AN OVERVIEW OF THE EARLY LITERACY SKILL OF KINDERGARTNERS IN SURABAYA, INDONESIA: A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF RESULTS FROM OBSERVATIONS AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS

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Abstract. Early literacy is an important abilities that must b possessed in early childhood because can affect children's success in elementary school. this study examines the description of early literacy skills of Kindergarten children conducted in a Kindergarten in Surabaya, Indonesia. The research method uses qualitative research with a case study approaches. The unit of analysis in this study is students in class A and class B and teachers. FGDs were conducted with ten teachers (mean age 48.8 years), with the criteria of having taught for at least three years. As well as observations related to early literacy skills in kindergarten children totalling 70 (mean age 5.2 years). The results showed that based on the observations made by the researcher for one week with students in class A and class B, the student's early literacy skills that were still lagging were the interest in reading and expressive communication skills. In expressive communication, some students still cannot imitate the simple sentences conveyed by the teacher, some still need help answering simple questions from the teacher, and some still need more confidence and have difficulty retelling simple stories/experiences/events. In reading interest, children tend to think books are boring, stop pretending to read them, and then put them down. Based on the FGD with teachers said that literacy skills, because children are often trained, are starting to be able to read, but that is for children who are often given repetition from their parents too. Parents are also required to be involved in early literacy, but for parents who do not retrain at home, sometimes there are still those who still need to memorize letters. Interest in reading has yet to emerge much because interest in reading is still lacking.

Keywords: early literacy skills, kindergarteners, qualitative study

INTRODUCTION

Early literacy is a phrase introduced by Clay (1972) which refers to the skills, knowledge and attitudes that are considered as precursors to the development of reading and writing and the environment that supports a child's attitudes and knowledge. Early literacy is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes related to reading and writing before children are actually able to read and write. This process occurs continuously from the beginning of life, long before children receive formal literacy learning at school age or at the elementary education level (Handayani, 2019; Getinger & Stroiber, 2007; Kleeck & Scuele, 2010; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998) .

Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998; Bjorklund, 2005) explained that early literacy is an ability consisting of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that determine the development of subsequent literacy behavior, consisting of nine components, namely language, rules/regulations/habits, knowledge of letters, awareness of language elements, phoneme-grapheme compatibility,

emergent reading , emergent writing , motivation and cognitive skills. According to Snow ; Mc. Crtney & Philips (Snow & Oh, 2010) in preschool children, basic literacy skills are the capacity to name letters and write them, spell simple words, recognize letters, spell simple words, recognize letters and surrounding signs, identify books from titles and carry out activities relating to books. Weigel sorts literacy skills into three: knowledge of writing (print knowledge), basics of writing (emergent writing), and interest in reading (reading interest). Early literacy or emergent literacy is a form of literacy skills that are known early before school children (Handayani, 2019) . Early literacy is knowledge and skills that form the basis of reading and writing skills which include alphabet recognition, phonological awareness (sounds of letters), and writing awareness (Septiani & Syaodih, 2021).

Early literacy is the ability possessed by preschool children to prepare themselves to learn to read and write in elementary school. The researcher summarizes the components of basic literacy into 5 components, namely a) language component, which includes vocabulary and understanding of spoken language (receptive and expressive), b) phonological awareness, namely the ability to detect, manipulate and analyze spoken language (distinguishing phonemes, syllables, and words), c) reading skills which include the introduction of reading rules, knowledge of letters and letter sounds, spelling words, d) writing skills, which include the ability to write letters, own names and words, e) interest/motivation in reading, desire from within child to read.

The emergence of their language skills has an impact on school readiness and subsequently on academic achievement and children who develop their language more quickly are better prepared to enter primary school. In Indonesia, the age range of 4-6 years generally enters the Kindergarten level, where children are prepared to enter the Elementary School level, namely Elementary School. The emergence of language skills has a positive impact on school readiness and academic achievement while in primary school.

Early literacy is an important ability that must be possessed by early childhood (Pertiwi, 2016). This is because early literacy skills possessed by preschoolers are a predictor of children's literacy skills in later grades in elementary schools (Ko, HW, Chan, 2009 ; Diamond et al., 2008 ; Silinskas et al., 2020). Literacy experience at preschool age is believed to form a strong foundation for the development of reading in elementary schools (Jared et al., 2011). The results of a meta-analysis conducted by the National Early Literacy Panel (NELP) in 2008 showed that the literacy skills of preschoolers predicted subsequent literacy skills at low, medium, and high levels.

