

TEACHER EFFORTS IN IMPROVING LETTER KNOWLEDGE ABILITY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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Abstract

The ability to recognize letters in students is the basis for students being able to read. This study uses the concept of learning while playing with word cards, picture cards, and letter cards as media. This study, recognizing letters, aims to discover and develop ways of learning to introduce letters to students with more fun methods and attract students' attention at PAUD Bunda Serdang Bedagai. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method. Data collection is done by interviews, observations, and field studies. In this study, the principal, teacher, and researcher worked together to use word cards, picture cards, and letter cards as media. 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, word cards, picture cards, and letter cards as media. Sources of data were obtained by researchers from school principals, class teachers, accompanying teachers, students, and several parents of students. Collecting data through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis is done through data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions, and verification. The results showed that the teacher's efforts to improve the ability to recognize letters for early childhood students with the initial method were still less effective. Students could only know how to write, not know the letters well. But by using the word card method, picture cards, and letter cards, it is more effective for students to know letters better, not only in writing, but students know the shapes of letters and how to pronounce these letters randomly or sequentially.

Keywords

Letter knowledge, PAUD Bunda, word cards



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INTRODUCTION

Learning in early childhood is carried out as early as possible because this period there is a sensitive period where students are easily exposed to various external stimuli and influences they receive through their five senses, the development of cognitive, linguistic, physical, motor, and emotional talents of students also experience rapid changes with environmental impacts. Surrounding. From an early age, students have good language skills to express thoughts and feelings and interact with their environment. Early childhood is the fastest period of growth and development, both physically and mentally. In addition to physical growth and development, students also experience motor, moral, social-emotional, cognitive, and language development that occurs very quickly (Siregar, 2019). Based on Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Early childhood education is stated in article 28, paragraph 1, which reads: "Early childhood education takes place in students from birth to the age of six and is not a prerequisite for going to elementary school." Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is basic education because the development of students in the future is very much determined by various early childhood stimuli. Early in a child's life is the best time to receive support or development to help students develop optimally (Nesi Ratna Sari, Fitriah Hayati, 2021). Early childhood is at the right golden age to provide educational stimulation to optimize students' growth and development. Providing educational stimulation needs to pay attention to the nature of the child so that the child's potential can develop optimally (Astuti, 2019).

In addition, Article 1 Paragraph 14 Chapter I emphasizes that child education is a training workshop aimed at students from birth to the age of six carried out by encouraging physical and spiritual growth and development so that students are ready to pursue further education. Ministry of National Education, USPN (Sujiono, 2013). The ability to recognize letters seems easy, but this skill must be mastered by kindergarten students because letter recognition is the initial capital of literacy (Mandalina, Herman, 2019). Learning media is a child's play tool, and the use of learning media in early childhood helps students understand or minimize something difficult and complex. Learning media is not expensive but can be obtained locally (Siti Winda Arifah, 2022). Education has a major influence on the growth and development of students. Education is defined as an effort by educators or guardians to improve a child's ability to improve the previous situation. Early childhood education uses a foundation for growth in six areas of development, including religious and moral development, physical, motor, cognitive, language, social, emotional, and artistic

development. When students understand consonants and vowels correctly and fluently, it's easier for them to learn to read from the start. However, if a child does not recognize vowels or consonants, it will be difficult for them to move on to the next level of reading (Firdaus, 2019).

Letter cards are the use of some cards as a tool for learning to read by seeing and remembering the shapes of letters and pictures, accompanied by writing the meanings of the pictures on the cards (Sumida, 2022). The media, if understood broadly, is human, material, or events that build conditions that enable students to gain knowledge, skills, or attitudes (Silvi Juliani, 2019).

Teachers are role models and identify with the students they teach and their environment. So, as a teacher, of course, certain standards and qualities must be met. Becoming a teacher requires a sense of responsibility, independence, authority, and discipline that can be an example for students (Dea Kiki Yestiani, 2020). A teacher's motivation has a significant influence on student success in school. Teachers are expected to be able to guide all students so they can solve their problems and increase their motivation to study at school (Gita Pratiwi, Sri Artati Waluyati, 2019). A teacher is the most important factor for the success of teaching and learning. Teachers not only act as educators and facilitators but must also be able to act as motivators for their students. Teacher effectiveness is the teacher's ability to complete learning tasks at school and take responsibility for students in their guidance and improve students' learning (Fitrah, 2020). At this stage, early childhood begins to learn to think critically and very easily assimilate the information they hear. Therefore, early childhood education is very important for child development (Firdaus, 2021). The teaching profession is very important and has a direct impact on the progress of the nation. As a profession, teachers ideally have certain requirements to be appointed by someone. Becoming a teacher requires special skills (Mangkurat, 2020).

