

## Enhancing Children's English Vocabulary Through Religious Singing Activities in the Era 4.0

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### Abstract

*The problem in this study is that children often have difficulty in understanding vocabulary, especially vocabulary in English while in Era 4.0 English is a language that is commonly used both in learning at school and in activities at home, so an appropriate technique is needed to improve children's English vocabulary skills with religious singing activities. The research method used is pre-experimental using one group pretest-posttest design. The subjects in this study were 25 students of PAUD Aisyiyah 1 where the research sampling technique used Nonprobability sampling. Each student in this study will be given a pretest to measure vocabulary skills. Furthermore, each student is given treatment by providing a religious singing method using English. After getting the treatment, each student will be tested again on their English vocabulary ability. The data obtained is then tested using Wilcoxon Non-Parametric Statistical testing to test the significance of providing religious singing activities to improve children's English vocabulary skills. Based on the calculation of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test, the Sig value of post-test and pre-test data in the experimental class shows a significant result of 0.000 because 0.000 < (0.05) so it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of religious singing activities on increasing early childhood English vocabulary. This study concludes that religious singing activities are one of the learning techniques that can be applied to improve children's English vocabulary because children enjoy the process of religious singing activities which in addition to being useful for increasing children's English vocabulary can also improve moral abilities, self-confidence and, get closer to learning resources and children learn happily so that it makes it easier to understand lessons.*

**Keywords:** *Religious Singing Method, English Vocabulary, Early Childhood Students.*

### Introduction

Mastery of English is one of the basic assets for a child in Era 4.0. Almost all educational units continue to strive to improve themselves by implementing learning programs with a bilingual concept. This is so that children are accustomed to using English as a second language in addition to their main language, Indonesian. Early childhood education is an educational stimulation aimed at children aged 0-8 years with various activities that can trigger children's development. (Darmayanti et al., 2022).. The aspects developed in early childhood education are aspects of behavioral development with habituation. These aspects include social, emotional, independence, moral values, and religious aspects; as well as the development of basic abilities which include language, cognitive, art, and physical motor development.

One of the aspects developed in early childhood education is the language aspect. According to Hutterlocher in Fertiliiana Dea et al., (2020), the fastest language development occurs between 2.5 to 5 years and compared to the *toddler* period, language development in preschool is more complex. For this reason, language learning needs to be taught based on the stages of development. Children as the subject of learning in Early Childhood Education (ECE) must understand that language learning is a supporter of success in learning every field of study because it is often a means of thinking scientifically (MS. Sumantri, 2005). The components of the application of language skills in early childhood include listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, and writing skills. (Amalia et al., 2020). These four components must be mastered by children

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so that their language development can take place properly. One of the existing components is speaking skills, where speaking skills can be achieved of them by increasing children's vocabulary mastery.

Vocabulary learning is a big and ongoing task, so teachers as learners must be involved in it by providing input and support to their students. The lack of vocabulary development in children makes it difficult for them to express their feelings and opinions in communication. (Luthfillah et al., 2022). This will then be even more difficult for children if language learning is taught using English. Children will find it more difficult to understand the vocabulary taught, especially if the method used is monotonous for children. This of course will affect the child's ability to absorb information because the presentation is done in a way or method that is not following the child's interests. According to Nugrahani (2017) in general, teachers still have difficulties in developing appropriate methods of teaching in the classroom which has an impact on the development of children's abilities.

Various ways can be done to improve children's vocabulary skills, one of which is by singing both secular and religious songs. Research conducted by Busse et al., (2021) showed a correlation between the effectiveness of singing activities as a method used in language learning. Singing is a basic musical activity because children can hear through their senses, voicing the highs and lows of musical notes with their voices. (Kamtini & Husni Wardi Tanjung, 2005).. For children, singing is a fun activity, and this singing experience provides satisfaction. Singing is also a tool for children to express their thoughts and feelings, because singing is a fun activity for children, especially if the theme of the song performed is religious. In addition to increasing children's vocabulary skills, it can also increase children's understanding of religious and moral values because children's character-building must start from an early age either through family or educational institutions (Sutarman et al., 2015). (Sutarman et al., 2022).. This is also supported by Hermawan & Fathonah (2020) who state that songs sung by children have relevance to the development of religious and moral values in early childhood.

Singing is one of the learning techniques that can be used as an alternative to learning English, especially if the songs performed are songs with religious themes. This is because the cultivation of religious and moral values through interesting and fun Islamic singing lessons has an impact on the habituation of adab and the introduction of habits in everyday life. Children are fluent in saying greetings, recognizing the pillars of Islam, recognizing the Prophets, being grateful to Allah, and becoming accustomed to praying. (Suwarti et al., 2023).. According to Albertus (Muhtar & Dallyono, 2020). According to Albertus (Muhtar & Dallyono, 2020), children's character development will not develop well if it is not accompanied by appropriate management and involves school-based education, culture, and society to build an effective process. In addition, the effectiveness of singing activities needs to be studied further so that the language learning process, especially English, becomes more optimal. For this reason, this study aims to examine the effect of religious singing activities in increasing children's English vocabulary.