Data filtering carried out by researchers showed that there was a little research on early literacy. Ruhaena (2012) conducted a survey of 84 children aged 5-6 years in Surakarta. However, there is no research about early literacy skills for kindergarten students in Surabaya, East Java. Surabaya is the only literacy city in East Java which has 530 reading service points (Wijayanto, 2017) . This is also supported by the fact that East Java is still included in the low literacy category. Based on matter that, researcher interested for researching an overview of early literacy skills in kindergarten children in Surabaya.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research is qualitative method with a case study approach, aims to understand the description of early literacy skills in kindergarten children in Surabaya. The researcher chose a case study qualitative research method on the basis of obtaining an in-depth picture of early literacy in children who are in kindergarten. The data collection method used was in-depth interviews with group forums discussions (fgd) to 10 teachers and observations to 70 children. Researchers used observation guidelines from early literacy skills based on aspects of early literacy, theory of language development aged 4 to 6 years and from child development achievements from the kindergarten curriculum and learning outcomes of basic literacy abilities for PAUD units (Kemdikbudristek, 2022).

Table 1. Teacher's personal data

No. _	Initials	Age	Teaching Time
1.	SK	60 years	26 years
2.	BA	54 years	27 years
3.	sh	46 years	24 years old

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4.	BC	48 years	20 years
5.	SC	44 years	20 years
6.	OAK	40 years	17 years
7.	SR	37 years	17 years
8.	sy	33 years	12 years old
9.	DS	41 years	12 years old
10.	RW	-	-

Table 2. The meaning of the interview transcript

Symbol	Meaning
W	Interview
S(numbers 1-20)	Subject to (1.2.3....)

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

1.1 Description of Early Literacy in Children Based on Observations on Students

Researchers carried out observations of 70 students consisting of 35 students of Kindergarten A (table 3) and 35 students of Kindergarten B (table 4). In the process of writing interview transcripts, there are several symbols to mark each stage in the interview (table 2). The results showed that based on the observations made by the researcher for one week with students in class A and class B, the student's early literacy skills that were still lagging were the interest in reading and expressive communication skills. In expressive communication, some students still cannot imitate the simple sentences conveyed by the teacher, some still need help answering simple questions from the teacher, and some still need more confidence and have difficulty retelling simple stories/experiences/events. In reading interest, children tend to think books are boring, stop pretending to read them, and then put them down.

Table 3. Kindergarten Observation A

No. _	Language includes vocabulary and understanding of spoken language (receptive and expressive)		Phenological awareness (distinguish between phenome , syllables and words)		Reading skills		Writing skills		Interest/motivation to read	
	Appears, description	Does not appear, description	Appears, description	Does not appear, description	Appears, description	Does not appear, description	Appears, description	Does not appear, description	Appears, description	Does not appear, description
1.		✓I don't understand the command yet	✓, can detect the final syllable		✓Recognize letters			✓, not yet proficient in holding a pencil		✓, can not read
2.		✓, did not understand the	✓, can explain coherently			✓, do not know the			✓, likes to study	

		instructions				letters				
3.		✓, not communicative	✓Recognize words and syllables			✓, can not spell	✓, wrote preferred		✓, likes to study	
4.		✓I haven't understood the instructions yet	✓, can distinguish words			✓, can not spell	✓,I can do it, a little			✓, in parental stimulation
5.		✓I don't understand the command yet		✓, can not explain coherently		✓, have not memorized the letters	✓, write random ✓, a little can			✓, must be ordered
6.		✓, difficult to use spoken language	✓, can explain coherently			✓, not yet spell a bit	✓, wrote preferred			✓, in parental stimulation
7.		✓it's hard to start a conversation	✓, can distinguish words			✓, have not memorized the letters	✓, can be directed			✓, in parental stimulation
8.		✓, not communicative	✓, can distinguish words			✓, still spelling		✓, can not write		✓, in parental stimulation
9.		✓I don't understand the command yet	✓, using the correct syllable			✓, can not spell	✓,I can do it, a little		✓, likes to study	
10.		✓, did not understand the instructions	✓, can distinguish words			✓, have not memorized the letters		✓, can not write	✓, likes to study	
11.		✓, do not really understand the words of others		✓, can not explain coherently		✓, can not spell		✓, can not write		✓, in parental stimulation
12.		✓, have not been able to string the words properly		✓can't explain coherently		✓, have not memorized the letters				✓, in parental stimulation