According to (Veryawan, 2020), knowing letters is very important for early childhood and must be conveyed in a fun way because it is fun, students are not burdened, and students need energy to fully learn language learning as taught or expected. In letter recognition, students can not only listen but also learn by using pictures or teaching aids and appropriate strategies and methods to build their knowledge (Mandalina, Herman, 2019). Letter recognition skills in early childhood are closely related to the development of students' language skills; up to the age of 5–6 years, students must be able to understand and transmit language related to early reading process skills (Arika Novrani, Dewi Caturwulandari, Dwi Purwestri, Eka Annisa, 2021). According to (Risnita & Oktaviana, 2020), the ability to recognize letters in this study is the child's ability to recognize letter

symbols, recognize letter sounds, and understand sound associations and letter symbols. (Mandalina, Herman, 2019) Students who do not know letters can not only listen but also learn, which includes pictures or props and appropriate strategies or methods for students to build their knowledge. It can be concluded that knowing the letters is very important for the early stages of reading. By knowing the letters, students can read easily. The method used in introducing letters to students must be interesting and make students focus, but not make them bored.

The ability to recognize letters in early childhood is similar to the ability to recognize accents or symbols in writing. There are appropriate steps to teach students to recognize letters, namely: (1) interestingly mentioning the sound of letters; (2) mentioning the letters of the alphabet; (3) showing the names of the letters of the alphabet; (4) sorting the letters of the alphabet; and (5) learning more about vowel concepts. The ability to recognize letters is a seemingly simple skill, but this skill must be mastered by students because the first literacy value is letter recognition. In early childhood, letter recognition must be learned through games. Teaching letter recognition material to students requires a meaningful function so that students don't feel bored and forced. (Nesi Ratna Sari, Fitriah Hayati, 2021) In general, the reading development of a preschooler must be taken seriously. Teaching students to read at an early age requires seriousness, patience, and faith. Class activities are activities that help students reach their potential. Teaching helps someone learn something. The teacher has a very complex task in learning activities, namely being a facilitator and motivator in education. Teachers are one of the human elements in the educational process (Suweleh & Rachmawati, 2022).

The ability to recognize letters, especially concepts in recognition, must be developed from an early age. Things that can be seen in the condition of students who do not know letters well are that they are also not able to arrange and sort letters, and they are less able to distinguish letter sounds. PAUD Bunda Dusun X Paya Pinang Village, Kec. Syahbandar Cliff, Kab. Serdang Bedagai's method is used at the beginning of learning by singing the ABC song and training students to recognize shapes and how to say letters. This PAUD also uses students' worksheets, or they call it a magazine. However, in this poem, there is still little media to introduce the letters. For example, they only have students' worksheets and letter boards in class.

This research was conducted at the Mother Dusun X PAUD, Paya Pinang Village, Kec. Syahbandar Cliff, Kab. Serdang Bedagai, because in this early childhood, there is a problem of the ability to recognize letters that are still done using the teacher's way of introducing letters directly

to students by writing letters in a notebook, mentioning the sound of letters, showing letters on the blackboard, and asking students to imitate the sound of these letters. This teacher-centered learning causes students to become less active in the learning process and makes most of them bored. In addition, the child's ability to recognize letters is still weak, both because of unclear pronunciation and the inability of students to distinguish letter shapes.

To be able to overcome this problem, researchers must find the best solution. The purpose of conducting this research is to find out and develop ways of learning to introduce letters to students with methods that are more fun and attract students' attention. After discussions with the principal and teachers at the PAUD, a way of introducing letters to students was developed through the method of playing with word cards, picture cards, and letter cards. Learning and application are carried out by the class teacher; the researcher only observes the progress of the planned method. After being observed for about four weeks with this method, the students were very enthusiastic about doing the playing method using the media of word cards, picture cards, and letter cards, which were arranged according to the teacher's instructions. This activity can also help teachers be curious and innovative when teaching and not be afraid to take risks when using different methods (Damayanti, 2021). According to psychologists, childhood only comes once, cannot be repeated, and is very important for the development of human character because students are valuable assets to their families, environment, and nation.

