


Teachers' Strategies in Developing Early Literacy Skills of Children Aged 5-6 Years at Al-Amin Gagah Kadur Kindergarten Pamekasan

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find out the strategies carried out by teachers in developing the literacy skills of children aged 5-6 years at Al-Amin Gagah Kadur Kindergarten, the impact and supporting and inhibiting factors of teachers in implementing strategies to develop early literacy skills. The method carried out in this study is to use a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The qualitative method is to describe the characteristics of a phenomenon with a narrative description. Data collection in this method is through observation techniques, interviews, and documentation, then the data obtained is analyzed using triangulation techniques and source triangulation and described through words. The results of the study show that teachers at Al-Amin Gagah Kadur Kindergarten Pamekasan use several strategies to develop early literacy skills, including: geometric letter cards, lego, finger painting, hijaiyah letter collages, letter stamps. The impact of the strategy carried out is: increasing children's literacy ability, children more easily understand the lesson, with the design of an interesting and appropriate strategy, it can help in achieving the goals of the learning plan to be achieved, increase the attractiveness of children's learning, help children recognize letters and letter symbols. The obstacles in the implementation of the strategy are: lack of participation from some different parents and the attitude of parents who are too much to delegate responsibility to the teacher, the diversity of children's emotional conditions at school, children lack focus in learning, loss of children's confidence. The supporting factors are: The availability of media that supports and utilizes existing media, educators who are always enthusiastic and trying to give their best, the existence of new people.

INTRODUCTION

In a learning, the use of teacher strategies, especially in language development, one of which is early childhood literacy ability, needs a good strategy so that the desired development of children's literacy can be achieved as desired. Strategy is an effective way to increase students' enthusiasm and interest. Strategy is a method used by educators in choosing teaching activities to be used during the learning process, the selection is made by considering a certain situation and conditions (Akbar, 2020). Teachers who employ strategies such as explicit instruction in phonics, vocabulary expansion, and guided reading can significantly enhance early literacy skills in children (Jambunathan, S., Aldemir, J. & Jayaraman, 2024).

The use of strategies and methods by educators is one way to provide learning to children. The selection and application of the right learning method has a great influence on

the process of optimal child growth and development, where it can help educators in delivering material so that it makes it easier for children to receive and understand the material given and in the end the learning goals can be mastered by children. Language is a tool for thinking, communicating or expressing ideas. The developing aspect of language begins with sound imitation and groping. Further development is closely related to the development of intellectual and social abilities. Language is a tool for thinking. Thinking is the process of understanding and seeing relationships (Susanto, 2011).

This process cannot be carried out properly without an auxiliary tool, namely language. Preschool education is a very important vehicle in developing children's language. Language is the main tool for children to learn to understand things. Allah says in Qs. Al-'Alaq 1-5:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ (1) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ (2) اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ (3) الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ (4) عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ (5)

"Read it with (saying) the name of your God who created. He created a human being from a clot of blood. Read, and your Lord is the Most Merciful. He teaches man what he does not know".

This verse explains that we as God's people must read, Allah sent down His revelation to the first Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), namely Iqra' (read). So important is the command to read until it is repeated 2 times in surah Al-Alaq, according to the verse above reading is the key in an education, therefore in early childhood education learning to read is very intended as a provision for children to make it easier in further education. Early childhood is children aged 0 to 6 years, where at this age is very decisive in the formation of children's character and personality. At this age, children experience quite rapid developmental growth or commonly called the golden age (nofianti, 2021).

As stated in the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003, early childhood education is a coaching that helps children from birth to the age of 6 years in their growth and development. Where this is done through the provision of educational stimuli to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children have readiness to enter further education (Putri et al., 2023). Therefore, early childhood education is the beginning of educational success at the next level. Where the aim is for children to have readiness so that it is easier for children to enter the next education. The introduction of early literacy in practice is actually not in line with the rules and needs of child development. Basically, the main task of teaching reading and writing skills that should be in elementary schools has shifted as if it is the responsibility of kindergarten or early childhood education. Even in some places, elementary schools in the registration process propose calistung test requirements for new students. This is a concern of the parents themselves so that there is a desire that forces the child to be able to calistung when leaving kindergarten.

