



Stimulation of Early Reading Skills through Alphabet Board Media in Slow Learner Children in Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an

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Abstract

This study aimed to describe the application of the alphabet board media to stimulate early reading skills for slow learners. The type of research used was descriptive research with a qualitative approach. It is called descriptive research since it produced case study data in the form of an overview of the application of the alphabet board media in stimulating the early reading skills of slow learner children in Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an. Data collection techniques employed observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The subjects in this study were two slow learner children, two teachers, and principals at Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an, with an individual class system of one child and one teacher. From the study results, it can be concluded that applying the alphabet board media could stimulate early reading skills for slow learner children in Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an. The stimulation carried out by the teacher in developing early reading skills included seeing the letters on the alphabet board, listening to the teacher's orders, and following the teacher's orders by reciting the letters on the alphabet board, starting with the vowels first, to the consonants, and then proceed into two syllables, i.e., consonants and vowels, and repeating the words on the alphabet board. This best practice in Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Quran can be a reference for teachers who want to solve the problem of slow learning in early childhood.

Keywords:

Early Reading Skills, Slow Learner, Alphabet Board

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan penerapan media papan abjad untuk merangsang kemampuan membaca dini anak *slow learner* (lamban belajar). Jenis penelitian yang digunakan adalah penelitian deskriptif dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Disebut penelitian deskriptif karena menghasilkan data studi kasus berupa gambaran umum penerapan media papan abjad dalam merangsang kemampuan membaca permulaan anak lamban belajar di PAUD Inklusi PAS Baitul Qur'an. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Subjek dalam penelitian ini adalah dua anak lamban belajar, dua guru, dan kepala sekolah di PAUD Inklusi PAS Baitul Qur'an, dengan sistem kelas individual satu anak dan satu guru. Dari hasil penelitian dapat disimpulkan bahwa penerapan media papan alfabet dapat merangsang kemampuan membaca dini anak lamban belajar di PAUD Inklusi PAS Baitul Qur'an. Stimulasi yang dilakukan guru dalam mengembangkan keterampilan membaca permulaan antara lain melihat huruf pada papan abjad, mendengarkan perintah guru, dan mengikuti perintah guru dengan melafalkan huruf pada papan abjad, dimulai dari huruf vokal terlebih dahulu, sampai konsonan, lalu dilanjutkan menjadi dua suku kata, yaitu konsonan dan vokal, dan mengulangi kata-kata tersebut di papan alfabet. Praktik baik di PAUD Inklusi PAS Baitul Quran ini bisa menjadi rujukan bagi guru yang ingin menyelesaikan masalah lambat belajar di anak usia dini.

Kata Kunci:

Keterampilan Membaca Dini, Slow Learner, Papan Alfabet

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INTRODUCTION

Reading skill is a critical-creative reading processing process conducted by the reader to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the reading, followed by an assessment of the state, value, function, and impact of the reading. According to Ana Widyastuti (in Hasanah & Deiniatur, 2017), reading is an activity that involves auditive (hearing) and visual (observation) elements. The ability to read begins when children enjoy exploring books by holding or flipping books, while language is the primary communication tool for children to express their wants and needs.

The process of learning to read can start in childhood. Observing the explanation above, optimally, child development goes through a sensitive period from 0-6 years, i.e., when the child is at an early age (Nurmalitasari, 2015). It aligns with Montessori's statement that children have a high absorption capacity from birth to the age of six ("absorbent mind"). During this period, children have a high ability to help children learn well and adapt to the environment by themselves. At this time, children will also readily accept something new. In maximizing children's education, Montessori introduces various materials used as materials, tools, and activities specifically designed to stimulate children's cognition.

Moreover, the vocabulary of children aged 4-5 years is a vocabulary of 1800-2200 words that can be grouped into repressive and productive languages so that children can master the language through listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities from several types of vocabulary, such as general and special vocabularies.

Aspects of development in children are not only related to language development but six aspects of child development are described in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 137 of 2013. Aspects of early development in children include religious and moral values, physical motor, cognitive, language, social-emotional, and artistic. At this stage, children begin to be sensitive to stimuli, and their abilities continue to develop,

so these aspects of development must develop optimally for children from an early age.

Through reading, one can find out what was previously unknown. Reading should also be taught from an early age. According to Tarigan (in Sukmanandita, 2020), reading is a process carried out and used by readers to obtain messages, which are to be conveyed by the author through the medium of words/written language. According to Herlina (2019), early reading is learning to recognize the sound symbols of language and a series of letters and then connecting them with the meanings in the series of letters. Thus, according to Herlina (2019), early reading is a stage where children still learn to recognize letter symbols, shapes, and meanings. It can be seen in Appendix I of the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 137 of 2014 concerning the National Standards for Early Childhood Education, listed in the STTPA (Standards for the Achievement of Child Development). It is stated that the age group of four to five years in the aspects of language development are recognizing symbols, imitating (writing and saying) the letters A-Z, answering questions according to questions, and making meaningful scribbles.