According to the journal (Mandalina, Herman, 2019), using picture card media with the play learning method can improve the ability to recognize letters. The ability to recognize letters by using picture cards increases to 90% if the activity is carried out. The child's response to using the picture card media obtained very satisfying results, namely the Very Well Developed (BSB) category. According to the journal (Siregar, 2019), the ability to recognize letters through word cards shows an increase of 83.3%. According to this journal (Firdaus, 2019), this study using letter card media also experienced an increase of 86.26%. Journals (Veryawan, 2020) through the medium of letter cards can develop students' abilities very well at the expected level of development, namely 80%. According to the journal (Tanjung, 2018), the results of this study indicate a significant increase in student's ability to recognize letters of the alphabet. The percentage of students' abilities in Cycle 1 Meeting 1 was 75%, and Cycle 2 Meeting 2 rose to 85%. The use of letter card media in learning to recognize letters of the alphabet can improve students' abilities.

Based on the research above, it is explained that using word card media, picture cards, and letters to introduce letters experienced a significant increase. There is a difference in this study, namely that the method of using the introduced media is slightly different from the research above. The above research uses the same media, but the method of introducing the media is slightly different from this research. Journals (Firdaus, 2019) and journals (Tanjung, 2018) use the same method, namely by singing and games or corrective steps consisting of the teacher singing line by line; the teacher asks the students to follow songs 1, 2, and 3 preceded by the teacher; the teacher sings the song in its entirety; and the teacher asks the students to sing in groups. Journals (Siregar, 2019) and journals (Veryawan, 2020) also have little in common in using media, namely in the form of word cards that are made, as in the following example: Labeling can be done with pictures of animals, fruits, and simple objects known to the child. In principle, word card games fall into the category of mastery play, namely playing to master certain skills. Then in the journal (Mandalina, Herman, 2019), using the media, the teacher takes one of the pictures to use as a reference in letter recognition. For example, "corn," then the teacher shows the letters to the child written under the picture. Then the teacher randomly assigns the letter cards so that the child can distinguish one letter from another.

Of the five journals above, there is a difference with this study, namely the use of media in this study. First, the teacher allows the child to choose what word card the child wants, for example, the word "tree". Then the teacher will show and ask if there are any letters on the word card. Then, the child looks for the scrambled letter cards and arranges them according to the words the child gets. By using this method, the child is very enthusiastic about doing it can be seen from the enthusiasm the child for the method and how to do it has increased by introducing letters to students. It is said that because of the 20 students who are in early childhood education, there are 16 or around 80% of the students show an increase that this method is successful.

But if you use the old method, the letter recognition does not increase or just stops there. It has been proven that with this recent innovation, students are more and more enthusiastic about learning. The goal is to develop a way of learning to recognize letters from students. Introducing letters does have to use interesting ideas so that students feel curious, so teachers are expected to look for references on how to develop letters for students with recent innovations.

METHOD

This research is to find out the teachers' efforts to improve the ability to recognize letters for students and learning that is carried out in the context of collaboration between researchers and PAUD Bunda teachers in Paya Pinang Village, Kec. Syahbandar Cliff, and Kab. Serdang Bedagai. In this study, the teachers worked together to make plans, and then the teacher was in charge of carrying out learning in class while the researchers made observations of the continuity of the action process. Furthermore, researchers and teachers have discussions. To see the lack and excess of activities that have been carried out. Then the researcher will interview the school principal and class teacher to find out how well the child knows the letters. Qualitative research is also a research method that aims to gain a deep, comprehensive understanding of reality through a naturalistic interpretive process (Haryoko, 2020). Then the researchers observed and conducted field studies. The subject of this study is the teaching class, head school, and PAUD students, whose average age is 5-6 years, for a total of 20 students, consisting of 9 men and 11 girls. The reason for choosing the subject of research in early childhood is that as many as 90% of the 20 students still have difficulty knowing letters. Area study technique This gives an outlook on the collected data using various methods, including interviews, observations, document archives, and tests (Nugrahani Farida, 2014).

This study was conducted at PAUD Bunda Dusun X Paya Pinang Village, Kec. Syahbandar Cliff, and Kab. Serdang Bedagai's. This school is a formal PAUD institution under the auspices of Institution Service Education, and the learning activities are packed with general and Islamic learning. For example, the teacher introduced Arabic language translations, prayers, and short surahs. This study was held for one month. At the time, the researcher did observational observations to find out the ability to begin an introductory letter on Paud. Then you do planning and compile RPPH, prepare media for study while playing, and prepare observation instruments. Data analysis was carried out using data reduction. This process continued throughout the research, even before the data was collected, as seen from the research conceptual framework, study problems, and the data collection approach chosen by the researcher. It involves making summaries, making RPPH, making themes, making groups, separating, and arranging the learning process according to the piece every day. At the presentation stage of research, researchers collect data from informants and data from various sources about the media and use word cards, picture cards, and letter cards to introduce letters to students. Based on the data verified by this researcher from