No.										
13.		✓it's hard to start a conversation		✓can't use words with the right syllable		✓, have not memorized the letters	✓, wrote random			✓, in parental stimulation
14.		✓, the vocabulary is still small	✓, can distinguish words			✓, can't spell yet		✓, cannot write	✓learn without being told	
15.		✓, the grammar is sometimes wrong	✓, can distinguish words			✓, can't spell yet	✓, can write numbers			✓, learn depending on the mood
16.		✓, do not really understand the words of others		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, can not spell	✓, can write random			✓, learn depending on the mood
17.		✓, hard to string words		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, have not memorized the letters	✓,I can do it, a little			✓, learn depending mood
18.		✓I don't understand the command yet		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, can not spell	✓, likes to write the alphabet			✓, learn depending mood
19.		✓, do not understand the instructions	✓know a few syllables			✓, have not memorized the letters	✓I like writing numbers		✓, start to like to learn	
20.		✓, the vocabulary is still small	✓know a few syllables			✓, have not memorized the letters	✓, write random		✓, start to like to learn	
21.		✓sometimes wrong vocabulary	✓, can distinguish a little words			✓, have not memorized the letters		✓, scribble		✓, learn according to the mood
22.		✓, do not really	✓, can explain			✓, do not	✓I like		✓, start to	

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No.									
	understand the words of others	coherently			memorize letters	writing numbers		like to learn	
23.	✓, do not really understand the words of others		✓, can not distiuish words		✓, can not spell	✓, likes random writing		✓, start to like to learn	
24.	✓, do not really understand the words of others				✓, can not memorize letters	✓, can write the name			✓, study according to mood
25.	✓it's hard to start a conversation		✓, can not distiuish words	✓, began to like books		✓I like writing numbers		✓, stimulated parents	
26.	✓, do not really understand the words of others	✓know some vocabulary			✓, can not spell	✓I like writing names		✓, start to like to learn	
27.	✓I haven't understood the instructions yet								
28.	✓, can be given an order		✓, can explain coherently		✓, can ja		✓, write random		✓, requires parental stimulation
29.	✓, the vocabulary is still small		✓, can not distiuish words		✓, have not memorized the letters	✓, can write numbers		✓, start to like to learn	
30.	✓sometimes wrong vocabulary		✓, can not distiuish words		✓, can not spell	✓, can write random			✓, study according to mood
31.	✓, can understand orders		✓, can distiuish words		✓, can't spell yet		✓, can not write	✓learn without being told	
32.	✓, the grammar is sometim	✓, can distiuish words			✓, can't spell yet	✓, can write numbers			✓, learn depending

No.	Lang. Appears	Lang. Does not appear	Phen. Appears	Phen. Does not appear	Read. Appears	Read. Does not appear	Write Appears	Write Does not appear	Interest Appears	Interest Does not appear
		es wrong								on the mood
33.		✓, do not really understand the words of others		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, can not spell	✓, can write random			✓, learn depending on the mood
34.		✓, hard to string words		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, have not memorized the letters	✓,I can do it, a little			✓, learn depending mood
35.		✓, the vocabulary is still small	✓, can distinguish words			✓, can't spell yet		✓, can not write	✓learn without being told	

Table 4. Kindergarten B observation

No.	Language includes vocabulary and understanding of spoken language (receptive and expressive)		Phenological awareness (distinguish between phenome, syllables and words)		Reading skills		Writing skills		Interest/motivation to read	
	Appears, description	Does not appear, description	Appears, description	Does not appear, description	Appears, description	Does not appear, description	Appears, description	Does not appear, description	Appears, description	Does not appear, description
1.		✓, the grammar is sometimes wrong	✓, can be different words			✓, m can not spell yet	✓, can write numbers			✓, learn depending on the mood
2.		✓, do not really understand the words of others		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, can not spell	✓, can write random			✓, learn depending on the mood
3.		✓, hard to string words		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, have not memorized the letters	✓,I can do it, a little			✓, learn depending mood
4.		✓I don't		✓, can		✓,	✓,			✓, learn

