Shielding Young Minds: *Mukhālaṭah* as a Prophetic Strategy to Prevent Speech Delay in the Screen Time Era

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Abstract

This study explores the adverse effects of excessive screen time on speech delay among early childhood in Indonesia. It proposes the *Mukhālaṭah* concept as a preventive solution rooted in Prophetic *hadiths*. Employing a qualitative literature-based approach with *a ma'anil hadith* methodology, the research analyzes primary sources, such as *Fathul Bari* by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, and secondary materials, including journals and books on child development. Findings reveal that high screen time, averaging 5.7 hours daily among Indonesian children aged 0-6, significantly hinders language acquisition by reducing verbal interactions essential for cognitive and emotional growth, leading to speech delays affecting 5-10% of young children. *Mukhālaṭah*, derived from hadiths in *Sahih Bukhari* (indices 6129 and 6203) emphasizing interactive mingling and affectionate communication, promotes active parental engagement through play, empathy, and dialogue to stimulate language skills. The study introduces the SHIELD strategy (Serve, Hear, Interact, Engage, Limit, Develop) as a framework for implementing strategies to limit gadget exposure, foster responsive interactions, and create stimulating environments. Ultimately, this integrative Islamic approach empowers parents to counteract digital disruptions, ensuring holistic child development while aligning traditional values with modern challenges.

Introduction

Screen time refers to the duration of time spent interacting with digital devices, such as mobile phones, tablets, computers, or televisions. Family interactions, which previously played a dominant role in stimulating children's language development, are now gradually eroding family resilience due to the high intensity

of screen time.[1] Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission shows that 47.7% or approximately 39.9 million children aged 5-6 years are the most frequent gadget users, followed by children aged 1-4 years at 5.9% or 4.8 million children, and infants under 1 year at 3.5% or 2.9 million children, with an average usage of 5.7 hours per day.[2] This indicates that gadget usage among children is becoming increasingly widespread. The phenomenon has profound impacts on child development, one of which is speech delay, which is increasingly found in early childhood. According to Fitri Hartanto, this intensity is one of the primary factors contributing to speech delay in children.[3] Thus, speech delay is one of the setbacks in child development in Indonesia. The prevalence of speech delay reaches 5-10% in early childhood, or approximately 4.15 million to 8.3 million children.[4] This phenomenon has received serious attention, based on data from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), which recommends strict limitations, with no screen time for children aged 0-2 years and a maximum of 1 hour for children aged 2-5 years, provided the content is of high quality and parental supervision is present.[5]

Previous studies have extensively examined the destructive effects of excessive screen time on children's speech development, highlighting a significant negative correlation between prolonged smartphone and gadget usage and language milestones. Bachtiar and Fitriani,[6] as well as Dewi et al.,[7] demonstrate that children exposed to more than two hours of daily screen time face up to a sixfold increased risk of speech delay, particularly among males and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, due to reduced verbal interactions and social enga-

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[1] Grace Amortia Erliana Priyoambodo, and Dewi Retno Suminar, "Hubungan Screen Time dan Perkembangan Bahasa Anak Usia Dini : A Literature Review," *JSIM: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Pendidikan* 2, no. 5 (2021): 377. https://doi.org/10.36418/syntax-imperatif.v2i5.119.

[2] Faried Wijdan, "Durasi 'Screen Time' di Indonesia Tertinggi di Dunia, Ancaman Serius bagi Tumbuh Kembang Anak." *Samudra Fakta,* 2024, May 25. https://samudrafakta.com/durasi-screen-time-di-indonesia-tertinggi-di-dunia-ancaman-serius-bagi-tumbuh-kembang-anak.

[3] Elizabeth Ayudya Ratna Rininta, "Screen Time Jadi Penyebab Anak Terlambat Bicara." Kompas, 2024, October 15. https://health.kompas.com/read/24J15180000768/screen-time-jadi-penyebab-anak-terlambat-bicara.

[4] Ni Putu Sartya Putri Savitri et al., "Faktor Risiko yang Berhubungan dengan Terjadinya Speech Delay pada Anak," *PREPOTIF: Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat* 8, no. 2 (2024): 3305. https://doi.org/10.31004/prepotif.v8i2.29188.

