THE USE OF WORD CARD MEDIA FOR LETTER RECOGNITION IN EARLY STUDENTS

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Abstract
This research aims to determine how word card media affects children’s letter recognition. Classroom teachers were questioned during data collection, along with other teachers, and learning activities were checked. This study used a qualitative method with a case study approach at PAUD al-Khoiriyah Tanjung Botung, Simangambat, Padang Lawas Utara, Sumatra Utara. This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. The research data is in the form of letter recognition activities using word cards as media. Researchers obtained data from school principals, class teachers, accompanying teachers, students, and several parents of students. Collecting data through observation, interviews, and documentation While data analysis is done by data reduction, data presentation, conclusion, and verification, The results of the study show that letter recognition using word card media can be passed by 1. The word cards are prepared by the teacher and distributed to students. 2. The teacher arranges the word cards that students will arrange by compiling the alphabet cards he gives according to the words proposed by the teacher. 3 The young person reads each letter and word aloud before the other groups.

Keywords
Media Word Cards; Letter Recognition, PAUD Al-Khoiriyah

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INTRODUCTION

You could say letter recognition is the first skill that children master before they master reading as a whole. Early infancy, which is around 4-6 years, is often when letter recognition is achieved or acquired. The stages of reading development begin, according to (Astuti et al., 2021), as children love to hold and flip through books to learn more about them. To introduce letters and symbols, media is needed. (Kurnia, Guslinda, 2020) Convey the importance of letter recognition for the growth and development of children. Children need to be encouraged to focus on two things in preparation for reading because they are at an early stage: regularity of form and mixed letter patterns. The instrument used is one of several factors that must be taken into account when teaching letter recognition to young children. One of the highest human abilities and what distinguishes humans from other organisms is the ability to read. The ability to read can tell a lot about a person in today’s culture. A person who reads a lot is more knowledgeable, wiser, and valuable than someone who reads little or nothing, only mediocre literature, or nothing at all. Reading is the study, understanding, and exploration of various symbols. Symbols can be images or even a series of letters that can be written, read, or both (Nilawati et al., 2014).

Children must begin receiving education at a young age, and it is planned that they have interesting learning opportunities. Children will obtain information through active learning activities such as understanding concepts, developing ideas, and generating their symbols and abstractions (Ade Dwi Utami et al., 2013). By directing, polishing, and supporting learners, early childhood education aims to stimulate, grow, and develop them. To improve learning in PAUD, teachers must also be willing to accept new ideas all the time. Apart from preparing children for the next level of education and maximizing their potential, kindergarten is also a place where children can practice their social skills. (Utami & Eliza, 2022). Beginning reading can also be seen as an exercise in recognizing and pronouncing letters, followed by translating a series of letters into words (Munthe, 2018).

Children’s ability to recognize letters and words is a stage in the initial reading process, according to researchers’ initial observations of group B children in PAUD Al -Khoiriyah Tanjung Botung Village, Simangambat District, North Padang Lawas Regency. When the teacher assessed the children’s two and four-letter names, the low level of letter recognition was evident. 95% of 20 children still have difficulty understanding the meaning of letters and words as a level of letter recognition ability, according to the results of the evaluation of letter recognition abilities.
One way to help children understand the relationship between letters and words is to use letter recognition media that is appropriate for their age. Word cards, namely cards in which there are words, are one of the media used to help children learn to recognize letters. With the help of this media, children will see and learn Letter recognition will be improved by writing symbols on each word card that is used when using word cards. The enthusiasm for learning to recognize children's letters will be even higher because children are directly involved in letter recognition activities, such as capturing the connection and meaning of letters in a word map. From the explanation given, the word card media will be used in PAUD Al-Khoiriyah, Tanjung Botung Village, Kec. Simangambat District, North Padang Lawas, North Sumatra, for the 2022 school year, can help children become more familiar with letters.

Learning techniques to encourage interest and reading habits in early childhood are related to letter recognition. For children to have a positive and engaging letter recognition learning experience at a young age, it is important to be aware of the restrictions on reading strategies according to their stage of development, especially the early stages (Suwaibah, 2015). According to (Yulida Izatusholihah Elan, 2021), Several steps are appropriate for teaching children to recognize letters, namely: 1) introducing various line shapes; 2) showing various geometric shapes; 3) It is interesting to name the sound of letters. 4) Name the letters of the alphabet; 5) Refer to the name of the letters of the alphabet; 6) Sort letters; 7) Recognize the concept of vocals.