The introduction of literacy in children aged 5 – 6 years is called the term early literacy or pre-literacy. This is based on Permendikbud Number 146 of 2014 where early literacy in children is introduced to play activities (Permendiknas No.58 tentang sistem Pendidikan Nasional, 2009). Students are not intended to use the methods that are usually done in elementary schools. In the regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Permendikbud) no. 137 of 2014, article 10 of the content standard regarding the level of achievement of early literacy development at the age of 5-6 years is that children can

mention letter symbols, recognize the sound of the initial letter from the names of objects around them and understand the relationship between sounds and letter shapes (Mufti, et al., 2022). Language is a tool for expressing ideas and asking questions and language also produces concepts and categories for thinking (Haryanti, 2020).

Based on a preliminary study conducted by researchers at Al-amin Gagah Kadur Kindergarten Pamekasan, data was found that there are 3 out of 5 children who are already familiar with and in accordance with the stages of early literacy development of children where children can already recognize letter symbols. This study aims to find out the implementation process of strategies used by teachers in developing early literacy skills of children aged 5-6 years at Al-Amin Gagah Kadur Kindergarten Pamekasan so that this research is important to be researched and studied.

METHODS

This study aims to find out the strategies used by teachers in developing the early literacy skills of children aged 5-6 years at Al-Amin Gagah Kadur Kindergarten Pamekasan. The method used in this study is a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, meaning that the results of the study are presented by presenting the data obtained. The data collection techniques in this study include: interviews with school principals and teachers to obtain data on what strategies are used in early literacy development. Observation was carried out to obtain data in the implementation of the strategy, documentation techniques were used to collect documents and photos of the learning activities carried out. The data analysis techniques in this study consist of interviews, data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions or verification. The data validity technique in this study was carried out through triangulation of sources and techniques. The location of this research is at Al-Amin Gagah Kadur Kindergarten Pamekasan. The research was conducted in October 2024.

RESULT

Based on the research that has been carried out, there are findings in Al-amin Gagah Kadur Pamekasan Kindergarten, namely learning activities are carried out based on the learning implementation plan (RPP) that has been made and prepared by teachers every day and evaluations are held every week. Learning activities include habituation to develop children's character, in addition to the core activities the teacher prepares activities that emphasize several aspects of development such as language, cognitive, social-emotional, religious, motor and art. In the process of learning activities, teachers also use media, the media used to introduce the basic concept of literacy to children, namely the whiteboard as an opening and as a medium to introduce the day, date, month and year or can also be introduced by singing so that it can make children more interested and easy to remember. There are also such as letter cards, letter stamps, big boom media and finger painting etc which are used to introduce letter shapes and letter sounds. Here are some strategies used by teachers to develop literacy skills in early childhood.

1.1 Playing Geometry Letter Cards

Based on the results of the research carried out, the strategies used by educators at Al-Amin Gagah Kadur Kindergarten Pamekasan are one of them, namely playing geometric letter cards. Children learn to read by being introduced first by the teacher by looking at letter symbols. Geometry letter card games can create a fun learning atmosphere, so that children will find it easier to receive stimuli and stimulation so that children can easily learn to recognize letters.



Figure 1. Activities to compile geometric letter cards

The geometry letter card program at Al-Amin Gagah Kadur Kindergarten Pamekasan was developed with children seeing and mentioning letter symbols or arranging letters into words. The teacher provides letter cards in geometric shapes using colored paper and pasted on ice cream sticks. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher and the child form a circle or semicircle, the teacher takes the geometric letter cards one by one and shows them to the children, then the children guess what the writing sounds like. After that, the children are directed to arrange the letters into words according to the theme. Then the teacher gives the card to the child so that it can be played independently, such as playing arranging letters into words

1.2 Playing Lego

Lego play activities at Al-Amin Gagah Kadur Kindergarten Pamekasan in its implementation, the children were very enthusiastic in participating. As usual at the beginning of the activity, the teacher will explain the activities and rules that will be carried out. The teacher prepares the lego media and puts it in the middle then positions the child's seat, after which the teacher and students start the activity. Children began to play with the letters and arrange the letters into words, for example the word "KATAK".



