

Implementation of International-Based Curriculum Alfa and Friends to Development Early Childhood Language

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Abstract

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Early childhood education plays a vital role in language development, which is essential for children's overall growth and future success. This research aims to describe the implementation of an international curriculum to support language development. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews with the teacher and a class teacher, observations involving 17 children, and document analysis including lesson plans and student assignments. Thematic analysis was conducted to fully interpret the data collected. The results show the curriculum stimulates language development in children. The study highlights the importance of innovative and interactive methods, these findings have important implications for curriculum design, encouraging the adoption of similar approaches to improve children's early language acquisition and holistic development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood language development must be encouraged from an early age, because language plays an important role in human interaction (Ita et al., 2020). Language development is one of the many developmental areas that must be addressed in Kindergarten. Children's language development includes four stages, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing (Kholilullah, & Hamdan, 2020). Language development is a process that aims to improve children's language skills based on aspects of language mastery, especially the ability to speak, listen, read, and write (Zein, R., & Puspita, V, 2021). Language skills are generally referred to as a set of skills, which are components of knowledge. People who have a significant influence on the concept of language knowledge are (Carroll, J.A., & Wilson, E.E., 1993). According to him, the concept of language knowledge includes four skill approaches, namely listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Language as a way of obtaining information, language as a tool for social interaction (Yulsyofriend, & Vivi Anggraini, I. Y, 2019).

Language skills are essential for a child's social development because they must understand others and communicate effectively to demonstrate their abilities. Language skills are essential for a child's social competence because they are essential for understanding others, communicating effectively, and demonstrating social skills (Bawono, 2017). Language acts as a means of communication in conveying thoughts, feelings, and opinions (Marputri, R., et al., 2016). Because children must develop their language to be able to communicate the knowledge they will receive during the learning process (Safikri Taufiqurrahman, S. S, 2019). Language can also be interpreted as complete and effective communication to convey ideas, messages, intentions, feelings, and opinions to others (Masnipal, 2018). Language development in children can be predicted by taking into account the child's environmental or social experiences during the prenatal and postnatal periods (Al Hammadi, & Faizah Saleh, 2017).

Efforts aimed at improving language skills in early childhood require activities that can improve children's language skills, including stimulation and guidance that promotes children's language development, thus building a key foundation for children's language development in the future (Triningsih et al., 2022). Newborns can

communicate with their caregivers through a variety of ways, such as crying, smiling, or body movements (Arfa et al., 2022).

According to (Jahja, 2011), language ability refers to the ability to interact with others through various forms of communication, which includes the expression of thoughts and emotions through symbols to convey understanding. These forms include speech, writing, gestures, numbers, paintings, and facial expressions. There are various aspects that determine language development in children. These aspects require careful consideration so that children's language development develops according to its stages. Language skill development includes the development of listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills. Based on the characteristics of early childhood, the most important aspect of language skills that must be developed is listening and speaking skills (Wiyani, 2014). Some of the language proficiency characteristics of 5-6-year-olds are detailed, as detailed by Papilla, Olds, and Fledman (2008), Hetherington and Park, Carey and Clark (as followed in Santrock, 2011), are as follows: (a) they are able to pronounce more than 2,600 words, (b) children of this age group construct sentences containing six to eight words, (c) they understand more than 20,000 words, (d) they have the ability to communicate clearly, (e) they can explain the meaning of simple words, (f) they are proficient in using conjunctions, prepositions, and articles, (g) their vocabulary includes descriptors such as color, size, shape, taste, smell, beauty, speed, temperature, difference, comparison, distance, and texture (coarse or smooth), (h) they recognize many letters, (i) they show proficiency in active listening, (j) they actively engage in conversation, (k) their dialogue involves various comments about their actions, other people's actions, and their observations, (l) Children aged 5-6 years show the ability to express themselves, write, read, and even write poetry.

Vygotsky stated that culture and social environment are the most important, which affects the formation of children's knowledge. Children can learn through songs, language, art, and games. Vygotsky also argues that children can learn through interaction and cooperation with others (Fitriani, F., & Maemonah, M, 2020). Vygotsky said that behind the development of children, language plays an important role, because language development is closely related to language development, cognitive development. He also argued that language is a very important communication in human life because language is a tool to express thoughts and feelings to others and a tool to understand the feelings and thoughts of others (Anggraini, N, 2021).