[5] Esme Anggeriyane Yunike Mariani et al., *Tumbuh Kembang Anak* (Padang: PT. Global Eksekutif Teknologi, 2022), 183.

[6] Yudi Bachtiar and Rayi Siti Fitriani, "Layar Kecil, Masalah Besar: Analisis Penggunaan Smartphone dan Pengaruhnya terhadap Keterlambatan Berbicara Anak," *Literasi: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Bahasa, Sastra Indonesia dan Daerah 14*, no. 2 (2024): 559-62, https://doi.org/10.23969/literasi.v14i2.11550.

[7] Putu Dianisa Rosari Dewi et al., "The Relationship between Screen Time and Speech Delay in 1-2-Year-Old Children," *GSC Advanced Research and Reviews 14*, no. 2 (2023): 1–6, https://doi.org/10.30574/gscarr.2023.14.2.0039.

gement. Similarly, studies during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as those by Oktariani[8] and Wahyu et al.,[9] underscore how heightened screen exposure exacerbates these issues by limiting face-to-face communication, while emphasizing the mitigating role of quality parent-child interactions, such as co-viewing and verbal discussions.[10] However, these investigations led to a focus on secular interventions, such as parental education, screen limits, and interactive media use, without integrating religious or prophetic frameworks. This gap is addressed in the current study by introducing *mukhālaṭah*—a concept derived from Prophetic hadiths—as a holistic, faith-based strategy to foster active social interactions and prevent speech delay in the era of screen time.

Furthermore, the author proposes a preventive solution for speech delay cases through the *mukhālaṭah* concept, which can be interpreted as parenting that emphasizes the importance of social interaction for children's language development, particularly in mitigating the negative impacts of excessive screen time, by prioritizing an interactive approach based on active communication between parents and children, as outlined in the Prophet's hadiths in the Sahih Bukhari book, specifically with index numbers 6129 and 6203. The explanation related to this research is directed to answer two problem formulations. First, how does screen time affect speech delay in Indonesia? Second, how is the implementation of the *mukhālaṭah* concept as a solution to prevent speech delay due to excessive screen time? The answers to these two problem formulations are presented in three parts: first, the introduction, which includes background information and problem formulation. Second, the content is divided into three sub-chapters: speech delay, implications of a lack of verbal interaction, the *mukhālaṭah* concept as an interactive approach in child language stimulation, and the implementative strategy of the *mukhālaṭah* concept to prevent speech delay. Third, the conclusion contains conclusions and suggestions.

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[8] Oktariani, "Gadget dan Speech Delay pada Anak Usia Dini Pasca Pandemi Covid 19," *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan, Psikologi dan Kesehatan (J-P3K) 3*, no. 3 (2022): 175–182, https://jurnalp3k.com/index.php/J-P3K/article/view/173.

[9] Wahyu Dwi Kusdaryanto et al., "Pengaruh Gadget terhadap Keterlambatan Bicara pada Anak di Era Pandemi Covid-19," *Mandala of Health: A Scientific Journal 16,* no. 1 (2023): 56–61, https://doi.org/10.20884/1.mandala.2023.16.1.8375.

[10] Muzafar Ali et al., "Association between Screen Time and Delayed Speech among Children Under Speech Therapy at a Rehabilitation Center in Islamabad, Pakistan," *Open Access Public Health & Health Administration Review 3,* no. 2 (2005): 205–211, https://doi.org/10.59644/oaphhar.3(2).214; Vrinda R., Krishna AR., and Suja Kurian Kunnath, "Appropriate Screen Time Use to Prevent Speech and Language Delay in Toddlers During the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Brief Report," *Disability, CBR & Inclusive Development 32,* no. 4 (2022): 155–164, https://dcidj.uog.edu.et/index.php/up-j-dcbrid/article/view/519.

Methods

This qualitative research utilizes the *Ma'anil Hadith* working steps.[11] First, historical criticism: Assessing the validity and authenticity of hadith with the rules of authenticity established by scholars. Second, eidetic criticism: Explaining the meaning of hadith after it is declared sahih, through three steps: Content analysis: Thematic and linguistic studies. Historical analysis: Understanding the social and historical context in which the hadith appeared. Generalization: Capturing the general meaning contained in the hadith. Third, practical criticism: Applying the general sense of hadith to the context of current life to answer legal and social problems.