Figure 2. Children's activities playing with lego

The teacher helps students by saying letters one by one such as "now we will make and arrange the word KATAK, what is the first letter, does anyone know?" after that the children start to answer and the teacher writes the letter "K" on the board, and so on, the teacher provides an opportunity for students to find the answer to approximately any letter. And children began to make letters from lego by using colorful lego according to the child's creation. In addition, teachers also help children who have difficulty recognizing letters, so teachers give examples on the board and students imitate.

1.3 Finger Painting

The activities carried out at Al-Amin Gagah Kadur Kindergarten Pamekasan in the learning process are by finger painting in developing early literacy. Where children write their own names on paper using paint that has been provided by the teacher, the paint used is safe so that it can maintain the safety of children. In the process of the activity, children are very happy to write their own names with colorful paint. Educators are also very enthusiastic in helping children who are experiencing difficulties.



Figure 3. Children's activities playing pinger painting

Teachers help children recognize letters and numbers by directing them to shape them using their fingers in paint during finger painting activities. In finger painting activities, teachers invite children to write their names or simple words, so that children begin to get used to the shape of letters and sounds. Teachers provide support by mentioning letters or numbers that children make during finger painting, helping them connect visuals to early literacy concepts.

1.4 Collage of Hijaiyah Letters

The hijaiyah letter collage activity is carried out by playing while learning. Indirectly, children learn and recognize hijaiyah letters in their play. The introduction of hijaiyah letters was carried out by the teacher through a collage game of natural materials. The teacher provides media for children to use, before the activity starts, the teacher explains what materials I use, how to use them and the activities that will be carried out. After the game starts, the children apply glue little by little to the picture and stick the grains that have been provided on the picture. With that, children will find it easier to learn the alphabet or hijaiyah letters.



Figure 4. Hijaiyah letter collage activity

The teacher directs the children to arrange colored paper pieces into the shape of hijaiyah letters, helping them recognize the basic structure of the letters while practicing fine motor skills. When the child pastes the collage material, the teacher pronounces the name and sound of the hijaiyah letters, so that the child can associate creative activities with the development of early literacy. Teachers provide simple guidance and praise during the child's hijaiyah letter collage, creating a fun learning atmosphere and supporting an early understanding of Arabic letters.

1.5 Letter Stamp

Letter stamps are one of the media used at Al-Amin Gagah Kadur Kindergarten Pamekasan. Letter stamps are a game tool made of thin wood in the shape of a square with a handle that is made smoothly and neatly so that it is safe to use by early children. The benefits of this letter temple are: a) introducing alphabetical letters to children, b) helping to train children in arranging letters into words, c) increasing children's creativity, d) training children's memory, d) training children's motor skills.



Figure 5. Letter stamp play activity

In the introduction of children's literacy after 5-6 years at Al-Amin Gagah Kadur Kindergarten Pamekasan, one of the strategies carried out is to play using letter stamps. The teacher gives the child the opportunity to play with colors and squeak letters using letter stamps, the teacher also asks the child's condition regarding the letters they take.

The impact of the implementation of strategies carried out by educators at Al-Amin Gagah Kadur Pamekasan Kindergarten in developing children's early literacy skills,

namely 1) increasing children's literacy abilities, 2) children are easier to understand lessons, with the design of interesting and appropriate strategies, it can help in achieving the goals of the learning plan to be achieved, 3) increasing children's learning attractiveness, 4) help children recognize letters and letter symbols.

DISCUSSION

In the current situation, early literacy development is very intended for an early childhood education. Early literacy development is one of the most important aspects in the development of students. Therefore, teachers as learning centers for students must have the ability to teach and high creativity to attract students' interest in learning, especially in learning to recognize and read letters, so that they can meet the needs of children in early childhood teaching, educators must also prepare special strategies so that children can easily understand and recognize letter shapes and letter sounds appropriately.