Language development in children can be observed through regular interaction with family members or other individuals. This includes spontaneous dialogue that occurs when a child has basic needs such as eating, sleeping, going to school, and engaging in other simple communication activities with parents. Children not only communicate with others at home, but also communicate with friends, teachers, and individuals around them. Children's communication can happen anytime and anywhere (Supriyadi, E., & Fitriani, F, 2019). When children engage in communication, they will usually use their own unique language or a language that is commonly used in everyday interactions. Children's language skills are observed through the stages of child development in the age range of 1-4 years. Children's language skills are very important because the language they have will be used for communication purposes. If a child's language skills are lacking or not fluent, the child's communication will also be poor. Poor language skills in children are influenced by the surrounding environment (Zainuddin, Z., & Hasanah, U, 2022). New words that children hear will be incorporated into their vocabulary because they tend to imitate new things easily, especially in preschool age. Children's language is shaped based on their immediate environment. Language development in children has been a source of attraction for centuries. Little by little and without formal instruction, the child learns to communicate. They learn to express meaning through the use of verbal symbols and the systematic and structured use of words (Otto, B, 2015).

Language problems in early childhood are one of the main challenges in the world of education, especially in the current era of globalization (Fadilah Shafitri & Nur Amalia, 2024). Language skills are very important as a means of communication and the basis of a child's cognitive, social and emotional development. However, in practice, many children have difficulty developing language skills, both in their mother tongue and in a foreign language (Sirait, H, 2016). Factors such as lack of environmental stimulation, ineffective learning methods and low parental involvement in children's language learning further exacerbate this situation. In addition, the difference in the level of access to quality education also creates a gap in language skills between groups of children. This problem requires an innovative approach that is able to integrate interaction-based learning methods, the use of technology and the active participation of teachers and parents to encourage optimal children's language development (Ningsih, R., & Mahyuddin, M, 2021).

The provision of early childhood education through non-formal channels is regulated both by the community and based on the special needs of the community, especially for children who are not accommodated in formal education environments such as kindergarten or early childhood education (Lestari, R., & Sari, D, 2019). Furthermore, the implementation of informal education is carried out by the family or the surrounding environment. There are several principles of early childhood education, including: (1) children as active learners, which means that education is innovatively structured to encourage active learning. Children will get used to acquiring and developing various knowledge, skills, and abilities through various activities such as observation, exploration, discovery, discussion, conclusion, and self-expression regarding the things they have discovered. (2) Children acquire knowledge by utilizing their sensory abilities and engaging the five senses. According to

Montessori's perspective, he argues that the five senses serve as channels for various forms of information and knowledge to be absorbed by the human brain, especially in children. Given its important role, each of the five senses must be given the opportunity to grow according to its assigned function. (3) children build their own understanding. From birth, children are endowed with various abilities. They acquire knowledge and skills from their life experiences and the knowledge accumulated during their lives. (4) Children think through concrete objects. Children use concrete objects to facilitate cognitive processes. Children have the ability to recall information that is visually real. Children will have an easier time remembering information when presented in the form of symbols. It is hoped that children can gain knowledge and experience effectively through concrete objects. (5) Children gain knowledge from the surrounding environment. Education is a deliberate and organized effort to facilitate the development of a child's potential optimally, thus allowing them to adjust effectively to the surrounding environment. The definition mentioned above implies that the fundamental purpose of education lies in the child's ability to adapt to the surrounding environment (Rizqiyyatunnisa, & Mahdi, N. I, n.d.).

Based on innovation and creativity, every early childhood education institution competes to offer a superior learning curriculum, both as a feature and as an added value. As a school that is recognized by the community and is one of the leading schools, the curriculum prepared must not only provide learning, but also meet all the needs of children (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024). In the preparation of the learning curriculum and curriculum, it is very important to comprehensively discuss all aspects of child development to ensure the development of the necessary skills holistically (Angga, 2022).

The curriculum is closely related to educational theory. The curriculum is formulated based on one or several curriculum theories; Furthermore, curriculum theory is developed or expanded from one or several educational theories. To gain a deeper insight into the relationship between curriculum and education, the various educational theories and curriculum models derived from each of these theories will be explained. There are at least four educational theories that are considered to underlie the development of curriculum models and educational implementation (Rahman, A., & Supriyadi, E, 2020). These theories include classical education, personal education, interactional education, and educational technology. Interactive education emphasizes the importance of interaction between students and their environment in the learning process, while educational technology integrates modern tools and media to improve the effectiveness of learning (Sukmadinata & Nana Syaodih, 2019).