## Literature Review

### *Early Childhood Student Development*

Language development is the increasing ability to master the means of communication, both oral communication, writing, and using signs. Language development that uses independent expression models, both oral and written, based on reading materials will further develop children's language skills. (Iskandar Wassid, 2011). Language is a tool to communicate with others. Language is a tool for thinking, expressing oneself, and communicating. Language allows children to translate experiences into symbols that can be used to communicate and think. Children acquire language skills from birth until the age of 6, they never learn language, especially vocabulary specifically. However, by the end of early childhood, the average child has stored more than 14,000 vocabulary words. (Suyadi, 2010).

In later development, children can add vocabulary independently in the form of good communication. Montessori in Suyadi (2010) states that, when children "learn" language through interaction with adults, children not only "learn" the redaction of words and sentences, but also the structure of the words and sentences themselves. Language is an important aspect of development in infancy and childhood. Through

language, the child communicates with the primary environment, namely the mother, parents, and people in the home and wider environment.

Progress in language skills goes hand in hand with physical, mental, intellectual, and social development. In general, the stages of child development can be divided into several age ranges, each of which exhibits its characteristics. Most children begin their language development by crying to express their response to various stimulants. After that, the child starts cooing, which is reciting meaningless sounds repeatedly. (Mansur, 2011).

Aspects related to children's language development according to Jamaris (Ahmad Susanto, 2011) can be divided into three types, namely:

- Vocabulary; As children develop and experience interacting with their environment, their vocabulary develops rapidly. This happens along with the development of other linguistic aspects that are strongly influenced by children's curiosity, namely through the use of language in the social context of their lives.
- Syntax (grammar); Although children have not yet learned grammar, through examples of language heard and seen by children in their environment, children can already use spoken language with good sentence structure.
- Semantic; Semantic means the use of words according to their purpose. Kindergarten children can express their wishes, refusals, and opinions using the right words and sentences.

From the description above, it can be concluded that the aspect of children's language development determines their ability to understand and communicate with others.

#### *Early Childhood Vocabulary Development*

Vocabulary development is a series of rapid changes in a child's language from infancy to age 6. By this age, the average child has stored more than 14,000 vocabulary words. Children's vocabulary development occurs through the stages of language development. Progress in language skills goes hand in hand with physical, mental, intellectual, and social development.

In addition, vocabulary plays an important role in everyday human life. As stated by Ismawati in Miranti et al. (Suyadi, 2010) that vocabulary is a very important element of language, because one's thoughts can only be clearly understood by others if expressed using vocabulary. The development of one's vocabulary mastery affects the ability and skills in expressing ideas and language appropriately. From this description, it can be concluded that what is meant by vocabulary development is a series of language changes in children that are very rapid from infancy to the age of 6 years. Where these changes can increase more widely by the stages of child language development so that the language can be understood by others.

Vocabulary is the vocabulary of a language. The quality of a person's language skills depends on the quantity and quality of their vocabulary. The richer or better the vocabulary, the more skillful the language. Types of vocabulary according to Rahmawati, et al. (Hardiyanti et al., 2008) consists of basic vocabulary as vocabulary that is not easily changed or has very little possibility of being picked up from other languages, general vocabulary is vocabulary that has a wide scope of use and can overcome various things, special vocabulary is a word that is special, narrow, and limited in use. In developing early childhood vocabulary through learning activities, M. Syukron Maksum (2010) provides several learning techniques such as listening to words, pronouncing words, exploring the meaning of words, reading words, and writing words.

#### *Singing Method*

The singing method is a learning method that uses singing media as a means of learning for children. Usually, the song sung is adjusted to the material to be taught (Muliawan & Unggul Jasa, 2009). Singing makes the learning atmosphere cheerful so that children's development can be optimally stimulated. In principle, the task of PAUD institutions is to develop all aspects of themselves, both physical-motor, social, emotional, intellectual, language, and art, as well as morals and religion. Singing activities are inseparable from early childhood. Children love to sing while clapping and dancing. By using the singing method in every lesson, children will be able to stimulate their development, especially in speaking and interacting with

their environment. (M. Fadillah, 2014). In addition, according to Wiyani (in Ardi Wiyani Novan, 2014). through singing activities the learning atmosphere will be more fun, and exciting, make children happy, eliminate sadness, children feel entertained and more excited so that the messages conveyed are more easily and quickly accepted and absorbed by children.