This library study is conducted by collecting primary and secondary data. The primary data of this research is the hadith text in the book *Fathul Bari'* by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani. The researcher also uses programs such as Ma*ktabah Syamilah, Hadith Encyclopedia, and Jami' Kutubut Tis'ah* to find hadiths relevant to the research topic. The secondary data of this research includes books, scientific journals, and various other sources related to the issue.

Speech Delay in Indonesia: Lack of Verbal Interaction

Speech delay is a condition in which a child experiences difficulty speaking clearly, not in accordance with their developmental stage.[12] This is characterized by speaking abilities that are below the developmental standards for children of the same age. For example, when peers are already able to speak using clear words, children with speech delay still use baby talk or body gestures to communicate.[13] In addition, difficulties in communicating and social interaction often occur due to limitations in expressing their desires.[14] Several factors, both intrinsic and extrinsic, cause the occurrence of speech delay in children. Intrinsic factors include genetics,

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[11] Anik Zulisnawati, "Hadis-Hadis tentang Kurma sebagai Obat: Studi Ma'anil Hadis" (Undergraduate thesis, IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2003), 13, https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/9356.

[12] Jumriah Halimah and Susilo, "Bahasa Lisan pada Anak Usia 4 Tahun dengan Keterlambatan Bicara (Speech Delay)," *Diglosia: Jurnal Kajian Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajarannya 7*, no. 3 (2024): 422, https://doi.org/10.30872/diglosia.v7i3.959.

[13] Terra Aurelia et al., "Analisis Faktor Internal dan Faktor Eksternal yang Mempengaruhi Keterlambatan Bicara (Speech Delay) Anak Usia 5,9 Tahun," *Bandung Conference Series: Early Childhood Teacher Education 2*, no. 2 (2022): 70, https://doi.org/10.29313/bcsecte.v2i2.3504.

[14] Maria Krisdayanti Dhei Raro et al., "Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Kejadian Speech Delay pada Anak," *Health Sciences Journal 7*, no. 2 (2023): 148, https://doi.org/10.24269/hsj.v7i2.2322.

physical disabilities, neurological malfunctions, prematurity, and gender.[15] Meanwhile, extrinsic factors include parenting patterns, parents' occupations, parents' education, family history, the number of languages spoken, gadget usage, and the number of children.[16] Therefore, early detection and appropriate intervention are crucial in addressing speech delay in children. many children experience speech delays not due to intrinsic factors, but rather as a result of a lack of interaction and verbal stimulation in their environment.[17] Yulianda, in his research, shows that lack of interaction and stimulation from parents and caregivers is the leading cause of speech delay.[18] For example, Sazli (3 years 2 months) experienced speech delay due to lack of attention from parents and could only say: *ma-ma or ya-ya*. Meanwhile, Azka (3 years, 7 months) could only say "*aa-mm*" because the environment was not supportive of verbal interaction. These cases demonstrate that the family's role in providing language stimulation is crucial to children's communication development.

In addition to traditional parenting factors, modern parenting patterns involving technology also pose unique challenges to children's language development. Parents often use gadgets as a tool to calm children when they are busy with work or other activities. Unfortunately, excessive gadget use without parental supervision can reduce children's opportunities for direct interaction.[19] As a result, speech delay becomes more complex because children lose the verbal stimulation they should get from social interactions. Moon et al.'s research states that the duration of gadget use (screen time) is negatively correlated with language development in three-year-old children ($rs = -0.481$), and children's language development is also found to be negatively correlated with the duration of children's gadget use (screen time) ($rs = -0.333$). Therefore, the results obtained are that the higher the media exposure, the lower the child's language ability.[20]

This is also evident in the case of Rafi, a three-year-old child who experienced speech delay due to excessive exposure to screen time, reinforcing the findings of the above research. In the interview I conducted, his mother revealed that since the age of one, Rafi had been accustomed to being given gadgets because his parents were busy working. Due to minimal verbal stimulation, he more often uses body

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[15] Asri Yulianda, "Faktor-faktor yang Mempengaruhi Keterlambatan Berbicara pada Anak Balita," *Bahastra: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia 3*, no. 2 (2019): 43–47, https://jurnal.uisu.ac.id/index.php/Bahastra/article/view/1137.