The development of children's language literacy aims to lay the foundations for children's early literacy, lay the foundation for children's reading abilities later on, and prepare them to study in public schools and develop other children's abilities. In line with that, PISA (the International Student Assessment Program) also shows that children's reading skills will have a positive impact on their self-concept, which stimulates children's enthusiasm for learning. A good habit of knowing letters and continuing children's participation in letter recognition activities will have a positive impact on children. Gaining knowledge determines success. Early literacy development will encourage children to become lifelong learners (Yulia et al., 2021). (Mardani, 2022) Outlines five different reading purposes, including (1) finding important information in the text, (2) enjoying reading, (3) understanding the information in the text, (4) obtaining clues from an event or events or activities, and (5) understanding the nuances of language. (Muis & Amal, 2021) say, "Starting reading, the focus is on letting children in and starting to understand reading, so they have not yet reached a thorough understanding of reading material. Basic reading skills refer to the ability to
translate symbols into sounds and point or catch letters and pronounce them, recognize words by pronouncing letters with words and combine letters into words, and understand the meaning of reading through pictures and words. The ability to look at pictures and write simple sentences with a purpose. Basic reading skills become children’s basic reading skills by getting to know the concepts of letters, words, and sentences.

Criticos in (Daryanto, 2012) in (Indriyani & Sihite, 2015) suggests that "the media is a component of communication, namely as a messenger from the communicator to the communicant.” According to Hasanah (2017) in (Gading et al., 2019), One of the main functions of learning media is as a teaching aid that also influences the climate, conditions, and learning environment laid out and created by the teacher. Media is a tool or facility that functions as an intermediary or channel, or bridge in communication activities between communicators (messengers) and communicants (recipients of messages) to convey information in teaching and learning situations.

Media can be a tool for spreading knowledge and achieving educational goals. Teachers can use media to convey knowledge through sound, visuals, motion, and color, both naturally and artificially, and to help students learn more interestingly and entertainingly (Pratiwi, 2020). (Atiningsih et al., 2022) said that word cards are a reading method that can coordinate eyes and mouth, increase vocabulary, and make children more confident. Word cards are “rectangular cards written in words that children can easily digest. Word cards are a way to help your students develop. Words are combinations of letters that have meaning. In this situation, many students are not able to do activities that show that children can identify objects by associating one object with another object, and children are not able to carry out activities that show that children can identify objects with the names of the objects they belong to. Therefore, the use of flashcards can improve their abilities. Children’s early reading (Muis & Amal, 2021). Word card media is a visual medium that can be visually captured. Word Flash Media displays letter forms that can be supplemented with capital letters, adds insight and skills, stimulates children’s interest in letter recognition, the activity of reading letters and words, allows children to respond to the meaning of each word spoken, supports their imagination, and provides a connection between the subject and the real world, allowing children to develop their first reading skills without sacrificing their fun. (Pratiwi, 2020 (Pratiwi, 2020). The word card media referred to in this study are cards made of cardboard, or you can also use cardboard covered with colored HVS paper. The 10 x 15 cm rectangular shape contains four-letter words that can develop early reading skills. Some examples of words contained in word
cards are me, father, mother, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, horse, sugar, monkey, teapot, glass, and others.