		understand the command yet		not distinguish words		can not spell	likes to write the alphabet			depending mood
5.		✓, do not understand the instructions	✓know a few syllables			✓, have not memorized the letters	✓I like writing numbers		✓, start to like to learn	
6.		✓, the vocabulary is still small	✓know a few syllables			✓, have not memorized the letters	✓, write random		✓, start to like to learn	
7.		✓sometimes wrong vocabulary	✓, can distinguish a little words			✓, have not memorized the letters		✓, scribble		✓, learn according to the mood
8.		✓, do not really understand the words of others	✓, can explain coherently			✓, do not memorize letters	✓I like writing numbers		✓, start to like to learn	
9.		✓, do not really understand the words of others		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, can not spell	✓, likes random writing		✓, start to like to learn	
10.		✓, do not really understand the words of others				✓, can not memorize letters	✓, can write the name			✓, study according to mood
11.	✓, can be given an order		✓, can explain coherently		✓, can spell		✓,write s random			✓, requires parental stimulation
12.		✓, hard to string words		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, have not memorized the	✓,I can do it, a little			✓, learn depending mood

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No.										
						letters				
13.		✓I don't understand the command yet		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, can not spell	✓, likes to write the alphabet			✓, learn depending mood
14.		✓, do not understand the instructions	✓know a few syllables			✓, have not memorized the letters	✓I like writing numbers		✓, start to like to learn	
15.		✓, the vocabulary is still small	✓know a few syllables			✓, have not memorized the letters	✓, write random		✓, start to like to learn	
16.		✓, hard to string words		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, have not memorized the letters	✓,I can do it, a little			✓, learn depending mood
17.	✓, can understand the instructions		✓, can explain coherently		✓, can spell		✓, can be directed			✓, in parental stimulation
18.		✓sometimes wrong vocabulary		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, can not spell	✓, can write random			✓, study according to mood
19.		✓it's hard to start a conversation	✓, can distinguish words			✓, have not memorized the letters	✓, can be directed			✓, in parental stimulation
20.		✓, not communicative	✓, can distinguish words			✓, still spelling		✓, can not write		✓, in parental stimulation
21.		✓I don't understand the command yet	✓, using the correct syllable			✓, can not spell	✓,I can do it, a little		✓, likes to study	

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22.	✓, can be given an order		✓, can explain coherently		✓, can spell		✓,write s random			✓, requires parental stimulation
23.		✓, the vocabulary is still small	✓, can distinguish words			✓, can't spell yet		✓, can not write	✓learn without being told	
24.		✓, the grammar is sometimes wrong	✓, can distinguish words			✓, can't spell yet	✓, can write numbers			✓, learn depending on the mood
25.		✓, do not really understand other people's words		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, can not spell	✓, can write random			✓, learn depending on the mood
26.		✓, hard to string words		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, have not memorized the letters	✓,I can do it, a little			✓, learn depending mood
27.		✓, the vocabulary is still small	✓, can distinguish words			✓, can't spell yet		✓, can not write	✓learn without being told	
28.		✓sometimes wrong vocabulary		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, can not spell	✓, can write random			✓, study according to mood
29.		✓, the vocabulary is still small	✓, can distinguish words			✓, can't spell yet		✓, can not write	✓learn without being told	
30.		✓, the grammar is sometimes wrong	✓, can distinguish words			✓, can't spell yet	✓, can write numbers			✓, learn depending on the mood
31.		✓, do not really understand the words of others		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, can not spell	✓, can write random			✓, learn depending on the mood
32.		✓, hard to string words		✓, can not distinguish uish		✓, have not mem	✓,I can do it, a			✓, learn to wait ng mood

			words		orized the letters	little			
33.		✓, do not really understand the words of others		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, can not spell	✓, can write random		✓, learn depending on the mood
34.		✓, hard to string words		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, have not memorized the letters	✓, I can do it, a little		✓, learn depending mood
35.		✓ I don't understand the command yet		✓, can not distinguish words		✓, can not spell	✓, likes to write the alphabet		✓, learn depending mood

1.2 An Overview of Early Literacy in Children Based on Forum Group Discussions (FGD)

Based on the FGD with teachers said that literacy skills, because children are often trained, are starting to be able to read, but that is for children who are often given repetition from their parents too. Parents are also required to be involved in early literacy, but for parents who do not retrain at home, sometimes there are still those who still need to memorize letters. Interest in reading has yet to emerge much because interest in reading is still lacking.