As the opinion of Futihat et al. (2020), the ability to read is the basis for mastering the field of study. If early childhood does not immediately read, he will experience many difficulties in learning various fields of study at the next level of education. Therefore, children must learn to read so that they can read to learn. This program is in the form of giving attention to intact words meaningful to the child's personality and material in the game as an intermediary for learning. In addition, early reading starts from the stage of introducing the letter symbols "A-Z" to children.

The four groups in the characteristics of children who are said to be lacking (slow) during early reading can be seen from (1) reading habits, (2) word recognition failure, (3) misunderstanding, and (4) various other symptoms. Indicators of children's early reading difficulties are (1) students cannot recognize letters, (2) students have difficulty distinguishing letters, (3) students do not know whether the letters they read are correct, and

(4) students may be wrong in knowing the meaning of the words or phrases they read (Pratiwi & Ariawan, 2017). Based on the children's characteristics above, slow learners are also included in the children who are less able to read early.

Slow learner children also have characteristics, including (1) delay in receiving lessons, such as slow in managing the meaning of reading, slow when working, slow in doing orders or assignments, and slow in solving problems; (2) behavioral disorders and bad habits; (3) lack of abilities, such as the ability to concentrate, remember, read, communicate, lead, and express ideas or opinions. From the perspective of intellectual development, according to Savage & Mooney in Natalia & Larasati (2019), slow learner children are those who experience learning barriers according to standard intelligence tests. They cannot absorb subject matter quickly, are slow in understanding, are deeper when completing assignments, and are far behind their peers in achieving results.

Further, children with cognitive disabilities need additional iterations to learn new skills and knowledge. Children with cognitive disabilities may also experience decreased attention and concentration in aspects of language but can still learn and participate in school with some support and modification. One way is to read early through engaging and child-friendly methods and media.

In this case, the alphabet board media is a learning tool for stimulating early reading skills for slow learner children in the Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an. Alphabet board is a medium developed by teachers at Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an to stimulate early reading skills for slow learner children. For slow learners in early reading skills, preparation for reading must be supported by experiences, media, and exciting activities to stimulate early reading skills.

The application of early reading skills through the alphabet board media has stages or steps that need to be considered to achieve learning objectives optimally. The steps for applying the alphabet board media to slow learner children to stimulate early reading skills in Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an include the teacher formulating

learning objectives, compiling learning materials, preparing tools and media used in early reading learning, preparing alphabet board media, determining assessment tools, communicating themes and learning activities to be carried out, preparing alphabet board media, conditioning children to concentrate in early reading learning activities, explaining how to use alphabet board media, introducing details of activities carried out by children, guiding children to learn to understand what they are doing, providing activities according to procedures, guiding children in learning activities, giving example using the alphabet board media, providing opportunities to try the alphabet board, providing opportunities to ask and answer questions, asking and answering questions with children about early reading by using the alphabet board media, providing opportunities for them to repeat the activities carried out, and assessing whether their learning objectives have been achieved.

Using the alphabet board media can stimulate early reading skills since it is proven that slow learners children can focus more on practicing their writing and pronunciation. Thus, this research focuses on finding out the application of using the alphabet board media in stimulating early reading skills in slow learner children in Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an.

Based on the description above, the research has a purpose, i.e., wanting to know and clearly describe the application of the alphabet board media to stimulate early reading skills in slow learner children in Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an. Therefore, the researchers conducted a qualitative descriptive study on stimulation of early reading skills in slow learner children at Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an.

METHODS

In this study, the type of research used was descriptive qualitative. It is called descriptive research since it produced case study data in the form of a detailed description of the application of the alphabet board media in stimulating the early reading skills of slow learner children at the Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an. Basrowi & Suwandi (in Fadli, 2021) argued that qualitative research

aims to understand the condition of a context by leading to a detailed and in-depth description of the portrait of conditions in a natural context (natural setting) about what happened and according to what is in the field of study. In the opinion of Yulianty & Jufri (2020), attention should be paid to the analysis of qualitative research data, and the data obtained must be well narrated to produce relevant research results.

According to Sugiyono in Anufia & Alhamid (in Waritsman & Hastina, 2020), as a human instrument, qualitative research functions to determine the research focus, select informants as data sources, assess data quality, analyze data, interpret data, and draw conclusions from the findings. In addition, qualitative research comes from a variety of sources, including observations (from non-participants to participants), interviews (from private to public), documents (from private to public), and audiovisual materials (such as photos, CDs, and VCDs) (Creswell in Westhisi, 2019).

