

## LEARNING EARLY READING SKILLS THROUGH LETTER BOARD GAMES AT KB IT AL IKHWAN SIDAMULYA

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**Abstract.** Learning early reading skills through letter board games is a method used by teachers that is carried out in a well-thought-out manner that is carried out regularly in the process of developing early reading, namely knowledge in reading, recognizing letter symbols in early childhood. The purpose of this study was to describe the development of early childhood reading skills at KB IT Al Ikhwan Sidamulya, Kemranjen District, Banyumas Regency. The type of research used by researchers in this research is *field research* with a descriptive qualitative approach. Where the focus of research in this study is the media used for learning early childhood reading skills, with research subjects namely school principals, class teachers, and early childhood namely students in KB IT Al Ikhwan Sidamulya, and parents of participants educate. The methods used in collecting data in this study are observation methods, interview methods, and documentation. The results of this study explain that the letter board media is a two-dimensional media that can be installed and removed easily made of flannel attached to a plywood or board, then other pieces of flannel are made which are placed on the back of the image. This letter board can be folded to make it more practical. The letter board media makes it easy for pictures to be attached and presented and can be easily removed so that it can be used many times. This media can be used to paste letters, numbers, and pictures. Because the presentation is instantaneous, it can attract children's attention, and is more efficient. Children's early reading skills at KB IT Al Ikhwan Sidamulya are already good. Early childhood reading skills at KB IT Al Ikhwan Sidamulya develop in various ways according to the stimulation that children have received so far. This can be seen from how researchers pay attention to indicators of achievement of children's early reading skills, namely, children are able to say vowel and consonant symbols, children are able to say syllables or spell words, and children are able to connect syllables into simple words.

**Keywords:** *Early Reading, Letter Board Games, Early Childhood*

### INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is physiologically at birth its brain weight is only 25% of the weight of an adult. The child's brain will reach 90% by weight at the age of 3 years and can reach 100% by the time the child is 6 years old. Experts revealed that the process of optimizing a child's brain is at a vulnerable age of 0-5 years, which is also known as the golden age or golden age (Wiyani, 2020), and during this golden age, children easily accept and respond to whatever they hear, see, and observe around their environment. Child development is grouped into four aspects, one of which is the aspect of language development. Language is a skill to communicate with other people. This includes various models for communicating,

expressing thoughts and feelings which are expressed in the form of symbols or symbols to express something.

Piaget argues that early childhood begins to learn when they enter the concrete operational phase, which is the phase when children are considered to be able to think in a structured way. Critics argue that 3-year-old children should be given a vehicle for interaction with others because it will optimize their socialization skills. Reading learning activities include being able to develop their socialization skills because this activity is carried out through games that are fun and not coercive (Hasan, 2013). There are two aspects of language skills, namely receptive aspects and expressive aspects. The receptive aspect is the child's ability to read and listen, because receptive language means obtaining verbal and visual symbols. For example, children listen and read early. While the expressive aspect is the child's skill in expressing his views, starting before the child starts talking or preverbal and communicating with facial expressions. For example, speaking and writing something to communicate with other people. Thus it can be concluded that early reading is in the receptive aspect (Kurniawan, 2019).

Reading skills are very important for a child. Through this reading skill, children will more quickly master and learn a field of science. Weakness in children's reading skills will have a negative impact on their academic or mental performance. This can make him discouraged and have no self-confidence and low motivation to study. Early reading skills have a major influence on advanced reading skills. Early reading skills are skills that underlie subsequent skills, so they really need the attention of a teacher (Ariyati, 2014). One of the efforts to make it easier for children to learn to read is in a fun way, namely through games. Every child likes something fun so learning through games will be more easily absorbed by children. and the use of media in games will make learning varied and prevent children from getting bored easily.

There are various kinds of learning activities at KB IT Al Ikhwan Sidamulya, one of which is learning that utilizes letter board games to help develop early reading skills in children. The use of letter board games as learning media at KB IT Al Ikhwan is expected to help achieve the expected learning outcomes. This activity can be carried out by all students so that the teacher can directly monitor all of the students' involvement in participating in learning.

The learning process carried out using letter board media can optimally develop initial/beginning reading skills. During the learning process, students were very enthusiastic about the letter board media provided. It is proven that now students are starting to be able to read two syllables that are combined and some are even fluent in reading one sentence. One of the game tools that children can play in the process of learning language skills is through a letter board made of flannel cloth. Before children play games using letter boards, the teacher must first provide a concept about the relationship between spoken language and written language or with symbols that represent it (pre-reading) so that letter recognition activities are more fun and meaningful for children at the early reading stage. The teacher should introduce the letter in the form of writing made of flannel attached to the letter board, then the teacher introduces the parts of the letters contained in the word.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The research conducted was field research. Field research is data collection in which researchers must go directly to the research site (field). Researchers conduct research by going directly to the field to obtain information directly from sources. The qualitative research method is

a research method that is based on the philosophy of postpositivism, that is, it is used to examine the condition of natural objects, where a researcher is the key. The research data collection technique was carried out in a combined manner, with inductive/qualitative data analysis, and the results of qualitative research emphasized meaning rather than *generalization* (Sugiyono, 2015).

