

# Communication Skills of 4 to 5 Years Old Autistic Children at Inclusive Kindergarten

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## ABSTRACT

This research is motivated the importance of communication that applied early on children are able to communicate and interact well with their environment. Social interaction will realize social contact and communication. The communication of autistic child will different from regular child communication, because in essence autistic child experiences three disorders namely interference with communication, interaction, and behavior. The research objective to determine the form communication skills of children with autism in social interactions in Jember Inclusion Kindergarten. Type of research is qualitative descriptive, data collection method of observation, interview, and documentation. Subjects study were 3 autistic children aged 4-5 years with mild, moderate, and severe categories. The results showed communication skill autistic children differed. Children with severe autism, verbal communication child i.e. able to communicate by saying 1-2 words through help, clear articulation, but still words have no communication function. Non-verbal communication, namely children using adult hands as a tool. Medium autistic children, verbal communication children able to do communication, clear articulation, but still some languages are spoken muttered. Non-verbal communication the child touches a hug, using an adult hand as a tool. Mild autistic children, verbal communication i.e. children able to communicate both ways, articulation still not quite right.

**Keywords:** *Communication Skill, Autistic Child, Inclusive Kindergarten*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social interaction is the basis of social processes and is the key to social life, because without social interaction there will be no life together [1]. Social interaction will be realized through social contact and communication [2]. Communication needs to be trained from an early age, because through good communication good parenting will be created. So that the education that will be applied by parents can be achieved [3].

Communication will continue as long as social interactions take place. However, some people will sometimes experience interference or obstacles in communicating. Many factors cause why people experience communication problems. One of the people who experience communication problems both verbally and non-verbally in social interaction is a child with autism [4].

Disorders of autistic children are characterized by three main symptoms, namely communication disorders, social interaction disorders, and behavior. People with autism have characteristics, namely that sufferers like to be alone, busy with their world and being cold from childhood or even from infancy, for example by not showing a response (smiling and so on). As well as not

paying attention to the surrounding environment, speaking little or even refusing to speak [5].

Children with autism have several problems, but basically every child has the same rights in terms of education. Special Schools are not the only institutions used in terms of studying. This applies not only to regular children but is also compulsory for those children with special needs. Schools that can accept children with special needs are schools that organize inclusion, where at this institution children with special needs will get the same education as regular children [6].

Inclusive education is a way to create comprehensive education in order to create a school that is responsive to the actual needs of children and society [7]. In inclusive schools there are children with special needs as well as regular children. Of course, in terms of communication, children with special needs will be different from regular children. One of the children with special needs is an autistic child. Autistic children in inclusive schools will often have social interactions, especially in the field of communication with regular children. Basically, inclusive schools will often communicate either verbally or non-verbally. This explanation will certainly refer to the communication skills of autistic children in social

interactions with other regular children in inclusive schools. One of the inclusion schools in the city of Jember which has students with autistic disorders is Cahaya Nurani Kindergarten, Sumbersari District, Jember Regency. In the first observation, researchers conducted interviews with teachers in the inclusion school, Cahaya Nurani Kindergarten, regarding the condition of children with autism. The total number of students in Cahaya Nurani Kindergarten is 47 students, with 23 regular students and 24 students with special needs.

The total number of autistic children is 8 students. While the rest are children with special needs with Down syndrome, ADHD, ADD, slow learner, speech delay, and global development delay. In fact, not all autistic children in Cahaya Nurani Kindergarten experience problems in communication and social interaction. After the researchers conducted interviews at Cahaya Nurani Kindergarten, there were children who were able to communicate and interact socially with their environment, both with teachers and with peers. Through the first observation, that there are autistic children there who are able to respond to communications provided by researchers, for example in the form of smiles. When invited to communicate, children with autism at a low level are able to respond to eye contact and are able to interact even though the voice spoken is less clear. Whereas in moderate autistic children, he is able to communicate, but only 2- 3 words they can say and occasionally he is able to respond when called.

In severe autistic children, they are completely unable to respond when the researcher invites communication, there is no eye contact at all and they are engrossed in their own world regardless of the environment. Based on the description above, the researcher will conduct research on the communication skills of children with autism in social interactions, where it has been explained that children with autism have disorders in communication and social interactions. This research was conducted at the inclusion school in Cahaya Nurani Kindergarten, Sumbersari District, Jember Regency, which is one of the schools that organizes inclusive education. The purpose of this study was to determine the form of communication skills of children with autism in social interactions at the Inclusion Kindergarten, Jember.