Innovation requires modifications or changes aimed at improvement, while learning includes a series of activities in which the curriculum integrates the learning process among students or students, with a creative, dynamic and comprehensive educational curriculum, which is organized to foster an optimal learning environment that is adapted to developmental needs in improving the language aspect of early childhood. The development of early childhood language skills is an important aspect in early childhood education (PAUD). Vygotsky in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory states that children's language development is greatly influenced by social interaction with adults and peers, as well as a supportive learning environment. The concept of the Zones of Proximal Development (ZPD) proposed by Vygotsky explains how learning occurs through social and individual interactions. Vygotsky emphasized that individuals thrive through interaction with the outside world, where they are shaped and influenced by the social context around them (Ama, HD, 2021). Vygotsky's Zones of Proximal Development (ZPD) developed the concept of cognitive learning. He also argued that a person's development consists of two levels, namely: the actual level of development and the level of potential development. The Zone of Real Development (ZPD) occurs when students are already independent because they can complete their homework. While in the Prospective Development Zone (ZPD), an adult or peer workforce is required to assist them if they are unable to complete a particular task without assistance (Habsy, B. A., et al., 2023).

In the context of international curriculum-based education, the interactive approach provided by the curriculum such as *Alpha and Friends* designed to maximize this development through exciting, creative, and multisensory activities. According to the report *Alpha and Friends* In 2021, 80% of students at institutions using this curriculum showed significant improvements in vocabulary and sentence structure skills within 6 months of implementation. However, the implementation of an international-based curriculum often faces challenges in adapting to local culture and teacher competence. For example, research (Nugroho, A., et al., 2020), 45% of early childhood education teachers in Indonesia have difficulty integrating international curricula and teaching methods for young children. In addition, the report (UNESCO, nd), highlighting the importance of teacher education as a key factor in the successful implementation of the international curriculum, especially in developing countries. In Indonesia, another challenge is the gap between curricula designed for the global environment and its limitations. Structure and resources in private early childhood education institutions (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021). Therefore, the literature shows that the success of international curricula, such as *Alfa and Friends*, is highly dependent on the school's ability to provide proper teacher training, adapt to local needs, and parent involvement in supporting learning at home. Further research is needed to evaluate the implementation of this curriculum so that children's language skills can be improved.

The use of international curricula such as *Alfa and Friends* is an innovative step in supporting early childhood learning. This curriculum is not only in line with the principles of the Independent Curriculum applied in

Indonesia, but also provides an approach that focuses on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) and the use of interactive tools and technologies.

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it was found that the main problem that became a challenge in this school was the improvement of children's language skills, especially speaking and listening skills. Prior to the implementation of the Alfa and Friends curriculum, early childhood language skills in this school still needed a more effective stimulus (Madyawati, R, 2016). Some children have difficulty composing long sentences, understanding instructions, or answering questions orally. This is influenced by the lack of interactive media-based learning and the lack of focus on a systematic approach to improving language skills (Puspita Candra, K. D., Marantika, I. M. Y., & Putri Utami, N. P. C, 2021).

Several previous studies have addressed topics relevant to the application of international curricula for early childhood skills development. For example, research (Siti Umayah & Suyadi, 2020), reviewed the development of a curriculum based on multiple intelligences at PAUD Fastrack Funschool which emphasizes the development of children's character through the integration of various aspects of intelligence. The study highlights local curriculum innovations that adopt international elements, without a specific focus on specific language skills. Furthermore, research (Muhammad Yaser Arafat, Mohammad Ali, M.Pd and Sabar Narimo, 2022), raised the implementation of the bilingual curriculum at SD Bilingual Muhammadiyah 1 Purwodadi with the aim of improving English language skills through a sustainable bilingual approach. However, this study focuses on the context of primary school, does not focus on early age, and does not discuss STEAM in detail. Furthermore, research (Muwafiqus Shobri & Indah Ratul Amaliyah, 2022), focusing on the efforts of educational institutions to improve the quality of learning through the implementation of innovative programs. Subsequently, research (Putri Wimbi Tria Rizky & Putri Aulia Diani, 2022), focusing on an interactive approach and the use of educational media as a key element to achieve educational goals. Furthermore, Research (Astria Ayu Ramadianti, 2023), focusing on the application of the international curriculum in the world of education to improve the quality of learning and student development

The novelty of this study is its particular focus, namely on the effectiveness of implementing the Alfa and Friends international curriculum to improve early childhood listening and speaking skills. This study also integrates the STEAM approach in the development of language skills which is rarely the object of research in the context of early childhood education in Indonesia. In addition, this study combines active interaction-based learning and the use of contextual digital media that has not been discussed in depth by previous research. Thus, this study offers a new perspective on the implementation of the international curriculum for early childhood language development in a more focused and innovative context.

