Gonen, Durmusoglu, & Severcan (2009).

Parents have a variety of ways to implement this storybook reading strategy, including reading storybooks before bed and reading storybooks between studies. Reading books before

bed not only helps children to relax and get ready for bed but also provides an opportunity to introduce new vocabulary in a calm atmosphere. Reading storybooks between lessons can give variety and refresh children's minds, making learning more enjoyable. When children start to feel bored or tired of formal learning activities, reading an exciting story can restore their interest and motivation.

### **Taking Lessons**

Parents also use the taking lessons strategy, but this strategy was only chosen by 3 respondents. This method often involves enrolling children in language classes or hiring private tutors who can provide systematic instruction in the target language. In addition to private tutors, parents also take lessons from university students who have open tutoring centers. These lessons are usually designed to cover various aspects of language learning, including grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and conversation practice. The tutoring strategy is reliable and thorough for parents who want to equip their children with solid language skills early on. However, only some parents opt for this strategy because they may be able to implement more exciting ways of introducing language at home and apply the principle of saving costs.

### **Implementation of Strategies in Introducing Language**

#### **Educative Videos**

Materials or tools must also support the implementation of the strategy. The tools often used are educational videos as many as 15 respondents chose educational video support tools. Educational videos are in great demand because learning using video media can provide a fun and not dull atmosphere for children, so children's attention is focused on videos containing learning information. Video media can present physically impossible events to show in real life so that students can learn more about these events. Video media can meet all children with different learning styles, ranging from students with audio, visual, or audio-visual learning methods (Simarmata, 2020).

#### **Picture Storybooks**

Picture storybooks are the most popular media after educational videos. In storybooks, there are pictures as representatives of interrelated stories, and there is also writing that can represent the story displayed by the pictures. Through image media, it can strengthen memory and facilitate understanding in understanding the contents of the story. This explanation is supported by Toha-Sarumpaet (2010: 18), who explains that picture storybooks present stories using pictures. Picture storybooks are the right choice for children because they are fun. Picture storybooks contain a variety of attractive colored picture designs and make children enjoy reading, language processing, and meaningful themes, which are also among the attractions included in picture storybooks. Mantei & Kervin (2014) explain that picture books are an essential form of visual art accessible to children because they provide opportunities for children to explore personal experiences and understand the values contained in family and social life.

#### **Educative games**

13 out of 30 parents use educational games in their flight strategies. This strategy can be used as an example of media and as a learning tool. Educational games are generally used to invite users to gain knowledge. Educational games are used in the world of learning. Educational games combine learning and play. Educational games can also attract children's interest in introducing language. For Reigeluth and Merrill (2016), the reasons for using games for learning are as follows: games connect action and thought. Designed games can provide authentic practice in thinking and working in specific roles and contexts working roles and contexts.

### **Obstacles in implementing the strategy**

#### **Time Constraints**

Time constraints were the most experienced obstacle, with 13 respondents stating this as an issue. Parents tend to have limited time to accompany their children while learning at home because they are busy working. Although parents or caregivers understand the importance of these strategies, they are hampered by their limited time in their daily lives. This time constraint can be caused by factors such as busy work, household responsibilities, and other commitments that make it challenging to consistently apply language strategies to their children. Some parents argued that they needed additional time to utilize resources from other people or family members.

#### **The child is not interested**

Disinterested children were also a significant obstacle, with 12 respondents reporting this. Children's interest is crucial in successfully implementing language strategies because, without solid interest, children are less likely to follow or actively engage in the learning process. Children become disinterested due to interest, motivation, and fatigue. Internal and external factors, such as noise and home conditions, do not support language learning motivation. Imam Musbikin (2009) states that a comfortable and quiet home encourages children to learn. A house was always full of noise, messy house conditions, or stuffy air conditions can reduce children's concentration and passion for learning.

#### **Lack of Knowledge**

Lack of knowledge is also a significant barrier to implementing language introduction strategies for children. Many parents or caregivers may not understand the best methods to introduce a second language to their children. This could be due to insufficient access to relevant information or clear guidelines. Low education can also affect the implementation of language acquisition strategies for children. Parents with low levels of education may lack exposure to practical methods and resources for teaching a second language. They may also lack the necessary skills and knowledge to support language learning effectively.

#### **Conclusion**

Parents often use several popular strategies to introduce language to their children, including using interactive games electronic media, reading a storybook, and taking lessons. The four strategies reflect the importance of technology and media in creating an engaging language learning experience for children. Combining traditional and modern ways establishes a balance between technology and hands-on interaction. In implementing the strategy, parents are also supported by various media that support children's language learning activities, such as educational videos, picture storybooks, and educational games. The media is effective in supporting children's language learning activities, and in addition to being supported by attractive images, it can also increase children's interest. On the other hand, there are several obstacles that most often hinder language acquisition strategies, including time constraints, the child's lack of interest, and parents' lack of knowledge in how to understand and introduce a language, which is an essential aspect in the formation of a child's language.

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