Table 5. Finding from FGD

Finding Aspect Code	Transcript	Interpretation
Language includes vocabulary and understanding of spoken language (receptive and expressive)	There are those who can catch quickly, there are those who need to be guided (W.S1. 12)	Language skills in the form of receptive and expressive understanding need to be carried out at school and at home.
	Regarding student readiness, some are ready to follow and some still need to be repeated. (W.S2.12)	
	Some of them are already fluent and can understand because before going to school it seemed that their parents were used to it, but there were also those who still needed more guidance. (W.S6.12)	
	Sometimes children are still shy to answer questions and come forward to retell stories that have been read. (W2.S4.12).	

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Phenological awareness (distinguish between phenome , syllables and words)	Children still have difficulty telling stories about experiences in detail and retelling the contents of a story (W.S3.2).	There are difficulties for children in stringing words and recalling the contents of the story read
	The application of early literacy in my school is telling holiday experiences, conversing, getting to know/introducing letters, and beginning reading (W.S7.8).	Schools prepare various alternatives to improve children's early literacy
Reading skills	The children have started to be able to read because they are trained every day at school. Also supported by school facilities such as reading books / language and science package books, notebooks for learning to write , story books, TV / videos (W.S1.10)	Parental involvement is very important in the development of children's literacy
	If in Kindergarten B they still recognize letters, they are taught at school but some are not trained at home, so children often forget things because they are only taught at school (W.S4.10).	
Writing skills	His writing ability already recognizes certain letters (W.S3.12)	There is a development in the ability to write gradually in children
	There are also those who have started to be able to spell a few sentences (W.S1.17).	
Interest/motivation to read	The children were very interested because the teacher conveyed it in a fun way, playing while learning (W.S2.14)	Learning while playing can stimulate children so that their memories are always filled with activities that give a positive impression and are fun for children
	Children who can recognize letters, start spelling, start to like learning (W.S10.14)	

1.2.1   First

First, an overview of the language components which include vocabulary and understanding of spoken language (receptive and expressive), that is, some students are still unable to imitate simple sentences conveyed by the teacher, some are still having difficulty answering simple questions from the teacher, and some are still lacking confidence and difficulty retelling simple stories/experiences/events. In line with this, the observation found that expressive communication skills were still lacking, children in Kindergarten B could understand orders, while Kindergarten children A had not been able to understand orders.

1.2.2   Second

Second, phonological awareness includes the ability to detect, manipulate and analyse spoken language (distinguishing phonemes, syllables and words). When on Children's schools have been accustomed to telling holiday experiences, talking, introducing letters, and starting reading. The existence of alternatives provided by schools can increase children's literacy. In observation, researchers found difficulties experienced by children in early literacy in the form of not being able to answer simple questions given.

1.2.3   Third

Third, reading skills which include the introduction of reading rules, knowledge of letters, letter sounds, and spelling words. For Kindergarten A children have started to recognize letters, Kindergarten B has started to recognize syllables but there are also those who have not memorized letters. There are obstacles in children who do not get stimulus training or recognize letters at home, parents are also needed to be involved in early literacy.

1.2.4   Fourth

Fourth, writing skills which include the ability to write letters, own names and words. Children have been able to write some letters write sentences and spell them. In Kindergarten A children the ability to write does not yet exist, in Kindergarten B there are children who can write.

1.2.5   Fifth

Fifth, interest/motivation in reading, the desire from within the child to read. Children like teacher innovation in teaching so that it creates a willingness to like learning. However, there is not much interest in reading yet, because interest in reading is still lacking even though a reading corner is provided in the classroom, perhaps because parents do not provide books at home either.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that based on the observations made by the researcher for one week with students in class A and class B, the students ' early literacy skills that were still lagging were the interest in reading and expressive communication skills . In expressive communication, some students still cannot imitate the simple sentences conveyed by the teacher, some still need help answering simple questions from the teacher, and some still need more confidence and have difficulty retelling simple stories/experiences/events. In reading interest, children tend to think books are boring, stop pretending to read them, and then put them down. Based on the FGD with teachers said that literacy skills, because children are often trained, are starting to be able to read, but that is for children who are often given repetition from their parents too. Parents are also required to be involved in early literacy, but for parents who do not retrain at home, sometimes there are still those who still need to memorize letters. Interest in reading has yet to emerge much because interest in reading is still lacking.

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