[16] Savitri et al., "Faktor Risiko," 3305.

[17] Halimah and Susilo, "Bahasa Lisan," 422.

[18] Yulianda, "Faktor-faktor yang Mempengaruhi," 43-47.

[19] Priyoambodo and Suminar, "Hubungan Screen Time," 393.

[20] Priyoambodo and Suminar, "Hubungan Screen Time," 376.

gestures rather than words. He does not respond when called, showing a lack of social response that can hinder his language development.[21]

The occurrence of excessive screen time not only impacts children's language development but also affects their cognitive and emotional development, thereby contributing to decreased academic performance and social interactions. Using mobile phones at night has the potential to trigger anxiety and depression; ultimately, excessive mobile phone use harms children's mental health.[22] Therefore, strategic efforts are needed to address speech delay cases in the era of screen time dominance, by placing parents at the central pillar. In Islam, this concept has a strong foundation, as mentioned in the Prophet's hadith narrated in Sahih Bukhari, with index numbers 6129 and 6203, which describe the importance of parental closeness in educating and guiding children.

The Mukhālaṭah: An Interactive Approach to Child Language Stimulation

Language development occurs rapidly in the first year, and cognitive development reaches its peak in the first two to three years of life. Therefore, habituation patterns and guided stimulation from parents, as the primary and foremost educators, are essential in shaping the child's self-identity toward the desired pattern.[23] The early childhood period is crucial, so parental stimulation greatly determines their development. In line with Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, Article 1, Paragraph 14, which states that Early Childhood Education is an effort to foster children from birth up to the age of six years, carried out through the provision of educational stimuli to assist physical and spiritual growth and development, so that children are ready to enter further education.[24] An environment rich in multi-sensory experiences and cognitive challenges will produce a greater number of connections among brain cells. Rapid and vigorous

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[21] Interview by Author, February 14, 2025.

[22] Eva Manfaatin and Mita Aulia, "Pengaruh Screen Time terhadap Perkembangan Anak Usia Dini," *Al-Muhadzab: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini 1*, no. 1 (2024): 27, https://jurnal.staidaf.ac.id/almuhadzab/article/view/273.

[23] Djeprin E. Hulawa, "Pedagogi Pembentukan Karakter Ulul Albab p*ada Anak Usia Dini," Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini 6*, no. 6 (2022): 6058, https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v6i6.3254.

[24] Khusnul Khotimah, "Tahap Pendidikan Anak dalam Islam: Metode Pendidikan Anak ala Nabi Muhammad SAW," *Jurnal Agama dan Hak Azazi Manusia 11*, no. 2 (2022): 158, https://doi.org/10.14421/inright.v11i2.2718.

brain growth occurs before the child's first birthday. Factually, more than 100,000 cells are estimated to exist in human genes used to produce brain cells.[25]

Newborn babies have billions of brain cells, far more than they have at the age of three years, and twice as many as adult brain cells. It is the golden age period, during which intelligence development increases by up to 50%.[26] This period is a crucial stage in child development, involving physical and psychological maturation, as well as environmental stimulation that shapes various vital aspects such as language, cognitive, social-emotional, and independence.[27] Therefore, parental support encompasses not only cognitive and social-emotional aspects but also language development, a primary skill in communication.

At the age of two years, children generally master around 50 vocabulary words and begin combining two words into simple sentences, such as "I'm thirsty." Meanwhile, three-year-old children are typically able to compose 3–4 words in a single sentence and understand basic instructions.[28] The vocabulary of three-year-old children consists of approximately 900 words. Preschool-aged children can acquire as many as 10 to 20 new words per day, and by the age of 5, they typically have a vocabulary of approximately 2,100 words.[29] This vocabulary development underscores the importance of consistent stimulation in supporting children's language abilities. Parents who tend to be passive or uninvolved in the parenting process may unknowingly hinder their child's optimal development in language abilities.[30]

In Islam, the Prophet has exemplified intensive and affectionate interactions between parents and children through playing and giving them attention. As

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[25] Warni Djuwita, *Parenting Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini dalam Bingkai Pendidikan Karakter dan Nilai Profetik Islam* (Mataram: Sanabil, 2020), 13.

