

# Language Mastering Reflected In The Speaking Skill Of Mentally Retarded Students at SLBN 1 Jombang East Java, Indonesia

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## Abstract

This research focused on the language mastering of mentally retarded student in terms of the speaking skill at SLBN 1 Jombang. This research problem was formulated how the speaking skill could be mastered by third grade mentally retarded student at SLBN 1 Jombang. Speaking skill means a skill taught to students to be able to speak well in reciting each letter in alphabet, each consonant, then each word, and how to pronounce them correctly. It aimed that student has no difficulty to pronounce the articulation by using manipulative media to facilitate students' understanding in speaking as well as analyzing the speaking skill of mentally retarded student. It was conducted to facilitate the teaching learning process in the classroom, to communicate in the community and to introduce how mentally retarded students pronounce letters and words. The researchers chose one research subject from one of the mentally retarded students, Aisyah. The method employed in this research was descriptive qualitative method because they tried to describe the pronounced words, mimicked words for speaking skills by introducing the letters while interviewing the subject. The results showed that the learning outcomes of Aisyah had good development. It was proved by Aisyah's better performance seen from Aisyah's learning book note, Cindi's learning in speaking. Cindi's learning development can be known by knowing the letters and vocabularies' pronunciation obtained when interacting with teammates, teachers and family environment.

**Keywords:** Language Mastering, Speaking Skill, Mental Retardation, Articulation, Pronunciation

## 1. Introduction

Language mastering is a process of mastering a language naturally performed by children when they learn their native language. There are several factors that affect children's language mastering both internally and externally. Internal factors are influenced by readiness in a child such as language instincts. In addition, there are several external factors that affect language mastering in children, for example, the child's environment is good the school environment, family and community. When a child acquires language, there are two processes experienced by a child, namely; process performance and process competence.

Furthermore, the discussion of the language mastering related to previous topics because how humans can perceive and understand the utterance of others. It is the first element that must be mastered by humans in language. Humans can produce utterances if they know the rules that must be followed obtained since childhood. Language skills include four aspects: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Based on the four skills, the main skills of this research are reading and writing. Mentally retarded children can learn well. They must be able to speak. Children with special needs because of natural intelligence limitations become introvert, shy, and difficult in studying lessons in their schools. Such this situation is not like normal children in interacting in their society .

### 1.1. Objectives

The objectives of this research was to facilitate the teaching learning process in the classroom, to communicate in the community and to introduce how mentally retarded students pronounce letters and words. Thus, Language

mastering of students needs to be studied including for mentally retarded student as experienced by one of the students at SLBN 1 Jombang , East Java, Indonesia.

## 2. Literature Review

Many children prefer speaking to listening, they think that listening is slow activity and more difficult to understand. People need speaking skill to express their feelings or ideas. Thus, speaking skill is needed both at school and in society. Speaking skills are very important for humans from birth. Speaking ability In essence, it is the ability to have and express ideas logically and systematically, to pour them into linguistic codes according to the language rules used in the context of appropriate communication events, and to pronounce them fluently and clearly. (Tarigan, 2008: 11). However, the development of language acquisition in children will be more stable to be observed by measuring their understanding and speech production in the form of word, phrase, or sentence acquisition and reasoning. This indicates that the acquisition of language in terms of speaking skills will depend on qualitative changes in children's thinking. So that we can study and find the factors or processes of how children acquire language which shows an important relationship between the success of children's language acquisition in the early stages of speaking skills and the internalization of language rules. (Badger, Julia R. et.al. 2020).

There are some theories were applied in this study. They are Psycholinguistics, Tunagrahita (Mentally Retarded) and Classification of Mentally Retarded Children. In etymology, psycholinguistics is formed from the words "psychology" and "linguistic", two different fields of science and each one stands alone with different procedures and methods. psychology examines the behavior of the language or the process of language while linguistics examines the structure of language (Chaer, 1994: 5). Therefore, Psycholinguistics is a study of language use and language acquisition by humans. The studies of psycholinguistic have different aspects, the first aspect is the acquisition of how children learn languages and the second aspect is language use which means the use of language by adolescence. Levelt in (Mar'at, 2011: 1).