According to research by (Rusti Alam Siregar, 2019), Word card media can be used in the learning process of guessing the letters on the word cards by each child carrying or holding the word cards directly and playing them according to the teacher's instructions, namely, to improve their abilities. Group B children know letters for kindergarten children in Pembina Jambi City (Mirayani et al., 2022). "Implementation of spelling card media to overcome student learning difficulties" can be interpreted so that the first-grade learning process runs smoothly and students are successful. Learning media is very appropriate to use to overcome this. Spelling word card media is needed in the first grade to make it easier for students who have learning difficulties. Students' ability to distinguish almost similar letters and overcome the challenges of reading both can be facilitated by using spelling word cards as media. The early reading skills of children in group B2 RA MA’ARIF NU Karang Tengah Kertanegara Purbalingga were improved by using picture word cards, according to a 2014 article by (Ari Musodah, 2014). Conclusion: The average achievement in pre-action conditions was 42.59 %, increased by 25.75% to reach 68.34% in Cycle I, and increased by 27.23% from Cycle I to Cycle II to achieve a score of 95.57% in Cycle II, according to research from (Aprianti & Widiyastuti, 2021) word card media in developing the ability to recognize letters in the child’s learning process, namely introducing letters of the alphabet with interesting images so that children can remember and be excited about learning the alphabet. The use of alphabet cards also helps children speak the language in everyday life and decipher letters in reading. According to research from (Atiningsih et al., 2022), At the second meeting of cycle II, there was an increase. From the observations of students with indicators, the ability of children to distinguish word sounds from 15 students presents two children in the category of developing according to expectations (BSH) and 13 children in the category of very well developed (BSB). On indicators of children’s ability to name letter symbols according to sound, three children developed as expected (BSH), and 12 children developed very well (BSB).

Based on several previous studies, there are several differences which include differences in research (Rusti Alam Siregar, 2019), namely the use of the word card media with a letter guessing game according to the teacher's instructions. The difference from the study (Mirayani et al., 2022) is the use of this medium by learning to distinguish letters that are almost similar to each teacher. And according to research (Ari Musodah, 2014), the use of media in this study is almost identical to the
use of media in this study, namely by matching the word pictures according to the teacher's instructions; it's just that the media in this study uses pictures. Research from (Aprianti & Widiyastuti, 2021) this research uses attractive pictures on each word card. And in research from (Atiningsih et al., 2022), the use of this medium by stating the letter symbols one by one. Whereas in this study, the researcher used the media with the phoneme recognition method, and the children were asked to arrange the letters according to the word cards given by the teacher, and the children were told to read the word loudly and loudly in front of the other groups.

The purpose of this research is to improve human resources, namely teachers at PAUD al-Khoiriyah Tanjung Botung Village, Kec. Simangambat, Kab. Northern Padang Lawas, and north Sumatera, in improving letter recognition in early childhood, as well as making interesting media for early childhood, such as word card media.

METHOD

This study describes and analyzes the phenomena of events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and individual ideas both individually and in groups using qualitative research (Saleh et al., 2019). The type of research used in this study is descriptive qualitative research, namely research that prioritizes data research or the reality of the problem based on disclosing what has been exploited and disclosed by respondents, and the data collected is in the form of words, pictures, and not numbers. -numbers (Moleong, 2007: 11) in (Aprianti & Widiyastuti, 2021). The approach used in this study is a case study. A case study is a series of scientific activities that are carried out regularly and are structured and detailed about a program, activity, individual, group, or organization to achieve in-depth knowledge related to the activity itself (Irmada & Yatri, 2021) (Arini et al., 2022).

This research was conducted at the Al-Khoiriyah PAUD in Tanjung Botung Village, Simangambat District, North Padang Lawas Regency. In the usual 2022 academic year. Twenty students and group B teachers from PAUD Al-Khoiriyah became research participants. To improve children's ability to recognize letters, this study will apply word card application activities at PAUD Al-Khoiriyah Tanjung Botung Village. Interviews, observations, and documentation approaches are the data techniques used. Interviews were conducted with all those related to the Al-Khoiriyah PAUD school, namely the principal, group B class teachers, accompanying teachers, and several parents of students. Observations were made in the group B classroom at PAUD Al-Khoiriyah
Tanjung Botung, Simangambat, Padang Lawas Utara, Sumatra Utara, by utilizing thirty minutes each day for one month. The documentation in this study is in the form of data on the number of children at PAUD Al-Khoiriyah, and several photos were taken when using the word card media with the documentation to complement the data to complete the research conducted. The analysis consists of three streams of activities that occur simultaneously, namely data reduction, data presentation, conclusion, or verification (Arikunto, 2010). The data reduction process involves making summaries, making RPPH, making themes, making groups, separating, and arranging the learning process according to the theme every day. At the data presentation stage, the researcher compiled data from informants and data from various sources regarding the use of word card media for the introduction of letter recognition in group B students at PAUD Al-Khoiriyah. In drawing this conclusion, the researcher concluded that from the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, it could be concluded that the use of word card media was very effective in recognizing letters in early childhood.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