[26] Ahmad Zaini, "Bermain sebagai Metode Pembelajaran bagi Anak Usia Dini," *Thufula: Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan Guru Raudhatul Athfal 3,* no. 1 (2015): 119, https://doi.org/10.21043/thufula.v3i1.4656.

[27] Sufiah Amalia and Sri Setyowati, "Persepsi Orang Tua terhadap Penggunaan Gadget pada Anak Usia Dini di TK Surabaya," *Journal of PAUD Teratai 8*, no. 1 (2019): 6. https://ejournal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/paud-teratai/article/view/27946.

[28] Eka Saputri Yulianti et al., "Peran Extended-Nuclear Family terhadap Perkembangan Bahasa Anak Usia Dini," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Early Childhood Education 7*, no. 2 (2022): 102, https://doi.org/10.51529/ijiece.v7i2.345.

[29] Arif Rohman Mansur, *Tumbuh Kembang Anak Usia Prasekolah* (Padang: Andalas University Press, 2019), 39.

[30] Firdausi Nuzulah and Muhammad Thoriqussuud, "Pengaruh Paparan Digital dan Minimnya Interaksi Orangtua terhadap Terjadinya Speech Delay pada Anak," *KNM BSA: Konferensi Nasional Mahasiswa Bahasa dan Sastra Arab 1,* no. 1 (2024): 477, https://proceedings.uinsa.ac.id/index.php/knm-bsa/article/view/2752.

mentioned in the phrase '*yukhālithu*' in the hadith narrated in *Sahih Bukhari*, with index numbers 6129 and 6203:[31]

عَنْ أَبِي التَّيَّاحِ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَنَسَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَاللهُ عَنْهُ يَقُوْلُ: إِنْ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ لَيُخَالِطُنَا، حَتَّى يَقُوْلَ لِأَخٍ لِي صَغِيرٍ: يَا أَبَا عُمَيْرٍ، مَا فَعَلَ النُّغَيْرُ

> "From Abu al-Tayyah, he said: I heard Anas bin Malik say, 'The Prophet SAW used to mingle with us to the extent that he would say to my little brother, 'O Abu Umair, what did the nughair (little bird) do?'"

The word '*yukhāliṭhu*' comes from the word '*khalaṭa*', which means to mix, blend, or mingle.[32] Literally, '*yukhāliṭhu* is in the form of *fi'il muḍāri'*, which indicates present and future actions. Meanwhile, *mukhālaṭah* is an *ism masdar* that suggests the process or act of mingling and interacting directly with others. According to Imam al-Ghazali, *mukhālaṭah* is a form of mingling that involves providing benefits, learning, teaching, and active involvement in social life.[33] The definition of *mukhālaṭah* is reflected in various narrations about the Prophet's interactions with his companions. Anas mentioned that the Prophet used to mingle with them. In the narration of Marwan bin Mu'awiyah, it is "when he came to Ummu Sulaim, he joked with her." Then Imam Ahmad narrated that he often visited Ummu Sulaim. According to Muhammad bin Qais' narration, the Prophet mingled with the residents of Abu Thalhah's house and Ummu Sulaim's. Al-Nasa'i also reported that he frequently visited the home of Abu Thalhah. In another narration, it is mentioned, "He smiled and made her laugh." Meanwhile, in the narration of Muhammad bin Qais, it is noted that "he joked lightly with her," and in the narration of Matsna ibn Abu 'Awanah, it is mentioned that "he conversed intimately with her."[34] For the Prophet, joking has benefits that delight the heart, please the soul, increase closeness and friendship, and strengthen social bonds.[35]

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[31] Ibnu Hajar al-Asqalani, *Terjemah Fathul Baari Syarah Shahih Bukhari* (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2010), 420.

[32] Mahmud Yunus, *Kamus Arab Indonesia* (Jakarta: PT. Mahmud Yunus wa Dzurriyyah, 2007), 122.