Psycholinguistics is a combination of two words, 'psychology' and 'linguistics'. Psycholinguistics studies psychological and neurobiological factors that enable humans to acquire, use and understand a language. The original study was more philosophical because there was still little understanding of how the human brain functions. Therefore, psycholinguistics is very closely related to cognitive psychology. Modern researches use biology, neurology, science cognitive and information theory to learn how the brain processes language. Psycholinguistics in this study is used to provide ease of learning for mentally retarded students whose abilities are in below average so learning is needed specifically in this research. Researchers take two objects used as a comparison associated with linguistics researches which are in the form of speaking skill, namely the letters of the alphabet. There are three components of speaking in language learning difficulties. There are articulation, sound and fluency in speaking. The damage to speech organs associated with one or more of these components can cause difficulties in speaking. (Mulyono, 2010: 190).

Furthermore, Tunagrahita (Mentally Retarded) in Somantri (2006: 103), tunagrahita (mentally retarded) is a term used to refer to children who have intellectual abilities below the average. Mentally retarded children understand the concept of *Mental Age (MA) first*. *Mental Age* is a mental ability possessed by a child at a certain age. Children who have below-average intelligence experience behavioral barriers, adjustments and occur during their growth. Tunagrahita (mentally retarded) have similar terms such as feeble-minded and Mental Retarded. Some studies concluded that speaking skill is expressions of mentally retarded children who can freely express what will be spoken according to their own language. Mentally retarded refers to the function of the general intellect which is clearly below the average along with deficiencies in behavioral adaptation and takes place in the growth period.

Finally, Classification of Mentally Retarded Children according to AAMD (American Association on Mental Deficiency) and PP No. 72, 1991 in Amin (1995: 22-24) the classification of mentally retarded children is divided into three groups: Firstly, Mild Mental retardation. This group has hampered intelligence and social adaptation but they have the ability to develop in the fields of academic learning, social adjustment and ability to work. Mild mental retardation is also called *moron* or *debil*. according to Binet, mild mental retardation groups have IQs between 68-52, and according to the Weschler Scale, mild mental retardation groups have an IQ of 69-55. Mental retardation can still learn to read, write and count simply. Children with mental retardation will get achievement on themselves by providing appropriate and good guidance and research.

Secondly, moderate mental retardation in which Mentally retarded children have general intellectual abilities and behavioral adaptation under mild mental retardation. They can learn school skills for functional purposes, achieve a level of "social responsibility" and achieve adjustment as workers with assistance. Children with mental retardation are also called *imbesil*. This mentally retarded group has IQ 51-36 on the Binet Scale and 54-

40 on the Wechler Scale. Children with mental retardation are able to achieve MA development approximately 7 years. Moderate mental retardation can be educated to take care of themselves, protect themselves from hazards such as avoiding fires, walking on the highway, sheltering from the rain. Finally, It is Heavy and very severe mental retardation. This group generally has almost no ability to be trained to take care of themselves to carry out socialization and working. Among them (to a certain extent) there are those who can take care of themselves and those who can communicate in a simple manner and those who can adjust to the very limited surrounding environment. These severely retarded children are often called idiots. Heavy mental retardation groups can be distinguished between severe and very severe mentally retarded children. Severe mental retardation have an IQ between 32-20 on the Binet Scale and between 39-25 on the Wechler Scale. Very severe mentally retarded children have an IQ below 24 on the Scale Wechler (Somantri, 106-108: 2006).

### **3. Methods**

This study was aimed at examining the process of acquiring language for children with special needs, especially in speaking skills, so the authors use a qualitative approach in accordance with qualitative characteristics. By adopting the model by Litoseli (2010: 209-211), there are several stages of research starting to select the topic or issue to be studied, how to obtain data and analyze it and make conclusions from the results of data analysts. The procedure is as follows; Data obtained by recording and documentation to categorize the processes of what the research subjects experienced in acquiring language, especially in speaking skills.

### **4. Data Collection**

The data source is the subject from a research obtained by the researcher. The subject is the person who responds or answers the researchers' questions. Sources of data in this research are students with mental retardation at SLBN 1 Jombang in the third grade. The object of this research is only one student because the student is from mild mental retardation. The research data is a research material. It is the available material because the material has kinds of utterances (Mahsun, 2005: 19). The data in the research are alphabetical vocabulary, detecting and imitating vocabulary. The data is taken from what students do on the aspects of speaking skills that will be carried out by a third grade mentally retarded student at SLBN1 Jombang.