interviews, observations, and documentation, it can be concluded that using word cards, picture cards, and letter cards is very effective in recognizing letters in early childhood.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The results of this research were obtained from observations, interviews, and field studies. The teacher's efforts to introduce letters to students at the Early Childhood PAUD Bunda Dusun X Paya Pinang Village, Kec. Syahbandar Cliff, Kab. Serdang Bedagai's, in the morning or after praying and getting ready before studying, make it a habit to sing the ABC song. At the time of the interview, it was also observed in the field that singing the ABC song at the beginning of this lesson was indeed not very effective because the students only knew the song or the lyrics from what they heard. There were still some students who sang this ABC song with the wrong pronunciation. For example, the song should be ABCDEFG; some students sing ABCDEEG; some sing ABCDFFG; and so on. The teacher also sometimes sings by pointing to the ABC posters that have been posted on the blackboard. So the child sings while the teacher points to the letter being mentioned. In this way, some students know and remember the shape of the letters. But there are still some students who don't remember or understand what the letters look like. After singing while pointing at the letter posters, the teacher also gives assignments for the students to do at school every day in the form of letter books (bold dotted lines) and large box books written in letters above to the side and then imitated by the students until they are finished. This method can be said to be imperfect. Because some students do not know what letter they are asking for, they just follow what the teacher gives as an example. In other words, students can only write letters. After completing these activities, the teacher evaluates what activities have been carried out that day and gives assignments to be done at home (homework).

Table 1. Master's effort in Increasing Ability to Know Letters in PAUD BUNDA

Paya Pinang, Serdang , North Sumatra

No.	Stages	Explanation
1.	First	In the morning, pray, and sing so that the students are enthusiastic and prepared for learning, then sing the ABC song (done by pointing to the ABC poster pasted on the blackboard.
2.	Second	The teacher gives assignments that must be done every day by writing in the book provided (bold dotted line)
3.	Third	The teacher gives the task back with a big box book that has written what letter the child will follow down

4.	fourth	The teacher evaluates the activities carried out during the day of learning
5.	Fifth	The teacher also gives the same task as a big box book that has written what letter the child will follow down to do at home

In interviews with school principals and teachers at PAUD Bunda Dusun X Paya Pinang Village, Kec. Syahbandar Cliff, Kab. Serdang Bedagai, cooperation between teachers and parents is very important. Because it is enough to improve letter recognition in students at school, it can also be done at home because learning takes longer to maximize the development of letter recognition. The method used in early childhood is quite effective but still quite tedious. It is said to be quite effective because 60% of students understand the concepts made by the teacher, but the other 40% do not understand or don't know. Letter recognition is also influenced by the teacher's limited experience of using letters. One of the teachers said in the interview that the obstacles faced by the teacher were that students would be active when the teacher was around. When the teacher was not there, the child's activity decreased. Then the teacher's knowledge is also an obstacle in interviews with PAUD BUNDA teachers in Dusun X Paya Pinang Village, Kec. Syahbandar Cliff, Kab. Serdang Bedagai's, Still own Lots of necessary limitations especially wary of teachers of approach management with the child in class. Besides that, the PAUD Bunda Dusun X Paya Pinang Village, Kec. Syahbandar Cliff, Kab. Serdang Bedagai's, influences introduction letters. Teachers are also lacking creativity in choosing and creating the right media. Existing facilities become a factor important for teachers to maximize programs, and fewer facilities become a significant obstacle for teachers. To act. A teacher must still Spirit teach without strings attached. And encourage students.

After discussing with teachers and head school, the draft teaching at Mother's Preschool can be improved. Results from discussion This is a possible solution teachers do more effectively Again in introduce letter on the child This that is with using other media, media that can be used must be interesting so that can increase Spirit child in Study know letters, the media used must also be interesting And unique, like card letters, cards u pictures and word card from Table 2.

