

Efforts to Improve Children's Ability to Recognize Letters Through the Use of Letter Card Media in AR-RIDHO Kindergarten, Jambi City, Indonesia

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Abstract

This research aims to improve children's ability to recognize letters through letter card media in AR-RIDHO Kindergarten, Jambi City. In its implementation, there are two cycles of this research: actions in classroom action research. Kindergarten in Group B AR-RIDHO as research participants, totalling nine students. The second semester of the 2023/2024 academic year was used for this investigation. Observation is the approach used to obtain data. The observation sheet is the instrument used in this research to collect data. Utilizing qualitative descriptive data analysis. A child's proficiency in letter recognition is said to have increased if the proportion of the child's proficiency reaches 88.89% with suitable criteria. Children's pre-action letter recognition skills meet the criteria of not being good, with an average increase in letter recognition of 58.65%. The children's average score of 77.22% in cycle I show they can recognize letters, meeting the required criteria. The second action cycle was necessary because, although there had been improvements after the first, children's letter recognition skills still needed to reach the mark of success. According to Cycle II data, the average child's letter recognition is 88.89%, which is good.

Keywords: ability to recognize letters, letter card media, AR-RIDHO Kindergarten

A. Introduction

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a training program for children under six. It aims to prepare them to enter higher education by offering educational stimuli to support their physical and spiritual development. (Helmawati, 2015). At this age, children need to receive education that meets the needs of all parties involved in their growth and development, especially parents or other people around the child, especilaly based on their genetic (Roslina, 2024).

"According to Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Article 1 Paragraph 14, "Early childhood education is a coaching effort aimed at children from birth to age six which is carried out through providing educational stimulation to help their growth and development. "Children's physical and spiritual development so they are ready for further education" PAUD pathways are divided into three categories according to Article 28, which regulates Early Childhood Education: formal education

(TK/RA or equivalent), non-formal (KB and TPA or equivalent), and informal (family and environmental education) Wiyana (2016), p. 24.

Murshid (2015), the principles of early childhood development must be guided by the specifics of learning, which include Applying the idea of learning through play, Doing this in an inventive and supportive atmosphere, both indoors and outdoors; Aiming at creating comprehensive and integrated intelligence potential; and implemented using themes and an integrated approach (Roslina, 2024).

From the results of observations, the activities for learning to recognize letters in the AR-RIDHO Kindergarten in Jambi City appear to be less than optimal, resulting in a lack of interest and enthusiasm for children in doing them. During the researcher's observations in group B of the AR-RIDHO Kindergarten, Jambi City, the researcher saw things like colouring the letters, making the letters bold, grouping objects according to the same initial letter, and so on. This implementation is not optimal, so the activities stay the same in the learning process.

Children in group B of the AR-RIDHO Kindergarten in Jambi City in group B in letter recognition activities did not attract the children's attention. It can be seen during the letter recognition activity. From the number of students present, only a few worked according to the work requirements until completion.

In group B, recognizing letters at the AR-RIDHO Kindergarten, Jambi City interests students. However, in implementing it, recognizing letters is only done by looking at the teacher's writing monotonously. So, when students combine words, they still do not need to match what is expected on the worksheet. This is due to students' need for more focus on what is being conveyed by the teacher, chatting with friends, and walking around the class. In delivering material regarding letter recognition, educators only use worksheets.

Educators have implemented learning media, but student interest still needs to be improved. Educators try to change the media used to attract students' interest in recognizing letters so that letter recognition activities are carried out in a fun way and without pressure and coercion. Letter card media is a type of learning resource that is used. Children become happier and more interested in participating in activities using this letter card medium.

Instructors can improve children's letter recognition skills by using letter cards. Interesting teaching materials can raise students' learning motivation and facilitate their understanding of the idea of letter recognition. Children will be interested in learning when they use media, which can help them in all aspects of development, including letter recognition.

According to observation data, the child's proficiency in letter recognition before using the observation instrument shows that his letter recognition skills have improved significantly. The average percentage before the cycle in children's research is 58.65%. Things like this are the impetus for researchers to take action to improve children's letter-recognition abilities.

B. Methodology

For two weeks, research was conducted to identify problems and improve the educational process at AR-RIDHO Kindergarten, Jambi City. Group B students, totalling nine students, were the targets of research using the type of classroom action research (PTK) using a qualitative descriptive approach. So, the research subjects were group B and group B educators at AR-RIDHO Kindergarten, Jambi City. The research methods used are preparation, implementation, observation and reflection. Therefore, the methods used to obtain data for this research include observation, interviews and documentation. The instruments used were teacher and student observation papers. Student observation sheets are used in the AR-RIDHO Kindergarten in Jambi City to determine how much students' letter recognition skills have improved through letter

cards. In contrast, educator observation sheets are used when teachers include game media in lesson plans. Evaluation based on indicators of developmental achievements of AR-RIDHO Kindergarten children in Jambi City will be included in the observation sheet. Qualitative descriptive techniques were used in this research. The student activity observation sheet data during letter recognition activities through letter cards will be analyzed. Data processing in this research uses the following solution.