The implementation of the Alfa and Friends curriculum over the past two years has brought positive changes, but challenges in implementation still remain, especially related to teachers' adaptation to technology and interactive media. This points to the need for further study of how this curriculum can be implemented more effectively to address children's language limitations, with attention to interventions that focus on speaking and listening skills.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of the Alfa and Friends international-based curriculum in developing early childhood language skills. This study aims to identify factors that affect the success of curriculum implementation, including teacher training, resource availability, and student characteristics. In addition, this study also wants to find out the views of teachers and parents on the curriculum and its influence on children's language development. By understanding these various aspects, it is hoped that this research can provide concrete recommendations for developing language teaching strategies in universities. Creating an effective and motivating learning environment for children. This research is expected to find solutions to develop children's motivation and participation in language learning, and ultimately contribute to the development of language skills.

2. METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, with a type of field research (field research). This approach was chosen to explore in depth the phenomenon of learning which uses the international Alfa and Friends program to improve children's language skills. This type of field research allows researchers to directly observe the learning process and interactions that occur in the natural environment. The qualitative approach is suitable for understanding the social context, behavior and experiences of the participants, as described by Dedy Mulyana (2004) and Sugiyono (2005), who stated that this study is suitable for interpreting phenomena and used to produce descriptive data in depth. The data collected include primary and secondary data. Data sources are something that should be considered in research because through the right data sources, research will be successful (Setiadi, Gatut, & Nurma Yuwita, 2021). Primary data were obtained from in-depth interviews with the principal (Ms. Mn) and the teacher (Ms. Rn), who provided information on school policies, program implementation and dynamic learning. In addition, primary data were obtained through the direct observation of 17 children in the KB / TK class, with an emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills. Secondary data was obtained through documents, such as lesson implementation plans, open materials, student work and assessment notes,

which enriched the information in the primary data. This study used three main data collection techniques: observation, in-depth interviews and documentation.

Participant observation was conducted to record the development of children's language skills in learning activities based on the Alfa and Friends curriculum. The purpose of observation is as an exploration to obtain a clear picture of the problem and perhaps clues on how to overcome it (Mayang Sari Lubis, 2018). In-depth interviews with school leaders and teachers aimed to understand teaching practices, challenges and the impact of the program. The interviews used fall into the in-depth interview category, which includes in-depth interviews, to allow flexibility and freedom in exploring problems more openly (Lexy J. Moleong, 2016). Research tools include observation sheets, interview guides and document checklists. Indicator tools include these aspects: (1) Implementation of the program, effectiveness of interactive media, IT tools and STEAM-based activities. (2) Development of children's language skills, speaking skills (arranging sentences) and listening skills (answering questions). (3) Interaction between teachers and children, verbal stimulation, teaching methods and use of teaching aids. Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis methods, which include the process of identifying, organizing and interpreting the main themes of the collected data. The analysis included coding data from observations, interviews and documentation, as well as grouping themes based on the relationship between the implementation of the Alfa and Friends program and the improvement of children's language skills (Figure 1). Then, the results of the analysis were summarized to draw conclusions about how the Alfa and Friends program supports children's language development.

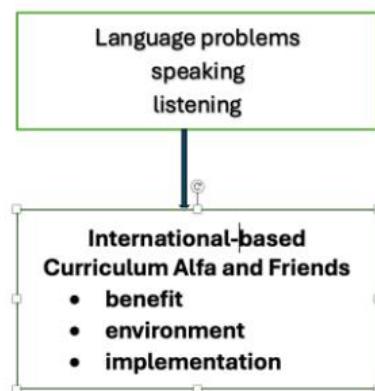


Figure 1. Research Flow

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research and analysis carried out by the researcher, the results were obtained only in KB/TK Ketilang UIN Jakarta, using a curriculum designed so creatively and innovatively that in the lesson emphasizes the relationship between STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) knowledge and skills that can help develop children's language skills (Pudjiati, D., & Pawitri, A, 2022), in addition to the curriculum that is prepared the lesson carried out reference to the Multiple program The intelligent learning that in the curriculum contains ten aspects of the child's development that must be developed (DeJarnette, A, 2018).

