

Does My Child Need a Gadget to Learn How to Speak? A Case Study on the Impact of Gadgets on Early Childhood Speech Development

Safiruddin Al Baqi^{1*}, Fathma Zahara Sholeha²

¹ Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ponorogo, Indonesia

² Institut Agama Islam Riyadlotul Mujahidin, Indonesia

Abstract

The use of gadgets among early childhood has become a common phenomenon in this digital era. Although technology can provide educational benefits, there are concerns about its negative impact on early childhood speech development. This research aims to determine the impact of gadget use on early children's speech development. This research used a qualitative approach with case study techniques. The subjects of this research were 10 children (4 females and 6 males) aged 1 year 8 months to 4 years (average 2.75 years). Subject then divided into two criteria, 5 children who intensively use gadgets and 5 children who are limited in using gadgets (only to video call relatives). The research results show that children who use gadgets intensively at an early age tend to experience delays in speech development. Among the subjects, 4 of the children who diagnosed by speech delay by child psychologist, they need speech therapy in children development center by professional, before they can speak and talk properly like the other children without speech delay. Factors such as duration of use, type of content accessed, and lack of direct interaction with parents or caregivers contribute significantly to these delays. Observations reveal that children who interact more often with gadgets show limited vocabulary, difficulty in constructing sentences, and are less responsive to verbal stimulation from the surrounding environment. Finally, it can be concluded that excessive use of gadgets in early childhood has a significant negative impact on speech development.

Keywords: Children, early childhood, gadget, speech, speech development