According to brief findings, observations, and interviews with group B students and parents of accompanying teachers at PAUD Al-Khoiriyah Tanjung Botung. Beginning reading can also be seen as an exercise in recognizing and pronouncing letters, followed by translating a series of letters into words. According to (Munthe, 2018), children’s first reading skills are the recognition of letters and written symbols, focusing on various aspects of reading skills such as reading symbols for letter pronunciation, phoneme understanding, and letter recognition. At PAUD Al-Khoiriyah, Tanjung Botung, Simangambat, Padang Lawas Utara, and Sumatra Utara, initial observations showed that children’s recognition of letters was still lacking, meaning that in the early stages of reading ability, children still had difficulty understanding the concepts of letters and words. Outstanding teachers try to create a fun learning atmosphere based on these factors by using games and visual aids.

Children benefit from using word cards because it can make learning to recognize letters more fun for them. Word cards are shaped like a grid and are made from cardboard. Each word consists of several letters. The use of word cards can be done as follows in Table 1.
# Table 1. Learning Letter Recognition using Card Media at PAUD Al-Khoiriyah Padang Lawas Utara

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>The children were separated into several groups, each consisting of four children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Word cards are prepared by the teacher and distributed to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>The teacher arranges the word cards that will be arranged by students by arranging the alphabet cards they give according to the words proposed by the teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>The young boy then read each letter and word aloud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>After that, the group representative asked attention to the spelling on the card in front of the other groups.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then when using picture word card media, the teacher’s first step is to choose the theme to be achieved. This is a central theme that every teacher must master because, with a theme, teachers can more easily design meaningful lessons for students and help them understand various concepts simply and clearly. As a result, instructors can create the following lesson plans after deciding on a theme to be pursued: First, annual planning, in which the plan determines how much time will be allocated to the annual program to achieve predetermined educational goals. Determine the amount of time needed by students to master all Basic Competencies (KD) as outlined in the curriculum; Second, the Semester Program, is a curriculum that divides the time needed for each subject network into semesters 1 and 2 and contains network themes that are arranged regularly and methodically; Third, the Weekly Activity Plan (RKM), which outlines activities to meet the indicators scheduled for that week following the depth of discussion of the themes and sub-themes planned for the semester of the program; Fourth, the Daily Activity Plan (RKH), which is an extension of the weekly activity plan, ensures that learning activities, whether carried out alone or with others, run effectively in one day. The teacher must develop word card media and introduce it to students after making a planning framework. Progressively introduces language words and sound letter symbols to children. Recording equipment and supplies. Group the kids into different groups and give them activities to do. The use of word card media is very effective for learning, especially recognizing letters for the first steps in reading for children at PAUD Al-Khoiriyah, Tanjung Botung Village, Kec. Simangambat District, North Plains, according to research conducted by researchers on teachers as well.
Table 2. The Inhibiting Factors that Reduce Children’s Interest in Learning Letters
at PAUD Al-Khoiriyah Padang Lawas Utara

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Barriers to the home environment</td>
<td>Such as parents who don’t like to read. This is a problem because parents are the first teachers of children, and if they don’t like reading, it will undoubtedly affect their education and learning process. In essence, children will imitate what is usually done and taught by their parents and will not set an example because of busy parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Barriers from the educational environment</td>
<td>Even though children need to keep their brains active, schools no longer value letter recognition. Ironically, letter recognition exercises are no longer fun for children in school and the educational institution most relied on in life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Barriers posed by the social environment;</td>
<td>many people do not see the value of reading as a means of progress, and as a result, those who read aloud in public still encounter an atypical appearance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Access to books is limited</td>
<td>This makes them seem expensive, but the high price of books reduces people's purchasing power. Parents are reluctant to buy books, especially families with limited resources, but this can be changed by buying cheap books, visiting the library regularly, or renting books from reputable places.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

The study aimed to examine the use of word card media for letter recognition in early childhood at PAUD Al-Khoiriyah Tanjung Botung, Simangambat, Padang Lawas Utara, Sumatra Utara. Data analysis obtained results from which it can be concluded that the use of word card media can have a positive effect on the ability of students to recognize letters. This can be seen from the increase in the subject's letter recognition ability after the word card method was used.