The international program Alfa and Friends is considered very effective, since this program is designed to provide an interactive, fun and contextual learning experience for children can optimally develop their language skills (Figure 2). Through a structured approach and supported by engaging teaching materials and tools, this program helps children master aspects of language such as vocabulary, pronunciation and communication skills through a range of age-appropriate learning activities (Hasibuan, R, 2022), (Lange, C., & Kauffman, D, 2022).



Figure 2. Children's work using the Alfa and Friends Tool Kit

Children's work to make birds from the Alfa and Friends tool kit is closely related to the development of children's language skills. The process of creating this bird not only engages motor skills, but also offers children the opportunity to enrich their language skills through supporting activities. (National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (ECLKC), 2024) explain when children follow instructions from teachers or learning materials, they learn to understand and follow verbal instructions, which trains their listening skills. In addition, children are encouraged to tell the process or the results of their work, for example describing the bird made, the color chosen or their imagination for the bird. This activity trains children to use new vocabulary, build sentences and express their ideas orally. Thus, this creative activity not only reinforces the artistic and manual aspects, but also enriches children's language skills in an interactive and fun way(Pudjiati, D., & Pawitri, A, 2022).

Planning, Implementation and Evaluation

Education is related to curriculum changes in Indonesia. Each curriculum has different criteria, one of which is the national and international curriculum. The national curriculum is often more closely linked to local culture and national values, creating a foundation that reflects the identity and needs of the community (Ministry of Education, 2019). On the other hand, international curricula, such as the Alfa and Friends curriculum, reflect global aspirations and relevant international standards (Hoesny, M, 2021). The Alfa and Friends curriculum has development objectives, namely: (1) Improving the quality of education by providing interesting learning materials and effective learning equipment. (2) Introducing culture and tradition to children to preserve heritage. (3) Providing support to parents in the form of ideas, suggestions and suggestions to improve learning at home. (4) Teaching digital art that allows children to be creative with advanced technology (Alfa and Friends Curriculum Development, 2022).

The implementation of the Alfa and Friends curriculum shows a structured approach to improve the quality of early childhood education, especially in the development of language skills. The curriculum is designed to meet international standards with learning methods that are interesting and relevant to children (Yamin, M, 2020). Before starting learning, teachers use visual media such as photos and videos to attract students' attention. This step is intended to motivate students to actively participate in learning activities. One teacher said, "We always start with a picture or video to get the kids interested. After that, we encourage them to ask questions and identify what they see." In the learning process, students are encouraged to understand the basics of language, such as grammar and vocabulary, through interactive activities. Teachers use simple language to ensure students understand the material. One teacher said, "We use language that is easy to understand and we invite children to have dialogue so that they are more confident in speaking". This approach creates a communicative and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom, so that children feel comfortable asking questions, discussing, and communicating. Furthermore, this curriculum emphasizes the importance of assessment in the learning process (Ratnasari, D., & Prabowo, H, 2023). Teachers routinely assess students' understanding through questions and answers, direct observation, and evaluation of work results. The principal added, "We always monitor the teaching and learning process and provide training to teachers so that the methods used are more effective." As a result, students are used to curriculum-based international learning. This approach not only improves their language skills but also encourages a passion for learning. The curriculum also includes strategies for creating a great learning environment. Teachers motivate students and create a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to positive interactions. This is in accordance with the statement of a student, "Studying here is fun, I really like to ask about lessons with friends and teachers." The successful implementation of the Alfa and Friends curriculum shows that this approach has a positive impact on holistic language development in early childhood.