[33] Mutrofin Mutrofin and Izzul Madid, "Dikotomi Ulama Menurut Perspektif Abu Hamid al-Ghazali," *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin 23*, no. 2 (2021): 154, https://doi.org/10.22373/substantia. v23i2.9243; Ratna Andi Irawan, "Ajaran Tasawuf Sosial Al-Ghazali dan Relevansinya di Era Kontemporer: Studi Konsep *Mukhalatah* dan *al-Kasb wa al-Ma'asy*," (Thesis, UIN Walisongo Semarang, 2017), https:// eprints.walisongo.ac.id/id/eprint/8386.

[34] Al-Asqalani, *Terjemah Fathul Baari,* 607.

[35] Muhammad Fajri, "Humor in the Perspective of Hadith: Analysis of the Theory of Hierarchy of Needs Towards Prank in Social Media," *Kontemplasi: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin 9*, no. 1 (2021): 57, https://doi.org/10.21274/kontem.2021.9.1.47-64.

The Prophet's frequent interactions with the family of Anas ibn Malik made him close to everyone, including Abu Umair, who had a small bird with red feathers, called *al-Nughair*, and would often play with it. Every time Prophet Muhammad visited Anas's house, he did not forget to ask Abu Umair about *al-Nughair*.[36] Once, the Prophet visited and saw Abu Umair, who had just been weaned, looking sad because the bird he usually played with had died. Then the Prophet comforted him by saying, "O Abu Umair, what did the bird ever do to die?" In the narration of Rub'i ibn Abdullah, the Prophet stroked Abu Umair's head while talking to him.[37] Meanwhile, the narration of 'Imarah ibn Zadhan mentions that the Prophet greeted Abu Umair warmly and continued talking to him, making Abu Umair feel close and able to change the child's state from sad to happy.[38]

This hadith provides guidance, especially for parents, not just to be around the child, but to truly be involved, enter into the child's activities, and make them part of social life.[39] Such interactions ultimately support optimal emotional and language development, having a positive influence on the child.[40] Play activities, which are the child's world, are often underestimated by parents; through play, children can learn to communicate, adapt, interact, and recognize their environment.[41] Thus, the aspects stimulated by mingling with children through play are: first, the motor aspect, which includes training endurance, flexibility, sensorimotor skills, gross motor skills, and fine motor skills. Second, the cognitive aspect involves developing imagination, creativity, memory, problem-solving skills, strategy, and anticipation. Third, the emotional aspect, emotional catharsis, honing empathy, and self-control. Fourth, the language aspect, understanding value concepts. And fifth, the social aspect, which involves building relationships, cooperation, and developing social maturity.[42] These five things are illustrated by the Prophet's behavior

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[36] Ibnu Hajar al-Asqolani, *Fathul Bari: Syarh Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Egypt: Darul Bayan, n.d.).

[37] Al-Asqolani, *Fathul Bari*.

[38] Nasrul Umam, "Kajian Hadis tentang Mendidik Anak Usia Dini dengan Menunjukkan Kasih Sayang," *Jurnal Warna* 5, no. 1 (2021): 53, https://doi.org/10.52802/warna.v5i1.285.

[39] Ali Mohtarom, "Pendidikan Ramah Anak Perspektif Hadits Nabi," *Mu'allim Jurnal Pendidikan Islam 3*, no. 2 (2021): 164–168, https://doi.org/10.35891/muallim.v3i2.2622.

[40] Pratiwi Sapani Tanjung et al., "Pengaruh Pola Komunikasi Verbal Orang Tua terhadap Kemampuan Berbicara Anak Usia Dini," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai 4*, no. 3 (2020): 3383, https://jptam.org/index.php/jptam/article/view/854.

[41] Sharifah Nor Puteh and Aliza Ali, "Pendekatan Bermain Dalam Pengajaran Bahasa dan Literasi bagi Pendidikan Sekolah," *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Melayu Malay Language Journal Education (MyLEJ) 1*, no. 2 (2011): 5, https://spaj.ukm.my/jpbm/index.php/jpbm/article/view/26.

[42] Arif Syamsurrijal, "Bermain Sambil Belajar: Permainan Tradisional Sebagai Media Penanaman Nilai Pendidikan Karakter," *ZAHRA: Research and Tought Elementary School of Islam Journal 1*, no. 2 (2020): 8, https://jurnal.istaz.ac.id/index.php/ZAHRA/article/view/116.

toward Abu Umair, which is not just an ordinary interaction but also a form of child development stimulation.