According to (Firdaus, 2019), the child's ability to recognize letters, especially the concept of letter recognition, must be carried out from an early age, and literacy recognition programs in early childhood education institutions can be learning activities that help develop children's literacy. (Pratiwi, 2020) states that the introduction of letters in Kindergarten must be carried out systematically, meaning that it follows the needs, interests, development, and characteristics of the child. The learning process, and game tools (learning media) that are used, must be considered as a conducive learning environment. In the opinion (Pangastuti & Hanum, 2017), learning to recognize letters is an essential component of the development of reading and writing. Children need to know or understand the letters of the alphabet to eventually become independent and fluent readers and writers. Flashcards are the most effective props in this learning, and this is in line with what was expressed by (Sari & Widyasari, 2022) "Flashcards are valuable resources for teachers and parents. They are used as a visual stimulus for learning to read, speak, or write". Flashcards as learning media
are inexpensive and can be made easily.

Cards are a form of visual media, especially printing technology. The card is a large rectangle of paper. Cards are described as "thick rectangular paper that can be used for various purposes" in the Big Indonesian Dictionary. This phrase consists of a series of letters that can be written or typed. (Suwaibah, 2015).

Students' reading challenges can be attributed to a variety of variables, including intellectual, environmental, and psychological variables as well as environmental variables. This is in line with Lamb and Arnold's assessment in (Mirayani et al., 2022) as a result of the following factors, which have an impact on reading difficulties: The first factor is intellectual: not all students with high IQs become proficient readers. In general, a child's IQ does not fully determine whether they will succeed or fail at learning to read at a young age. A child's first reading ability is also influenced by factors related to learning strategies, practices, and teacher talent; secondly, environmental factors. The development of students' reading is also influenced by the environment. Both the home environment and the school environment can play a role in environmental factors. Children will take the right path, namely learning to read, if their environment, for example, includes friends who are attentive readers. Otherwise, a child will only play with friends who are not interested in reading, for example. In addition, if parents pay less attention to their children's learning conditions; third, psychological factors; and Psychological factors may also have an impact on a child's reading development. Motivation, emotion, and self-confidence are psychological characteristics that can influence a child's first reading challenge.

According to (Djamarah, 2011), the family environment does not create and provide creative environmental conditions for children to learn when parents do not pay attention to their child's education and when parents do not provide a cool and pleasant environment for children's learning. When family harmony is not created, when the kinship system is increasingly shaky, and when children's learning needs, especially those that are very important, are not met. Then, such a home setting contributes to a child's learning challenges. Factors supporting the introduction of letters in PAUD Al-Khoiriyah Tanjung Botung, Simangambat, Padang Lawas Utara, Sumatra Utara are teachers who are creative in making interesting media for students, the interest of children who want to know letters is marked by children who like to read the writing on the school walls, and some parents also provide smart reading books. And the inhibiting factors for letter recognition in PAUD Al-Khoiriyah Tanjung Botung, Simangambat, Padang Lawas Utara, Sumatra Utara are the lack of
textbook facilities for teachers, the lack of media facilities related to letter recognition, and some children who are absent too often which makes these children left behind with their friends.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the research findings and discussion in this study, it can be concluded that the use of word card media can be used in a way. Children are separated into several groups, each consisting of four children. Word cards are prepared by the teacher and distributed to students. The teacher arranges word cards to be the students arranged by arranging the alphabet cards they gave according to the words proposed by the teacher. The young people then read each letter and word aloud. After that, the group representatives paid attention to the spelling on the cards in front of the other groups. Factors supporting the introduction of letters in PAUD Al-Khoiriyah Tanjung Botung, Simangambat, Padang Lawas Utara, Sumatra Utara are teachers who are creative in making interesting media for students, the interest of children who want to know letters is marked by children who like to read the writing on the school walls, and some parents also provide smart reading books. And the inhibiting factors for letter recognition in PAUD Al-Khoiriyah are the lack of textbook facilities for teachers, the lack of media facilities related to letter recognition, and some children who are absent too often, which makes these children left behind with their friends.

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