The implementation of the Alfa and Friends curriculum is carried out in stages, starting from planning, implementation and evaluation, namely: (1) Planning, at this stage it is explained that planning is the preparation of a unit. plans that refer to the Alfa and Friends curriculum, management included in this planning, (2) Implementation, at this stage of implementation is also called the implementation phase. implementation of the Alfa and Friends curriculum. This is in line with the established learning model, namely: (a) Using English as the main language of instruction, (b) Effective learning days, at this stage, Effective days are from Monday to Friday, with a duration of 1 hour of class, (c) Teaching staff, the results of interviews with school principals and classroom teachers can be concluded that some teacher training aims to improve teaching performance in the classroom. Training is a professional development offered to teachers four to five times a year. The competency factor is related to the quality of teachers which ultimately affects the quality of education, therefore, efforts are needed to improve the quality of teachers through the teacher training curriculum (Hoesny, 2021), (d) Learning resources, based on the results of interviews. along with the principal and classroom teacher, it is known that the content and learning resources are available to teachers on the official Alfa and Friends website. Through the official Alfa and Friends page on this website, teachers can stimulate children's language development through the learning materials provided on the website. Then, guidelines for making learning modules and learning materials were also introduced by Alfa and Friends, (e) Curricular Activities, the results of research on curriculum activities revealed that STEAM activities were routinely held every day. With this learning activity, teachers can train students to

stimulate high curiosity to encourage children to ask questions, where children's language skills are trained, (3) Process evaluation is an advanced evaluation of data evaluation. The evaluation process includes teacher performance, the effectiveness of teaching materials and student attitudes and motivation. Teacher performance is related to all the actions experienced by educators when facing a task, the answers they compose, to provide goals (Yamin, M, 2020b). The results of the study show that school principals regularly monitor to evaluate teacher performance and to improve the quality of learning in schools. Depending on the purpose, there are three types of monitoring, namely academic monitoring, administrative monitoring and institutional monitoring. The results of the study show that every teaching application requires the use of teaching materials. And as the observation shows, all teachers use PowerPoint materials to explain the teaching materials.

The implementation of the Alfa and Friends curriculum at KB/TK Ketilang UIN Jakarta shows a comprehensive and structured approach, integrating the stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation. In the planning stage, the curriculum is designed based on the guidelines provided by the Alfa and Friends curriculum, which includes the preparation of unit plans and resource management (Santoso, P., & Yulianti, D, 2024). According to the principal, Ms. Mn, "The planning process focuses on aligning Alfa and Friends resources with our goal of ensuring students receive an engaging and meaningful learning experience." The implementation phase emphasizes the use of English as the primary language of instruction, an effective learning schedule from Monday to Friday with one-hour sessions, and regular teacher training sessions aimed at improving teaching competence. Ms. Rn, one of the teachers, shared, "The resources provided by Alfa and Friends, including online teaching modules and toolkits, made it easy for us to deliver lessons in an engaging way. STEAM activities in particular spark students' curiosity and help improve their questioning and communication skills." Teachers have access to a wide range of learning resources through the official Alfa and Friends website, which offers content and guidelines for creating teaching modules and stimulating students' language development. Daily STEAM activities, a hallmark of the curriculum, encourage students' curiosity and questioning skills, which directly supports their language development (Lestari, R., & Sari, D, 2022). Ms. Mn highlighted, "We have observed that students are more active in asking questions and constructing sentences, which shows a significant improvement in their language skills." Ms. Rn further explained, "Interactive activities such as storytelling and hands-on experiments allow students to learn vocabulary and concepts more effectively, making lessons more engaging and impactful."

The evaluation process involves continuous monitoring and assessment to ensure the effectiveness of the curriculum (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2024). This includes evaluating teacher performance, the quality and suitability of teaching materials, and student attitudes and motivations. Ms. Mn explained, "As part of the evaluation, I regularly conduct academic and administrative monitoring to assess the quality of teaching and provide feedback for improvement." The principal also emphasized the importance of teacher training and resource utilization, noting that "teacher development sessions held four to five times a year significantly improve classroom practice." Additionally, the use of modern teaching aids such as PowerPoint presentations further enriches the delivery of teaching materials, ensuring that students understand concepts effectively. Interviews with educators revealed that regular teacher training, coupled with the comprehensive resources provided by the Alfa and Friends curriculum, supports the teaching-learning process, fostering an interactive, engaging, and effective classroom environment. Although Alfa and Friends' internationally based curriculum offers an innovative approach to Developing early childhood language skills, its implementation still faces various challenges. These challenges include the gap between curriculum design and local cultural adaptation, the limited competence of teachers in understanding and implementing international-based learning methods, and the variation of results in the development of children's language skills. This shows the need for a more in-depth evaluation of the implementation of the curriculum, as well as strengthening teacher training and adjusting learning methods so that this curriculum can be implemented more effectively and have a maximum impact on early childhood language development (Alfa and Friends, 2021).