The selection of strategies is the main key in achieving the learning goals to be achieved. Strategy is an effective way to increase students' enthusiasm and interest. Strategy is a method used by educators in choosing teaching activities used during the learning process, the selection is made by considering a certain situation and conditions (Akbar, 2020). The use of strategies and methods by educators is one way to provide learning to children. The selection and application of the right learning method greatly affects the process of optimal child growth and development, where it can help educators in delivering material so that it makes it easier for children to receive and understand the material provided so that in the end the learning goals can be mastered by children. In this study, the strategies used by Al-Amin Gagah Kadir Pamekasan kindergarten teachers in developing early literacy skills of children aged 5-6 years will be described.

1.1 Teachers' Strategies in Developing Early Literacy Skills Of Children Aged 5-6 Years At Al-Amin Gagah Kadir Kindergarten Pamekasan

1.1.1 Playing Geometry Letter Cards

Geometry letter cards are one of the media in the form of cards in the form of various geometric shapes made of colorful thick paper. The use of geometric letter card media aims to attract children's interest in learning to read and recognize letters so that the existence of an attractive media will make children more interested and help in stimulating children to learn to analyze and read letters. The benefits of letter card media for early childhood are: a) being able to read easily, b) developing children's memory, c) increasing vocabulary (Trisniwati, 2014). In choosing a strategy to develop initial literacy skills through the activity of compiling geometric letter cards, this is very appropriate. Glenn Doman is a brain surgeon who has successfully healed people with brain injuries through flash cards that he made himself. There was a development from his patients that made him want to try it on other children.

Teaching children to read is to introduce a word that is meaningful or has often been heard in their daily lives by children. So that this will be very helpful for children in remembering and getting to know the letters shown through the flash card (Haryanti, 2020). Flash cards here are the same as letter cards that both introduce letters or words. In the use of the strategy through the letter card at Al-Amin Gagah Kadir Pamekasan Kindergarten, the educators there modify and make their own so that the children do not feel bored in the learning process, but the goal is the same, which is to develop children's reading skills, so that geometric letter card media is created.

1.1.2 Playing Lego

Lego games are one of the educational games made of plastic (Cahyo, 2011). Lego toys are usually in the form of square pieces, there are rectangular and short

pieces, where each piece can be inserted or arranged according to the child's wishes. In the development of children's literacy through lego games, it can make children not bored in learning because children learn while playing. In addition, Lego games are one of the interesting, effective and fun activities and are able to facilitate various aspects of early child development.

Lego games are games that refer to children's creativity where colorful plastic block games with mini sizes so that they are easily arranged into sharing various shapes such as mobi, houses, pistols and it can also be used as a medium as a vocabulary introduction. This is also supported by the results of previous studies showing that Lego games or Lego letters can develop children's early reading skills and there is a significant increase or change (Soebachman, 2012).

1.1.3 Finger Painting

Finger painting is one of the media that can be used by children in describing or channeling their imagination. Finger painting is a type of drawing activity by applying color paste directly with your fingers freely, both all fingers, palms to wrists (Sumanto, 2005). Finger painting activities here involve finger skills and can indirectly train fine motor skills. This can provide fun to children because it can provide opportunities for children to touch objects directly using children's fingers. The tools used must be safe so as not to endanger and injure children. The purpose of the finger painting activity at Al-Amin Gagah Kador Pamekasan Kindergarten here is to help children develop literacy skills by writing and adding new vocabulary. The process of painting with fingers is an effective way for children to learn to recognize the concept of letters by practicing writing activities such as imitating the shape of letters. (Astari dkk, 2012).

1.1.4 Collage of Hijaiyah Letters

The introduction of letters at Al-Amin Gagah Kador Kindergarten Pamekasan not only introduces the alphabet but also in the learning process introduces the hijaiyah letters which are introduced through hijaiyah letter collage activities. Collage according to Hajar Pamadhi and Sukardi is a game of sticking an object to the surface of the image (Padillah Dkk, 2023). Children can choose and arrange pieces of shapes, materials and can place them in the place they like according to the pattern that has been provided. Collages can be made from materials that exist around the environment, both natural materials and used materials. From the use of natural materials around, creative ideas can emerge that can produce unique and interesting collage creations. In addition, these activities can provide experience for children in making their own decisions about the use of materials, colors, sizes and shapes

1.1.5 Letter Stamp

Letter recognition is a very important thing for children at an early age. The choice of strategy in the learning process also has an effect, one of which is using letter stamps. Basically, the learning process of children is learning while playing. Children will be more quick to grasp the understanding given, because the activity of knowing and reading the symbols of the letters of the child is invited to play. In recognizing letters, there is a unique and interesting way for children, namely by using letter stamps.