Table 2. Stages Create Media Cards

No.	Medias	Explanation of Stages
1.	Word Card Media	1) Prepare tools and materials, 10 x 8cm cardboard (according to the teacher's wishes), scissors, glue, markers, origami paper (other colored paper), and solution (clear solution). 2) After all the tools and materials have been prepared, the 10X8cm carton is neatly wrapped in origami paper (color paper) using glue. Then when it's neat, please write the word as desired. The media said the cards could be used, and the teacher can make as many as possible, the number of students can choose them, 3) use solution (clear

		solution to cover all surfaces of the cards so that they are safe if they are exposed to water or things that make the cards wet or dirty).
2.	Picture Card Media	1) prepare tools and materials, cardboard 10X8 cm (maybe larger), scissors, glue, origami paper (color paper) printed pictures (which have been drawn with HVS paper according to the size of the cardboard. 2) after all the tools and materials already prepared, the cardboard is wrapped neatly with origami 3paper (color paper) using glue, 3) then paste the drawing paper that has been printed or drawn yourself on the cardboard using glue, 4) then coat the entire surface with solution (clear solution) so that the cardboard is not easily wet or dirty.
3.	Media Card Letters	1) Prepare tools and materials, cardboard 10x8cm (according to the wishes of the teacher), scissors, glue, markers, origami paper (other colored paper), and solution (clear solution). 2) After all the tools and materials have been prepared, the cardboard measuring 10X8cm is neatly wrapped in origami paper (color paper) using glue. Then if it's neat, please write the letters AZ. It's more advisable not to just make only 1 card per letter. Because in a word there are the same letters, then at least make three cards with the same letters. 3) use a solution (clear solution to cover all surfaces of the card so that it is safe if it is exposed to water or things that make the card wet or dirty).

This research used word cards and letter cards. This medium is more effective because it makes students feel unique and fun. At the beginning of introducing this medium, the teacher gives short words such as "table, mother, father," and so on. When the child is more proficient with short words, the teacher can extend the word, such as "fan," "apple tree," and so on. Students feel interested because, according to them, the method used is unique. After doing this learning, students tell their parents how exciting it is to learn letters. The child can recognize letters and connect letters to letters to form words. And most of the students on Mother's Day can already make their names from the method of dissecting words.

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to introduce letters to students through word cards, picture cards, and letter cards at the PAUD Bunda. From the data analysis, it can be concluded that the use of word cards, picture cards, and letter cards has a positive impact on early recognition in students.

In this journal (Veryawan, 2020), the medium of letter cards can develop students' abilities very well, with an expected development level of 80%. According to the journal (Mandalina, Herman, 2019), it shows a good average score, as seen in the achievement of 3 stars and 4-star scores. Students who reach 1 star are 0 students; students who reach two stars are two students; students who reach three stars are 18 students; and students who reach four stars are five students. It can be

concluded from several journals that have studied introducing letters through the medium of word cards, letter cards, and picture cards that learning like this is very interesting for students, so they are enthusiastic about learning because students feel differently about their learning. So that research can be improved well.

The method used in early childhood is quite effective but still quite tedious. It is said to be quite effective because 60% of students understand the concepts explained by the teacher, but the other 40% do not understand or don't even know. Letter recognition is also influenced by the teacher's limited experience using letters. One of the teachers said in an interview that the obstacles faced by the teacher were that students would be active when the teacher was around, but when the teacher was not there, the child's activity decreased.

The ability to recognize letters is the child's ability to do something or do an activity by recognizing the characteristics and signs of a script in writing, which is part of the letter symbols that will symbolize the sound of the language (Pratiwi, 2020). The ability of the beginning child to read is also marked by the ability to know letters. Unborn child letters have a better chance of reading than known child letters (Christianti, 2015). The introduction letter has proven to be wrong. One predictor of ability is the strongest and most reliable reading (Nesi Ratna Sari, Fitriah Hayati, 2021). The introduction letter has proven to be wrong. One predictor of ability is the strongest and most reliable reading (Panjaitan & Asbi, 2022). The ability to recognize letters is an aspect of students' language development that needs to be developed by providing optimal stimulation from an early age (Indriyanti, 2021).

The results show that it is easier for PAUD Bunda students to recognize letters with the media of letter cards and word cards, which are very visible. The recognition of students' letters increased; before using the word card method, picture cards, and students' letter cards, only 60% knew letters well. However, after using word card media, picture cards and word cards increased the number of students who knew letters very well to 80%. There is a change of about 40% from before using recent innovations. So the findings of this study state that the application of knowing letters has increased. Based on this media, it can be concluded that students become more active and train their courage to come to the front of the class. This method also increases motivation, and the learning experience of students goes well. So it can be concluded that using this medium can improve letter recognition in students.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the teacher's efforts to improve the ability to recognize letters for PAUD Bunda students with the initial method are still less effective. The students can only know how to write, not know the letters well. But by using the word card method, picture cards, and letter cards, it is more effective for students to know letters better, not only in writing but also in the shapes of letters and how to pronounce these letters randomly or sequentially.

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