The research location at Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an was selected because it follows the school background, i.e., an inclusive school. The researchers collected as much data as possible from informants. Data source decisions were made by predetermined sampling, i.e., the selected data source became a rich source of research data for teachers, school principals, children, and others.

The primary data sources in this study were teachers and informants aged five years who experienced slow learning in the Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an. Meanwhile, the secondary data source was the principal. The data obtained from the research results collected were then processed and analyzed descriptively and qualitatively. The descriptive-qualitative analysis contains descriptions according to the data obtained crudely. The data analyzed using qualitative data analysis was also related to the stimulation of early reading skills in slow learner children through the media of the alphabet board at Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an based on the results of in-depth interviews, observations, documentation, and measurements.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research on the application of stimulation of early reading skills using the alphabet board media in slow learner children was carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were made in two meetings at Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an, according to the alphabet board media. Interviews were conducted with teachers of the slow learner group of children and school principals. Meanwhile, documentation was carried out by documenting the curriculum, alphabet board media, annual programs, lesson plans, supporting facilities for early reading, and other supporting documentation.

Identifying Slow Learner Children's Language Skills

The language ability of slow learner children was measured by identifying whether the child could recognize letters, identifying one syllable, and then identifying words by looking at the extent of the child's ability. It was because the slow learner children at the Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an had previously participated in therapy and studying at other schools. Afterward, the school decided on an early reading program for slow learner children, whether they were already capable of vowels or unfamiliar with letters. The next stage was imitation, where the children imitated the teacher when playing words with the alphabet board media while pronouncing and imitating the letters designated by the teacher. Then, slow learner children began to read while playing with the alphabet board media.

Stimulation Program Planning

Before conducting the research, the authors conducted field observations by interviewing teachers. In addition, the authors observed learning activities that developed aspects of language in slow learner children. Based on the results of observations, learning planning started with the preparation of daily lesson plans. The lesson plan used was the Daily Lesson Plan (RPPH) adjusted to the Weekly Lesson Plan (RPPM) made previously. The learning program was contained in the school's annual program (Prota), which would later serve as a reference

in preparing the semester program plan (Promes).

Meanwhile, the stimulation of early reading skills with alphabet board media was then adjusted to the ability of each slow learner children. The alphabet board media was also a medium developed by teachers at the Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an, which was previously adapted to the children's characteristics and abilities. After that, stimulation of early reading skills with alphabet board media was carried out together with daily lesson plans on aspects of language development. It was done to facilitate the learning implementation.

Simulation of Using Alphabet Board

In practice, the stimulation of early reading skills with the alphabet board media was taught personally, i.e., one child and one teacher. Based on the results of observations, the steps or stages in applying the alphabet board media consisted of initial, core, and closing activities. At the opening stage or the initial activity in applying the opening SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) and introducing the learning theme, the teacher began the activity with a prayer and greeting. The teacher also took attendance and invited the children to discuss today's theme. After that, the teacher did ice breaking and invited the children to sing according to the theme. At the core activity stage, the teacher prepared the tools and media, i.e., the alphabet board. Then, the teacher introduced vowels and consonants to children using the alphabet board media. Then, the teacher explained how to use the alphabet board media and gave examples of learning early reading utilizing the alphabet board media. It was followed by the teacher giving the children the opportunity to try to learn to read using the alphabet board media. In the final stage or activity, the teacher applied the closing SOP by asking the students how they felt today and inviting the children to discuss what activities they had played today, such as what toys they liked the most. Also, the teacher told a short story containing messages and informed the activities for tomorrow. The next was the greetings and prayers.

Based on the study results, the preparation before learning early reading with the alphabet board media began for slow

learners with the teachers inviting the children to sing while clapping, asking questions, and answering questions, and holding ice breaking so that the children continued to enjoy when the learning took place. According to the teacher who taught, the slow learner children at the Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an did not want to learn early reading with books and preferred media, such as the alphabet board media. The teacher introduced the alphabet board media to slow learner children by first introducing the vowels a, i, u, e, and o. The child's response when the teacher applied the alphabet board media to stimulate early reading skills was highly active, and they looked happy to follow the lesson.