Letter stamping activities can be an effective method in developing children's early literacy skills. Playing with picture letter cards can improve early literacy skills in early childhood (Nisa, 2021).

1.2 Supporting And Inhibiting Factors in Developing the Early Literacy Skills of Children Aged 5-6 Years at Al-Amin Gagah Kadur Kindergarten Pamekasan

1.2.1 The Supporting Factor

The development of early literacy skills in children is influenced by several supporting factors. The preparation of adequate facilities and infrastructure, such as learning devices, comfortable reading places, and appropriate storybooks, is very important in supporting children's literacy (Kebudayaan, 2019). The availability of media that supports and benefits existing media. Educators who are always passionate and try to give their best. In addition, teachers play a role in creating fun learning by using creative and innovative learning media, so that children are more interested and understand the initial literacy material well (Putri, et al., 2022).

Personal and institutional factors also affect children's interest in reading; Therefore, good management of the learning environment can improve early childhood literacy skills (Fitriana, 2022).

1.2.2 The Inhibiting Factor

Lack of participation from some different parents and the attitude of parents who are too much to give up the responsibility to teach their children. In addition, the lack of support from parents where when learning to recognize and read letters at school children have begun to be able to but when children return home parents pay attention to what the child's development is like at school, parents do not teach children to return to learn to recognize and read but instead let children play or be busy with their work, And give us the responsibility of giving our elder responsibilities in children's education, so that we have a bit of difficulty because initially the child at school has begun to know but when he arrives home it is not repeated so that the child forgets, and the next day the child forgets and has to be repeated again and it becomes an obstacle in the process of developing literacy to children. Lack of motivation and attention from parents and an unsupportive environment can be an obstacle in the development of literacy skills in children (Dardjowidjojo, 2003).

The diversity of children's emotional conditions at school, when children come to school does not always come with a good emotional state, sometimes they come in a bad emotional state. Children's emotional conditions sometimes occur due to interactions with friends during learning, for example, there are fights due to toy fights. So that this is one of the obstacles because teachers need to calm children and make children's emotions comfortable so that the planned activity can go well. (Nafiqoh & Rohaeti, 2019).

Children lack focus in learning, where during learning sometimes it is very difficult for children to focus and loss of children's confidence. Basically, school is just a supporting system, which is the main actor, namely children and parents at home and also the most time when children are at home with their parents. Parents with various professions or busyness certainly have different problems. Problems that are often conveyed to schools include: parents are busy working so they do not have time to teach their children to learn to read or know letters with their children, lack of media or limited books, and there are also families who still do not understand the importance of introducing letters or reading together from an early age with their children

CONCLUSION

The development of early literacy skills is an important aspect in early childhood education, especially in learning to recognize and read letters. In this context, teachers play the role of learning centers that must have high teaching skills and creativity to attract

children's interest in learning. The right learning strategy greatly affects the success of the learning process and children's development, especially in recognizing the shape and sound of letters. This study revealed that at Al-Amin Gagah Kadur Kindergarten Pamekasan, teachers have used various strategies to develop early literacy skills in children aged 5-6 years, such as the use of geometric letter cards, Legos, finger painting, and letter collages. However, the implementation of this strategy is faced with several obstacles, such as lack of parental participation, diversity of children's emotional states, lack of focus on children's learning, and loss of children's confidence. These barriers affect the effectiveness of learning and hinder the development of children's literacy abilities.

On the other hand, there are several supporting factors that facilitate the process of early literacy development, such as the availability of supportive media, the enthusiasm and dedication of educators, and the presence of new educators who can increase children's enthusiasm for learning. However, the biggest challenge still comes from the lack of parental support, which is an important factor in supporting the success of children's education at home and at school.

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