Data collection techniques are the most strategic steps in research, because the main objective of research is to obtain data. Without knowing data collection techniques, researchers will not get data that meets the established data standards. Data collection techniques used by researchers are observation, interview, and documentation (Moeloeng, 2017).

Analysis Data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and compiling data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation, by organizing data into categories, describing them into units, synthesizing, compiling into patterns, selecting which ones are important and what will be learned, and make conclusions so that they are easily understood by oneself and others (Hardani et al., 2020). The data analysis technique uses a technique developed by Milles and Huberman which contains three techniques namely: Data Reduction, Data Presentation, and Data Verification.

## RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Based on observational data conducted by researchers during the learning process, the teacher guides children directly in learning early reading skills, while the steps are as follows.

- 1.1. The teacher introduces the letter board media and how to use it.
- 1.2. The teacher introduces the letters az and its pronunciation, while the children are given the opportunity to imitate and look for the letters and then stick them on the flannel letter board.
- 1.3. The teacher gives examples of nouns that have the same initial letters by showing words and pictures so that the children understand better, while the children take turns to take the letters mentioned by the teacher. Children are given the opportunity to assemble letters into a word attached to the letter board.
- 1.4. Children are given the opportunity to connect pictures and words and mention the letters in the word. In addition, children can also stick pictures and then paste the words that match the pictures.
- 1.5. Children pay attention to the teacher when giving examples of reading pictures. In the end the child can follow these steps according to the initial reading skills.

Learning to develop early reading skills is carried out on the skill aspect of translating letter symbols in the form of sounds with indicators of taking or pointing to letters mentioned by the teacher and indicators of pronouncing letters designated by the teacher and recognizing words with indicators of assembling letters into words. This activity begins with the teacher explaining the activities to be carried out. Children are introduced to the letter board media for learning early reading skills along with the items that will be used on that day. The teacher explains how to use them, children are given the opportunity to take a closer look and feel these items.

The teacher introduces the child to the letter az by sticking it on the flannel board while touching and saying the letter. Children are welcome to stick the letters mentioned by the teacher and pronounce the letters pointed by the teacher. In between sticking letters the teacher asks the children the names of objects that start with a certain letter, for example:

children what objects start with the letter b? the children answered stone, ball then the teacher took a sample of the ball.

After the az letters are introduced, the teacher gives the child the opportunity to take the letters mentioned by the teacher and pronounce the letters indicated by the teacher, the children are also given the opportunity to recognize words by assembling these letters into a word which is pasted on a flannel board. Children who cannot yet point to and pronounce the letters mentioned by the teacher are then guided by the teacher by giving them the opportunity to feel them and look for the same letters as they touched earlier. The teacher can also mention a word that has the same initial letter. For example: the child has difficulty pronouncing the letter b, then the teacher reminds him by saying the word duck, the teacher asks again what letter, son? Then the child will answer b.

The child is guided by the teacher to string letters into words by asking "what words do you want to compose?". If you haven't answered yet, you can ask again "Here, the teacher has pictures/objects (while showing pictures/objects), do you want to assemble these pictures/objects?" or if the child can answer the teacher can dictate the letters or show the written words. The teacher *rewards* children who participate, for example by giving star stickers. The teacher also motivates children to participate boldly. Researchers observed the development of early reading skills using letter board media according to the observation instrument which included skills in translating symbols in the form of sounds consisting of pointing or taking the letters mentioned by the teacher and pronouncing the letters pointed by the teacher, recognizing words by mentioning the letters in the words. Each child advances in turn, those who haven't yet had a turn have the opportunity to play plasticine or letter cards. However, because it was too long to wait, some children were running around. All children want to get their turn quickly and after their turn there are children who don't want to take turns with their friends. There are also children who are still shy and hesitant in sticking letters on the letter board. There are also children who are enthusiastic so they help their friends who have not been able to find the letters mentioned and then look for the letters.

Researchers observed the development of early reading using letter board media according to the observation instrument, namely matching pictures with words and mentioning the letters in a word. Each child takes turns advancing, all children want their turn quickly and after their turn some children do not want to take turns with their friends. There are also children who are still unsure about matching pictures with words or guessing pictures and mentioning the letters that make up the word. There are also children who are very enthusiastic so they help their friends who have not been able to find the letters mentioned and then look for the letters.