Data Collection was done through observation, recording and data transcription. Observation is the stage of research by collecting and classifying all data carefully, without giving any theory (Djajudarma, 2010: 27). the observation is carried out at the beginning of the researchers entering the school by observing the object. Then the researchers are given the opportunity to choose the subject in accordance with the opinions of the teacher. The research process is conducted by looking directly at the subject, and observing the activities of mentally retarded children. Then, recording recorded images of all conversations carried out by the student starting the learning process and the interview process with the researchers. The recording process is carried out by a recording tool. Therefore, the researchers recorded all activities related to the observation process at SLBN1 Jombang. Data transcription that was obtained from recordings were transcribed on notes so that the researchers get data in the form of writing. The researchers also had the results of interview. The data were matched between the results of the recording and the interview that had been transcribed at the time of the observation.

Data analysis, then, was done by identifying data by re-reading, identifying, grouping, describing, analyzing, and concluding the results. Collecting data in the form of speaking skill mastery from mentally retarded students uses manipulative media in the four grade of SLBN1 Jombang. The researchers entered the data analyzed by using descriptive qualitative. The data in the form of media applications is obtained through the conversation process and showing pictures of the students. The following is data obtained by researchers.

## **5. Results and Discussion**

### **5.1. The respondent profile**

The respondent in this research is Aisyah. She is one of the students at four grade of SDLB Tembelang, East Java, Indonesia. SLBN 1 Jombang is Sekolah Dasar Luar Biasa or (Special-Needed Elementary School) She is special-need student at the school because having mentally retarded (tunagrahita).

### **5.2. Aisyah's Language Mastering in term of Spelling Skill**

The discussion of language development on mentally retarded student at SDLB is the student who is expected to know how to speak well though a long language mastering process. The research process at SLBN1 Jombang was conducted in the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade. Based on the research aim above, thus, the researchers chose one subject of mentally retarded students in the research of language mastering for mentally retarded students in teaching learning proses. The subject is a mild mental retardation student named Aisyah . There are data related to the developing of mastering language skills of the respondent, from speaking skill, dictation and describing

images and dictation in writing. Spelling is one of the speaking skills to know the development of language mastering. The dialog below showed the interaction in spelling activities in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The Development of language mastering in term of spelling some letters

Teacher's Question	Student's Answers	Researchers' Findings
What letter are these?	/ a, i, e, o, u, / / b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z/	The letter "f" was pronounced (ep) and the letter "q" was pronounced (khi)

The table 1 showed that the student placed the letters vocal and consonant on the board based on her ability to recognize several letters. The letters were pasted on the board then the teacher explained the letters and the student mimicked. The student's ability to recognize letters is good enough because she is able to sort letters even though it takes a little longer time to remember in spelling the letters of the alphabet. She mentioned letters well but the letter "f" was pronounced (ep) and the letter "q" was pronounced (khi)

### 5.3. Aisyah's Language Mastering in terms of Dictation and Describing Images

Dictation and describing object can be used to know the development of language mastering as seen in the following table 2.

Table 2: The Development of language mastering in term of spelling some letters and Describing Object

Teacher's Question	Student's Answers	Researchers' Findings
What fruit is this?	/ w,o,r,t,e,l /	Right composition
What color is it?	<i>Tuning</i>	Misspelling of " <i>Tuning</i> " that should be " <i>Kuning</i> "
What fruit is this?	/ n, a, n, a, s/	Right spelling
What color is it?	<i>oren</i> (orange)	Right composition
What fruit is this?	/ b, a, n,g,k,u,a,n, g /	Misspelling
What color is it?	It's not clear	Misspelling of " <i>bengkoang</i> " that should be " <i>bangkuang</i> "
What fruit is this?	/ d, e, l, i, m, a /	Right composition
What color is it?	<i>Abu-abu</i> (Gray)	Right spelling

The table 2 showed that the student mentioned *wortel*, when the letters of the alphabet are X, Y, Z. The student can mention the thing or the object but she cannot arrange the letters of the alphabet to be words. To mention the color of an apple which color is *kuning* (yellow), she mentioned *tuning*. Furthermore, the student can mention the name of the fruit and can sort the letters of *nanas* (orange) even though it is helped by spelling so that the student can begin to remember the fruit of *nanas* (orange). Mimicking the fruit of *nanas* (orange) is very good because the consonant of *nanas* are not changed. To mention the fruit of *bengkoang*, the student mentions *bangkuang*, then for the letters of the alphabet, a,u,e the spelling of the letters of the fruit should be in the sort of *bangkuang*. Aisyah has ability to mention fruits but she cannot arrange the letters properly and correctly.