From the description above, it can be concluded that the singing method is a learning method that creates a joyful learning atmosphere so that children's development can be optimally stimulated. By using the singing method in every lesson, children will easily understand the lessons delivered by the teacher, because basically, early childhood is very happy to sing.

### Research Methods

The research method used is *Pre Experimental* using a *one-group pretest-posttest design*. The subjects in this study were 25 students of PAUD Aisyiyah 1 where the research sampling technique used *Nonprobability* sampling which is a sampling technique that uses a sample of choices based on the subjectivity of the researcher or not random. Each student in this study will be given a pretest to measure vocabulary skills. Furthermore, each student is given treatment by providing religious singing methods using English. After getting the treatment, each student will be tested again on his/her English vocabulary ability using the same measuring instrument at the time of the pretest. The data obtained is then tested using Wilcoxon Non-Parametric Statistical testing to test the significance of providing religious singing methods to improve children's English vocabulary skills.

## Results and Discussion

### Results

Based on the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test calculation, the Sig value of post-test and pre-test data in the experimental class shows a significant result of 0.000 because  $0.000 > \alpha (0.05)$  so it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of religious singing activities on increasing early childhood English vocabulary.

**Table 1.** Test Statistics Vocabulary Posttest - Vocabulary Pretest

Z	-4.382 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

- Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
- Based on negative ranks.

The results of descriptive statistical analysis show the (negative) difference between vocabulary skills for the pre-test and post-test is ), both in the N value, Mean Rank, and Sum Rank. A value of 0 indicates no decrease from pre-test to post-test scores. Furthermore, the (positive) difference between vocabulary ability for the pre-test and post-test shows an increase in the English vocabulary of 26 children in this study, where the Mean Rank shows a value of 13 and the Sum Rank shows a value of 3.256.

**Table 2.** Ranks

N		Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Vocabulary Posttest - Vocabulary Pretest	Negative Ranks	0a	.00
	Positive Ranks	25b	325.00
	Ties	0c	
	Total	25	

- Posttest Vocabulary < Pretest Vocabulary

- Posttest Vocabulary > Pretest Vocabulary
- Posttest Vocabulary = Pretest Vocabulary

## Discussion

Religious singing is one of the learning techniques that can be applied to improve children's English vocabulary. The results of this study indicate a significant effect of religious singing activities on improving children's English vocabulary skills. This is in line with the results of research conducted by Gumiandari (2021) regarding the introduction of English language skills through singing activities, the results of which show that children can easily recognize vocabulary and automatically increase children's English vocabulary skills. Research conducted by Salwiah & Asmuddin (2021) also shows the results that there is an increase in language skills in children through singing activities. In addition, singing activities can also improve children's ability to write and remember vocabulary. (Mohd Yusof et al., 2016).

Based on the results of the research and the exposure of previous studies related to the effect of singing activities on improving children's English vocabulary skills, the results of this study can be used as a reference for teachers when conducting classroom learning. The difficulty often encountered by teachers is when they try to find the right technique to teach and at the same time be liked by children. When singing activities are applied in the classroom, it is expected that the same results as this study will also be obtained by teachers when teaching vocabulary skills to children. The increase in children's vocabulary will affect the improvement of children's language development. Language is considered something special because language is a means of human thinking which is the initial source of human understanding and knowledge. (Purba et al., 2022).

In addition to being able to improve English vocabulary skills in children, this research shows children's interest in learning. Singing activities can create a pleasant atmosphere for children and increase children's interest in learning. (Prayudha et al., 2021). In addition, children become effective and interested in learning English (Luo, 2019). (Luo, 2019) so that of course, it will affect the improvement of children's English language skills. When the right technique is given to children while learning, children will easily understand the learning material provided by the teacher and be more enthusiastic in participating in learning. Children will also be more confident (Lestari & Handayani, 2017), especially when showing their abilities to others.

This study also showed an increase in children's morale as indicated by changes in children's activities before and after the research, where before the research was conducted, children rarely said greetings and prayed before eating, but after the research was conducted, children were fluent in greeting the teacher before entering the classroom and praying before eating. The results of this study support the results of research conducted by Rukmana et al., (2022) which states that the Islamic singing method can increase recognition of Allah, understanding of religion, carrying out Allah's commands and staying away from His prohibitions, and children show good behavior.

Another benefit that can be obtained when implementing singing activities in the learning process is that singing activities invite children to get closer to the real source of learning, namely introducing nature and the surrounding environment by singing. Singing activities make it easier for children to directly get to know the environment more closely and make it easier for children to remember the names of nature and the environment around children which refers to experience and environmental education which greatly affects naturalist intelligence. (Meilia et al., 2023).

Singing activities provide many benefits for children, therefore singing activities should be used as a method or technique used in the learning process so that it can help children learn, especially when children learn vocabulary in English by singing religious songs.

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