In addition to mingling, the Prophet also used gentle speech toward young children. In the above hadith, there is the phrase '*yā Abū Umair*'. This phrase is a *kunyah* from the Prophet, used as an optimistic expression, so that the child may live long and have children.[43] According to Ibn Qayyim, *kunyah* is a form of honor for its bearer.[44] In Arab culture, it is usually given to adults as a sign of honor. Still, the Prophet applied it to a young child, demonstrating his value for and elevation of children's dignity from an early age.[45] Parents and society must treat children with complete affection, as recommended in religious teachings. Conversely, rough and harsh attitudes toward them need to be avoided, because this not only contradicts Islamic values but can also become a factor in child behavioral deviation. In his book Education of Children According to Islamic Views, Abdullah Nasih Ulwan emphasizes the importance of courtesy and affection in shaping children's morals. With this approach, children will grow in a balanced way, both physically and spiritually.[46] Many hadith scholars have narrated this hadith and included it in their respective books. In fact, this hadith is also narrated by all the authors of *al-Kutub as-Sittah,* namely the six prominent hadith scholars. Therefore, it can be concluded that the status of this hadith is *sahih*, even reaching the degree of *muttafaq 'alayh*, namely narrated by Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim.[47]

According to Sheikh 'Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah, there are scholars who have commented on this hadith in a special work and derived more than 60 benefits, such as Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad ibn al-Qas al-Tabari al-Shafi'i (*Fath al-Bari*, 10/481). In fact, some have found more than 300 benefits (*al-Taratib al-Idariyyah*, 2/150). Ibn al-Sabbagh, in his teaching assembly in Miknasah, Maghrib, even discussed up to 400

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[43] Al-Asqalani, *Terjemah Fathul Baari,* 606.

[44] Saeful Bahri, "Fiqh Parenting: Pemberian Nama Anak Perspektif Ibnu Qayyim Al-Jauziyyah," *La-Tahzan: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam 13*, no. 2 (2021): 181, https://doi.org/10.62490/latahzan.v13i2.221. Honor here does not mean exaltation. Every behavior displayed in front of children will become an example they imitate and use as a guide for their own actions, in line with Albert Bandura's theory, which asserts that children learn through observation and imitation. They tend to imitate the behavior of individuals they admire. Therefore, attitudes of respect and honor for children will shape positive social interaction patterns, creating a safe and supportive environment for their development. Muhammad Saifullah Mamat et al., "Interaksi Sosial terhadap Kanak-kanak: Teori dan Aplikasi Nabawi Berdasarkan Hadis Yā Abā ʿUmayr," *Rabbanica 1*, no. 1 (2020): 79, https://ejournals.kias.edu.my/index.php/rabbanica/article/view/9.

[45] Al-Asqalani, *Terjemah Fathul Baari,* 6.

[46] Mamat et al., "Interaksi Sosial terhadap Kanak-kanak," 80.

[47] The title '*al-Kutub al-Sittah*' is given to six prominent hadith scholars, namely Imam Bukhari, Imam Muslim, Imam Abu Dawud, Imam Tirmidzi, Imam Nasa'i, and Imam Ibn Majah.

benefits from this hadith.[48] The difference in the number of benefits found by scholars shows the breadth of hadith knowledge and its flexibility in providing benefits to the ummah in various situations and conditions.

Strategies of the *Mukhālaṭah:* An Effort to Prevent Speech Delay

After the above explanations, it can be seen that speech delay cases not only impact the child but also have complex effects within the family. To prevent speech delay through the *mukhālaṭah* concept, support and joint efforts are needed. The author offers an alternative preventive solution with the SHIELD strategy. This is a practical approach for parents to prevent speech delay by building more responsive, interactive communication patterns that support children's language development, through the following explanations:

S–Serve (Serve): Parents must actively serve the child's communication needs by speaking, listening, and responding directly. This involves not only talking to the child but also ensuring that the child feels heard and understood. When a child expresses something, parents should respond with enthusiasm and provide positive feedback to encourage the child to speak further.