Learning to develop early reading skills is to find out the ability to understand the meaning of words and the purpose of reading with indicators of reading pictures with simple sentences. This activity begins with the teacher explaining the activities to be carried out. The teacher introduces the letter board media to develop reading skills along with the items that will be used that day for children at KB IT Al Ikhwan Sidamulya, the teacher explains how to use them, the children are given the opportunity to take a closer look and feel these items. After that the teacher introduces the letter az to the child by sticking it on the letter board while feeling and saying the letter. The teacher invites the children to stick the letters mentioned by the teacher and sound the letters pointed by the teacher. In between sticking letters the teacher asks the children the names of objects that start with a certain letter, for example: children what objects start with the letter y? the children answered "yoyo, yakult, yangko" then the teacher took an example of a yo-yo object. After the az letters were introduced, the teacher pasted the pictures on the letter board. The teacher gives an example

of reading the sentence in the picture. Children are given the opportunity to start telling stories on their own, they can also be guided by the teacher. Participating children are given *rewards*, for example by saying "okay, good, thank you" and motivating children to tell stories, dare to express their opinions about the picture.

Researchers observed the development of early reading using letter board media according to the observation instrument, namely reading pictures with simple sentences with guidance. Children who are enthusiastic about helping friends who are still shy and can't. Thanks to the help of the theme, children who are still shy gradually start to choose pictures and read them. After the initial reading activity using letter board media ended, the children moved places in groups to complete the next activity. The core activities in subsequent learning activities are matching pictures with words, grouping similar picture words based on verbs and nouns, finger painting on matters related to the sub-themes. This activity begins with the teacher explaining the activities to be carried out.

Researchers observed the development of early reading using flannel board media according to the observation instrument, namely recognizing words by mentioning the letters in a word and understanding the meaning of words and the purpose of reading by matching pictures with words. Each child advances in turn. There are children who are very enthusiastic so they help their friends who have not been able to find the letters mentioned and then look for the letters. After the activity using the letter board ends, the child moves to another place to do another task. Teachers guide children who still need help. Teachers also provide opportunities for children to be able to help their friends.

Children's early reading skills at KB IT Al Ikhwan Sidamulya are already good. Early childhood reading skills at KB IT Al Ikhwan Sidamulya develop in various ways according to the stimulation that children have received so far. The achievement of these skills is in the form of Reading pictures. Children are mostly able to read pictures. Reading pictures is one of the basic skills that children need to read, Reading/narrating story books. The second indicator is reading/narrating story books. Children at this stage begin to like reading, for example picture story books, and children will carry books they like anywhere, Identify vowels. The next indicator is identifying vowels (a,i,u,e,o), Identify consonants. Indicators of children's skills in identifying consonants include 3 indicators, namely identifying letters (b,c,d,g,h), (j,k,l,m,n), (p,r,s,t,y). Regarding these indicators, it is known that there are still many children who are still confused and have difficulty identifying consonants, especially the letters g, j, k, r, y, Pronouncing vowels. The next indicator is to pronounce vowels (a,i,u,e,o). The average child's skill in pronouncing vowels (a,i,u,e,o) shows good results. This is shown from the smoothness of the child when pronouncing vowel letters. Only a few children have difficulty pronouncing vowels, namely the letters e and u, Pronouncing consonants. The indicators for the skill of pronouncing consonants include 3 indicators, namely pronouncing the letters (b,c,d,g,h), (j,k,l,m,n), (p,r,s,t,y). The findings of the researchers regarding these indicators show that there are still many children who pronounce the letters b, d, m, n backwards, Reading syllables. The next indicator is reading syllables. Through these indicators it is known that the researcher still encounters several children who can immediately read the syllables, and there are also many children who spell one letter after another with the help of the teacher to combine the sounds of the letters the child has spelled, Read the word. Reading the word is the final indicator. Some children can read words fluently, but almost half of the children still need the help of the teacher, in the form of the child spelling out the letters one by one with the teacher helping the child combine the sound of the letters the child has spelled as a guide so that the child can read the words provided.

At the end of the meeting, the teacher and children evaluate the results of today's learning. Followed by the teacher providing information related to tomorrow's learning activities. The next activity is praying after studying, reading the closing prayer of the assembly, praying outside the house, praying in the vehicle, and closing with greetings.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research that has been conducted and described regarding efforts to develop early reading skills in children through letter board games at KB IT Al Ikhwan Sidamulya, researchers can conclude that it is proven that the use of letter board games is very effective in developing early reading skills in children. This can be seen from how researchers pay attention to indicators of achievement of children's early reading skills, namely, children are able to say vowel and consonant symbols, children are able to say syllables or spell words, and children are able to connect syllables into simple words.

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