Interactive Learning Atmosphere

The interactive learning environment implemented in the Alfa and Friends program plays an important role in encouraging children's language development (Alfa and Friends, 2024). The environment is designed with a dynamic learning environment, where the emphasis is on the use of English as the primary language and media-based teaching methods such as pictures, videos and other creative activities. Principal Ms. Mn said that "The implementation of the Alpha and Friends program has transformed this classroom into an interactive space where children are more confident in expressing themselves and using new vocabulary." In this context, teachers play a strategic role in creating a fun learning environment by using easy-to-understand language to convey material, motivate and actively involve students in learning activities (Hoesny, M, 2021).

The class teacher, Ms. Rn, explained that they encourage students to participate in discussions, ask questions and explore concepts, which helps to improve their grammar and vocabulary significantly. The STEAM-based approach integrated into the program not only develops children's curiosity, but also improves their communication skills (Yamin, M, 2020a). STEAM learning activities are designed to facilitate hands-on exploration so that children can actively practice the language (DeJarnette, A, 2018). Ms. Rn adds that "The STEAM project is

very beneficial because it not only engages students in practical activities, but also it stimulates them to express their thoughts and ideas."

In addition, teachers also utilize resources from the official Alfa and Friends website to prepare relevant and interesting materials (Alfa and Friends Curriculum Development, 2022). This allows them to respond optimally to their children's learning needs. Ms. Mn said that "The material provided by Alfa and Friends is very useful to create interesting and educational learning." The principal periodically evaluates the implementation of learning, including teacher performance and the effectiveness of teaching materials. "Our regular monitoring sessions focus on identifying areas that need improvement, ensuring that teachers are well prepared and maintaining the standards set by the school curriculum," said Mrs. Mn. Thanks to the combination of these strategies, the learning environment created successfully supports children's language development in a complete and sustainable way (Lange, C., & Kauffman, D, 2022), in line with the goals of the Alfa and Friends program.

The Use of English as The Main Language, and Media-Based Teaching Methods

The use of English as the main language in the Alfa and Friends program aims to introduce children to listening and using English actively in learning activities. This approach allows children to develop their vocabulary, understand grammar and increase their confidence in communicating (Lestari, R., & Sari, D, 2022). English is used in various classroom activities, from teacher teaching to group discussions. creating a learning environment that supports the development of children's language skills. In addition, this program is supported by the Alfa and Friends Toolkit which provides various learning materials such as videos, interactive maps, and visual aids. These media are used to deliver material in an interesting and easy-to-understand way, helping children learn through visual, auditory, and kinesthetic approaches (ALFA and Friends, 2021).

The strategies implemented include daily interactive activities, where teachers integrate English into routine activities, and use video tutorials and learning materials to introduce new concepts. A STEAM-based approach is also applied to motivate children to collaborate and think creatively (DeJarnette, A, 2018), with English as the main medium. In addition, the educational games in the toolkit help strengthen children's vocabulary and understanding in a fun way. Learning assessment is carried out continuously through discussions, Q&A, or simple projects to ensure student understanding and provide appropriate feedback. According to Mrs. Mn, the principal, "this media and English-based learning process builds children's confidence in using English in everyday life." With a combination of English as the main language and innovative learning materials, the Alfa and Friends program provides support for interactive, fun and effective learning experiences. language development in early childhood (Ratnasari, D., & Prabowo, H, 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Alfa and Friends program in KB/TK Ketilang UIN Jakarta has significantly contributed to the development of children's language. With an international curriculum-based approach, the program not only encourages the use of English as a primary language, but also introduces innovative and interactive learning materials such as videos, images and other creative activities. A conducive, interactive and supportive learning environment with competent teachers can encourage children to communicate more confidently, understand grammar, expand their vocabulary and increase their curiosity through STEAM-based activities. Technological support and learning resources from the official Alfa and Friends website enrich the learning process, while parental involvement in supporting learning at home creates sustainable synergies. Periodic evaluation of teacher performance, the effectiveness of teaching materials, and student learning outcomes ensures the preservation of the quality of learning. So this program not only helps children develop their language skills, but also strengthens their communication skills, confidence, and the spirit of lifelong learning.

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