Total Skor = menjumlahkan seluruh penilaian anak

$$\text{Persentase Nilai} = \frac{\text{Total skor penilaian}}{\text{Total skor maksimal}} \times 100\%$$

$$\text{Rata - rata} = \frac{\text{Total persentase nilai}}{\text{Total persentase maksimal}}$$

C. Findings and Discussion

Nine children, five girls and four boys participated in the research from April 29 to May 10, 2024, at AR-RIDHO Kindergarten, Jambi City. In order to foster language, creativity and communication skills in children aged 5 to 6 years at the AR-RIDHO Kindergarten in Jambi City, letter recognition teaching activities were carried out using letter cards. This causes children's creativity to grow well. The researcher presents the findings of the discussion and data analysis below as the next stage in the conclusion-making process.

Before starting the research cycle I, we conducted a pre-cycle assessment to measure the participants' letter recognition skills. Activities before the cycle begin by knowing the abilities before recognizing letters to ensure children can say the letters a – z.

This is related to the ability to identify letters using letter cards on the findings of observations made. Children have challenges and need help when learning. For example, when children discuss the letters of the alphabet a to Z, they still need the teacher's help identifying the letters they missed.

So that children can recognize letters related to the task of sorting letters a–z using letter cards, they still need a lot of direction and stimulation, activities to bold letters, and arrange letters into words according to examples. The results of observations before the action carried out on 22 – 27 April 2024 using observation instruments obtained the following data:

Table.1. Pre-Cycle Results of Ability to Recognize Letters with Letter Card Media

cNo	Nama Anak	Anak mampu menyebutkan huruf a – z	Anak mampu membuat simbol huruf dengan benar	Anak mampu menuliskan huruf – huruf dari namanya sendiri	Anak mampu mencocokkan huruf dengan gambar
1	Abi	2	2	2	2
2	Arin	3	3	3	3
3	Aqilaa	3	3	3	3
4	Asif	3	3	3	3
5	Eliza	2	2	2	2
6	Nabila	2	2	3	3
7	Riana	2	2	2	2
8	Rizky	2	2	3	3
9	Zaki	2	2	2	2
Total		21	21	23	23

Based on the data in the table, four children could not do it during the pre-letter recognition activity, and five were quite good. The total percentage of scores for the ability to say the letters a – z is 58.33%, the ability to make letter symbols correctly is 58.33%, the ability to write the letters of one's name is 58.97%, and the ability to match letters with pictures is 58.97%. Thus, 58.65% is the average value of children's

letter recognition. Because the material used in this exercise was a worksheet, the participants were enthusiastic to start at the beginning of the first cycle. However, each student's reaction was different; some used the media according to the teacher's instructions, and some participants played the media according to their wishes.

The ability to recognize children's letters before acting using the observation sheet instrument shows from the observation data that children's letter recognition abilities are still developing quite well. This can be seen from the average percentage of children's assessments, which is 58.65%. Situations like this encourage researchers to take action to improve children's letter recognition abilities.

After seeing the results of the pre-cycle observations, the researcher conducted further research in the second cycle with the following data results:

Table 2. Results of Cycle I Ability to Recognize Letters Using Letter Cards

No	Nama Anak	Anak mampu meyebutkan huruf a - z	Anak mampu membuat simbol huruf dengan benar	Anak mampu menuliskan huruf - huruf dari namanya sendiri	Anak mampu mencocokkan huruf dengan gambar
1	Abi	2	2	3	3
2	Arin	3	3	4	4
3	Aqilaa	3	3	4	4
4	Asif	3	3	4	4
5	Eliza	2	2	3	3
6	Nabila	2	3	3	3
7	Riana	2	2	3	3
8	Rizky	3	3	3	3
9	Zaki	2	2	3	2
Total		22	23	30	29

It can compare the learning outcomes assessment in cycle I by looking at the table above based on observations made before and after the action. Before the activities in cycle I, children's numeracy skills had increased. Before being given action, the child's pre-cycle letter recognition abilities were not adequate based on the criteria. This includes difficulty pronouncing the letters a to z, correctly forming letter symbols, writing letters using their names, and matching letters with pictures.

Although the child has still not reached the anticipated milestones of success, this table shows considerable progress in developing the child's letter recognition abilities compared to pre-cycle observation findings. The percentages obtained in cycle I were the ability to sort letters a - z sequentially 61.11%, the ability to make letter symbols 63.89%, the ability to write the letters of one's name 83.33%, and the ability to match letters with pictures 80.56%, with an average of 72.22%. Then, the average shows that students successfully carry out letter recognition activities in the first cycle using letter card media.