## **2. METHODS**

The research was conducted at Cahaya Nurani Kindergarten, Sumbersari District, Jember Regency, Indonesia. Sources of data obtained from informants are three autistic children aged 4-5 years with the category of severe autism, moderate autism and mild autism, special accompanying teachers, and parents. This type of research is a qualitative descriptive study. The methods used for data collection are observation, interviews and documentation.

Observations made in this study were to observe the communication skills of children with autism in social interactions in Cahaya Nurani Kindergarten, Sumbersari District, Jember Regency. Interviews in this study were conducted to collect various necessary information related to the communication skills of children with autism in social interactions. This interview activity was carried out to special companion teachers and parents of autistic students at Cahaya Nurani Kindergarten, Sumbersari District, Jember Regency.

Documentation is the collection of supporting documents in research. The documents needed in this study are the profile of the Cahaya Nurani Kindergarten School in Jember, the history of autistic children, the autistic children's behavior records, photos of the interaction of children with autism, and photos when conducting interviews with resource persons at Cahaya Nurani Kindergarten, Sumbersari District, Jember Regency.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The research was carried out in Cahaya Nurani Kindergarten, Sumbersari District, Jember Regency from October to November 2019 on the communication skills of autistic children in social interactions aged 4-5 years at Cahaya Nurani Kindergarten, Sumbersari District, Jember Regency. Children with autism as a subject with the initials A are currently 5 years old, A was born in Jember on August 13, 2014. Gender A is a boy and A is the second of two siblings. A did therapy at Cahaya Nurani Kindergarten, Jember for about two years. A in terms of communicating by speaking is less capable of doing it. A is able to communicate by saying one to two words, by being stimulated continuously and assisted through physical assistance by directing his face to the communicant's face so that he is able to respond to the communicant.

Sometimes he is also only able to imitate the words spoken by the teacher only. In articulation, the spoken word is clear, utters one to two words, but sometimes there are still words that do not have a function in terms of communication. He is also too engrossed in his own world to ignore his surroundings. Children with autism as subjects with the initials S are currently 4 years old, S was born in Jember on July 8, 2015. Gender S is male and S is the first child of one sibling. S did therapy at Cahaya Nurani Kindergarten, Jember for about two years. S in terms of communicating by speaking is good enough, because he is able to respond to what the teacher says.

He has been able to invite interaction with those around him through simple communication. he is able to communicate even though the language spoken is still unclear or cannot pronounce complete sentences so that they appear and form murmurs that are not clear in meaning. He likes to imitate words spoken by other people. This is in accordance with Atmaja's [2018] theory, on the character of problems in the field of

communication that autistic children like to imitate words without understanding their meaning. In articulation, the spoken word is clear, but there are still some languages that are pronounced (mumbled). The communication function of children with moderate levels of autism in social interactions is to respond to calls, respond to questions, respond to orders and imitate other people's words [8], [9].

Children with autism as a mild category subject with the initials K are currently 5 years old, K was born in Jember on 23 November 2014. K is male and K is the first child of one sibling. K did therapy at Cahaya Nurani Kindergarten, Jember for about three years. K in terms of communicating by speaking is very good, because he has been able to respond to what was conveyed by the teacher and the people around him. He has been able to invite interactions with people around him through simple communication [9], [10], even though the words spoken are still not quite right. In articulation, the words spoken are not quite right [11], [12]. The communication function of children with mild level of autism in social interactions is to respond to calls, respond to questions, responds to orders and mimics the words of others.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The results of this study can be concluded that the form of communication skills that can be carried out on different research subjects. In accordance with the results of the study, that the subjects studied were categorized as severe, moderate, and mild autistic children. The form of verbal communication skills for autistic children at a severe level is that they are able to communicate by saying 1-2 words, with the help of physical assistance such as turning their face towards the communicant's face. In articulation, the words spoken are clear, but there are still words that do not have a function in terms of communication, namely the words "yakdiya" and "adadiya".

The communication function of social interaction is to respond calls, questions and imitates what others say. The form of verbal communication skills for children with autism is at a moderate level, that is, the child is able to communicate. In articulation, the spoken word is clear, but there are still some languages that are pronounced mumbled. The communication function of social interaction is to respond to calls, orders, questions and imitate the words of others. While the form of verbal communication skills for children with autism at a mild level is that the child is able to communicate in two directions. In articulation, the words spoken are not quite right. The communication function of social interaction is to respond to calls, orders, questions, imitate other people's words, and ask questions again to get answers from others. In developing communication skills for children with autism, educators provide speech therapy continuously. So that autistic children there can develop

their communication skills. In addition, educators also massage slowly on the cheeks or around the mouth of autistic children with the aim that autistic children have visual stimulation of the educators' mouth movements and facial muscles to form articulated sounds against letters.

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