In Aisyah's learning process, she cannot mention the letters of *delima*. It becomes o, n, j, s, R, q, k, m. In good writing, the letters should be sorted as *delima*. The development of Aisyah's learning process in composing letters of the alphabet is still difficult but she can mention the fruit presented in the board.

### 5.4. Aisyah's Language Mastering in terms of Spelling and Mentioning Alphabets

This part discussed the results referring to the spelling ability and mentioning alphabets by the respondent as seen on table 3.

Table 3: The Development of language mastering in term of spelling some letters and Mentioning Objects

Teacher's Question	Student's Answers	Reserchers' Findings
What line is it?	/ l,u,r,u,s/, /l.e, n, g, k, u, n, g /, / t,e,g,a,k//	The students could answer the teacher's questions appropriately
What letters are these, Aisyah?	X and Y	The student could mention the names of alphabet
Aisyah, I will show you how to write. Ok?	Yes	The student could answer the teacher's questions appropriately
What letters are these, Aisyah?	B and D	The student could mention the names of alphabet appropriately
What are these letters, Aisyah?	P and V	The student could mention the names of alphabet appropriately

Table 3 showed the student's development of language mastering in terms of answering the teacher's questions. Aisyah answered by mentioning the the lines according to the specified line so that it is not difficult in moving the hand to mention several lines. She dictates and bolded the lines from the slash to the curved line. The process of bolding is not so neat when Aisyah is imitating the lines in her book. Aisyah is able to remember the names of the lines printed on the book such as mentioning sleep lines, curved lines, slashes. Aisyah is very happy because she can learn to remember the letters of the alphabet and learn to draw in bolding letters. Aisyah has no difficulty to imitate the letters of the alphabet because she is able to write capital letter (X) and small letter (x) well and write capital letter (Y) and small letter (y). Aisyah also mentioned and bolded the letters of B and D very well and correctly and bolds the letters of C and D well. She has a little difficulty to differentiate the capital letter of (B) and small letter of (b) because of the same shape but in differentiating the capital letter of (D) and small letter of (d) is easy. Her ability to bold and dictate letters is good, even though the teacher must give an example first because she sometimes forgot the process of remembering the writing and mastery of letters. The development of the student's learning process in learning to bold capital letter (P), she could bold it well but she has a little difficulty to bold small letter (p) because of the curvature in its letter. In bolding the capital letter (V) and small letter (v), Aisyah could bold well because the letters are almost same but the small letter of (v) has a slight curve.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the language mastering of mentally retarded students on speaking skill at SLBN 1 Jombang, it can be concluded that the mastering of speaking skill, dictating and imitating the reading of letters, in mentally retarded students at SLBN 1 Jombang can be proved from student's notebook in the school. This can be seen from the student's understanding the material through the media used by the teacher to find out how the student has mastered writing skill and reading skill.

Thus, mentally retarded student or mental retardation is any condition of intellectual development experiencing problems so that they do not reach the stage of development well and optimally when they are compared to other normal students. Mentally retarded students can get good learning in schools if they are trained with media to speak starting from consonants to good pronunciation. This activity influences their developments in learning activities in their school.

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**Heny Sulistyowati** was born in Jombang City, East Java, Indonesia. He completed his education from Elementary to High School in Jombang City. Then he continued her Undergraduate Degree in Indonesian Language and Literature Study Program at the State University of Jember, Jember, East Java and Masters from Padjajaran University, Bandung, Indonesia and completed her Doctoral Degree at the State University of Malang, Malang, Indonesia. Heny Sulistyowati is a Senior Lecturer at the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program, STKIP PGRI Jombang, Indonesia since 1992 until now. Apart from being a teacher, Heny Sulistyowati is also a freelance writer in various media. The courses taught include Introduction to Linguistics, Psycholinguistics. Heny Sulistyowati can be contacted at [heny.sulistyowati@gmail.com](mailto:heny.sulistyowati@gmail.com) or +62-85850028382

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