With an average score of 72.22%, children's letter recognition skills using letter cards as a medium are pretty good, according to the calculation results for cycle I. The researcher carried out research once again for cycle II in this way and obtained the following data results:

Table 3. Results of Cycle II Ability to Recognize Letters Using Letter Cards

No	Nama Anak	Anak mampu mengurutkan huruf a - z	Anak mampu membuat simbol huruf dengan benar	Anak mampu menuliskan huruf - huruf dari namanya sendiri	Anak mampu mencocokkan huruf dengan gambar
1	Abi	3	3	4	3
2	Arin	4	4	4	4
3	Aqilaa	4	4	4	4
4	Asif	4	4	4	4
5	Eliza	3	3	3	3

6	Nabila	3	4	4	4
7	Riana	3	3	3	4
8	Rizky	3	4	4	4
9	Zaki	3	3	3	3
Total		30	32	33	33

Based on the observation results table, the assessment of children's numeracy skills using letter card media is improving. The findings show that the score in the fourth position has increased from the last action meeting. Because the seven children's scores at this meeting met the predetermined markers of success, the research was stopped in cycle II of meeting 2. The percentage results in the children's assessments were also seen, namely saying the letters a – z in sequence 83.33%, the ability to make letter symbols correctly 88.89%, the ability to write the letters of one's name 91.67%, and ability to match letters with pictures 91.67%. In the letter recognition task using letter cards, the average score appeared to increase by 88.89% overall.

Compared with the observations in cycles I and II, the table shows a perfect improvement in recognising letters by using letter cards and writing one's name on the letters. Observation results met anticipated markers of success. Regarding children's letter recognition skills using letter cards, three could name the letters a – z in sequence, and six could not correctly name the letters a – z in sequence. Four children could form letters accurately, and five could correctly make letter symbols. In addition, three children could write their names well, and six could write them very well. Next, two children could match letters to pictures quite well, and seven could match letters to photos very well. Children's performance increased by an average percentage of 88.89% when using letter cards to practice letter recognition.

To determine whether the activities have been carried out according to plan or there have been adjustments, researchers and class teachers must observe the learning process from start to finish. We carried out observations together with learning assistants. Activities in cycle II ran smoothly from start to finish. The following are the results of data observations:

Table 4. Recapitulation of Pre-Cycle, Cycle I and Cycle II Results for Ability to Recognize Letters Using Letter Card Media

Kemampuan Mengenal Huruf dengan Media Kartu Huruf			
Yang diamati	Pra Siklus	Siklus I	Siklus II
Anak mampu mengurutkan huruf a – z	58,33%	61,11%	83,33%
Anak mampu membuat simbol huruf dengan benar	58,33%	63,89%	88,89%
Anak mampu menuliskan huruf – huruf dari namanya sendiri	58,97%	83,33%	91,67%
Anak mampu mencocokkan huruf dengan gambar	58,97%	80,56%	91,67%
Rata – rata	58,65%	72,22%	88,89%

The percentage of learning outcomes in cycles I and II in the table above can be compared based on observations of the results before action is taken. When group B children carry out letter recognition activities using letter cards, the data collected can be used to assess how well they meet their learning objectives. Children's letter identification capacity improved quite well in this study, as seen in the table. Children's letter recognition activities using letter cards in the pre-action criteria had a poor average score of 58.65% before the action was carried out. After carrying out

activities in cycle I, the average percentage was 72.22%, and after cycle II, the average ability of children to recognize letters using letter cards was 88.89%.

There are two cycles in classroom action research: the first is where the research is carried out. Each cycle consists of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Obtain information from the cycle observation sheet. The results are then used to ensure student improvement based on observational data. Researchers analyze research primarily to determine how the problem is formulated. Analysis is also carried out when collecting information about a child's early talents. To take appropriate research action, the analysis should be carried out before the research tries to determine the level of the child's problems and talents. Children's ability to recognize letters is the most frequently encountered problem, based on observation findings about how learning is carried out and how learning materials are used with children. Letter recognition activities using various media and techniques will occur from April 29 2024, to May 10 2024. Research activities will be carried out in two cycles. At AR-RIDHO Kindergarten, Jambi City, this first action research demonstrated how classroom action research can be carried out.

It is proven that the effectiveness of research shows the consistency of theory and findings. This can be seen from the learning of AR-RIDHO Kindergarten students in Jambi City through letter recognition exercises using letter cards as media. This shows how letter recognition training using letter cards can improve children's letter recognition skills at AR-RIDHO Kindergarten.

Therefore, it can be concluded that classroom action learning involving letter recognition exercises using letter cards is efficacious in improving the letter recognition skills of group B children at AR-RIDHO Kindergarten.

D. Conclusion

From the research results, group B children of AR-RIDHO Kindergarten in Jambi City have the potential to improve their letter recognition skills in writing their names. Children's letter recognition skills can be developed gradually by following the learning steps and gradually applying the method of learning to write their names. AR-RIDHO Kindergarten students can improve their ability to recognize letters by creating activities to change groups and create teams. They can also sort the letters a-z and explain or show off their findings in front of the teacher. In the first condition, children's letter recognition increased to 58.65%; in cycle I, it increased to 77.22%; and in cycle II, it reached 88.89%.

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