H–Hear (Hear with Empathy): Listening to the child with full attention is the key to building healthy communication. Parents should not just let the child speak without giving meaningful responses. Make eye contact with the child, show expressions that indicate you understand them, and repeat or clarify what they said so they feel valued.

I–Interact (Interact Actively): Good interaction is not just one-sided talking, but also involves two-way communication. Encouraging the child to tell stories and answer questions will help enrich their vocabulary and increase their confidence in speaking.

E–Engage (Engage in Verbal Activities). Reduce screen time and replace it with activities that involve more conversation.

L–Limit (Limit Gadget Exposure): Excessive gadget exposure can hinder social interaction and cause children to receive language more passively without practicing speaking. Therefore, parents need to set screen time limits. For example, replacing video-watching time with speaking sessions or storytelling together can help ensure the child receives more active language stimulation.

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[48] Habib Ahmad, "Syarah Hadis al-Nughair," accessed February 15, 2025, https://pondokhabib.wordpress.com/2011/06/15/syarah-hadis-al-nughair.

D–Develop (Develop a Stimulating Environment): A home environment rich in communication is crucial for children's language development. Parents need to create a supportive atmosphere by engaging with their child while doing daily activities, providing opportunities for the child to express their opinions, and avoiding passive habits with technology.

In comparison to prior research, which predominantly identifies screen time as a risk factor for speech delay and advocates for general mitigation through parental involvement and reduced exposure, such as Bachtiar and Fitriani,[49] Dewi et al.,[50] and Ali et al.[51] This study extends the findings by proposing the SHIELD strategy, rooted in *mukhālaṭah*, which emphasizes empathetic, interactive, and language-rich engagements inspired by Prophetic examples. While earlier works, such as R et al[52] and Oktariani[53] recommend interactive screen time and family-based interventions to counteract negative effects; they lack a structured, prophetic model that integrates social mingling (*mukhālaṭah*) with practical steps, including serving communication needs, active listening, and limiting gadget use. This research's outcomes align with the observed benefits of verbal stimulation but innovate by demonstrating how *mukhālaṭah* not only prevents delays through enhanced parent-child bonds but also promotes broader cognitive and emotional development, offering a culturally resonant alternative that surpasses secular approaches in fostering resilient, faith-aligned family dynamics.

Conclusion

Excessive screen time usage has a significant contribution to the increasing cases of speech delay in children in Indonesia. Excessive screen exposure has been proven to replace the role of direct communication between children and parents, thereby hindering the natural process of language acquisition and impacting children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. This condition affirms that intensive verbal interaction within the family environment is a crucial factor for optimizing children's language development. Therefore, controlling screen time duration accompanied by strengthening face-to-face communication becomes a strategic step that needs to be internalized in modern family parenting patterns. The new finding of this research lies in the development of the *mukhālaṭah* model, which incorporates the SHIELD approach (Serve, Hear, Interact, Engage, Limit, Develop),

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[49] Bachtiar and Fitriani, "Layar Kecil, Masalah Besar."

[50] Dewi et al., "The Relationship between Screen Time."

[51] Ali et al., "Association between Screen Time and Delayed Speech."

[52] Vrinda et al., "Appropriate Screen Time Use."

[53] Oktariani, "Gadget dan Speech Delay."

as a preventive solution to the negative impacts of excessive screen time. This approach emphasizes the importance of parents' role in creating active, empathetic, and meaningful communication through loving service (Serve), responsive listening (Hear), active interaction (Interact), involvement in constructive verbal activities (Engage), proportional limitation of gadget use (Limit), and the development of a stimulating environment that supports children's language growth and development (Develop). The SHIELD model is integrative because it not only offers a conceptual framework but is also applicable, allowing it to be implemented in real, daily parenting practices.

Conceptually, this research provides an essential contribution to strengthening family digital literacy by integrating Islamic communication values in the context of early childhood education. Meanwhile, practically, this research expands understanding of child mentoring strategies in the digital era by placing humane interactions as the primary foundation for children's language and character development. Thus, this research not only enriches the scientific treasury in the field of family-based child education but also presents a new approach that is relevant, contextual, and aligned with the social challenges faced by modern society in the era of massive digitalization.

Authors Contribution

All authors agree to be accountable for all aspects of this work.

Statement of Interest

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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