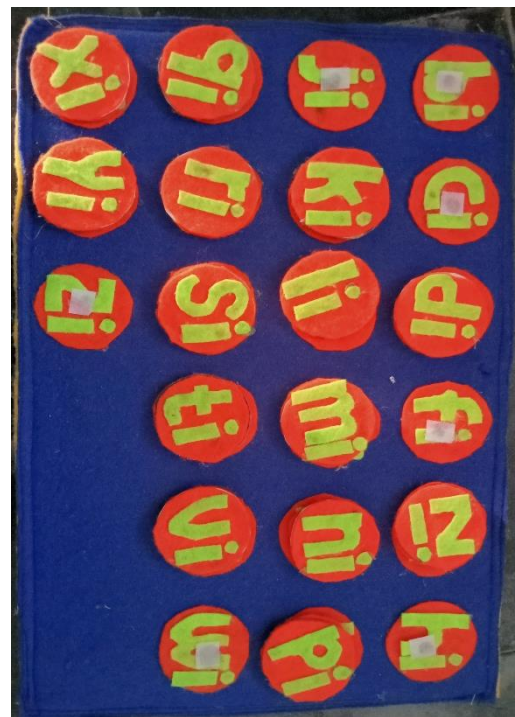


Figure 1. Alphabet Board

Meanwhile, the assessment performed by the teacher in stimulating early reading skills through the alphabet board was to see the child's achievement, whether the child could recognize letters, imitate pronouncing letters, and mention the letters on the alphabet board. The recorded results of the child's achievement were then conveyed by the teacher to the child's parents through daily reports. Moreover, the obstacle in applying the alphabet board media for slow learner children

at the Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an was the mentality of children who were less confident when studying. When another child entered the class, the child did not want to study anymore. However, the teacher always provided stimulation so the child did not feel inferior and encouraged the child to be confident so that the child would not be shy or inferior.

Stimulation Results in Slow Learner Children

Based on the study results, stimulation of early reading skills in slow learner children with the alphabet board media revealed that slow learner children in language development, especially early reading, experienced increased every day, such as in recognizing vowels, recognizing syllables, imitating syllables, pronouncing letters on the alphabet board, having increased vocabulary, increasing children's learning motivation, and not being as moody as before.

The ways applying the alphabet board media in stimulating early reading skills in slow learner children by teachers at Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an are: from the first one, it started with the vowels *a, i, u, e, and o*, and then proceeded to *a, ba, ca, da, fa, and ga* to *za*, then *i, bi, ci, di, fi, and gi* to *zi*, then *u, bu, cu, du, fu, gu* to *zu*, and *e, be, ce, de, fe, ge* to *ze*, and *o, bo, co, do, fo, and go* to *zo*. When the child was capable of these syllables, the teacher could proceed to two syllables, i.e., consonants and vowels, for example, with the vowel *a*, namely *mata, baca, saya, and dafa*. Then, if they could get the letter *a*, they could continue to the vowel *i*, such as *biji, difi, risi*, and others, until the consonants and vowels *o*.

In implementing early reading skills using the alphabet board media, slow learner children were more interested and focused on their views when learning early reading. They also paid attention to the teacher when mentioning the letters on the alphabet board and could imitate so that aspects of children's language development continued to develop. In the social-emotional aspect, children also experienced improvements, such as a feeling of inferiority or lack of confidence, that gradually disappeared. Thus, even though children were said to be slow learners, their language development and vocabulary

experienced an increase daily. Moreover, teachers always provide parents with daily reports regarding children's school achievements.



Figure 2. Introducing Early Reading to Children

Discussion

The alphabet board media can be used and is an alternative that can be used for early reading activities. Apart from the media, approaches, and methods also need to be considered to be partners in running the alphabet board. The method that suits the characteristics of the children made the alphabet board chosen by the teacher (Azkia & Rohman, 2020). Stimulating children with short words on the board is also considered capable of stimulating children to recognize sounds and word order (Silvia & Wirabrata, 2021). Several previous studies have also looked at the urgency of interesting media such as artificial boards to stimulate children to early reading. Visual media such as boards or cards are considered effective because they stimulate children's visual and motor senses (Futihat et al., 2020; Rahmawati, 2017). After all, children's early reading difficulties are usually due to a lack of visual and motor stimulation (Aprilia et al., 2021). Various forms of stimulation are very important for children to stimulate early reading skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings above, the alphabet board media used when learning had an essential role in stimulating early reading skills for slow learners. The stimulation carried out by the teacher in developing the early reading ability of slow learners included seeing the letters on the alphabet board, listening to the teacher's

orders, and following the teacher's orders by reciting the letters on the alphabet board. It started with the vowels first, went to the consonants, and continued by mixing the two syllables, i.e., the consonants and vowels, and repeating the words on the alphabet board. From the study results, slow learner children in Inclusive Kindergarten of PAS Baitul Qur'an also had difficulty reading early before getting to know the alphabet board. Unlike the slow learner children who already know the alphabet board, they looked quite easy to recognize letters and early reading.

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