The emergent Literacy activities through the storytelling method with flashcard media for early childhood education

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Abstract: Teachers have an important role in the development of children's language at school. The study period at PAUD is a good opportunity to improve literacy skills when children are experiencing a sensitive language learning period. Language skills have a role in improving social aspects and developing emotional and cognitive aspects. Children age 2-4 years go through a concrete learning period. Using storytelling teaching methods with flashcard media can create a fun learning atmosphere and encourage children to learn optimally. This study aims to look at the application of the flashcard storytelling method to the language skills of children aged 2-4 years in support of an emergent literacy program.

Keywords: *Emergent literacy, storytelling method, flashcard media*Background

Early childhood enters the maximum growth as a human being is often called the golden age (Uce 2017). Children will learn many things in this stage, from cognitive and motoric to language development (Amalia, Rahmawati, & Farida, 2019). Literacy is one of the basic skills that must be mastered early on (Zati, 2018) and is closely related to communication skills (Basyiroh, 2017). This communication ability will equip individuals to live better life (Anggraini, 2021). But tragically, Indonesia ranks in the 60th, according to the announcement of literacy research conducted by UNESCO (Restiawati, 2021).

One way to increase literacy is through emergent literacy (Hidayatullah, Syihabuddin, & Damayanti, 2021). Programs that help children have readiness in the world of literacy include the ability to read, listen, hear, speak and write. Research in the field of literacy explains that at the age before school, children begin to develop literacy skills and are aimed at communicating, even briefly. The process of language development in early childhood has been widely studied abroad in various language contexts, such as English (Johnston, 2010). Several studies have also been conducted on children's research subjects using Indonesian as their mother tongue (Astuti, 2014; Fajriyah & Puspitasari, 2022). Significant results have also been applied in early childhood language development using storytelling (Fajriyah & Puspitasari, 2022).

This study aims to provide an in-depth description of the application of the storytelling method using flash cards as the medium. Although the storytelling method is not new, the combination of storytelling and flashcard methods in teaching Indonesian is a fairly new application. This study was inspired to provide creative ideas for early childhood education (ECE) educators to carry out interesting and creative learning. As is well known, learning in early childhood requires many concepts that can entice students to learn new things without stressing them. Teacher as facilitator plays an important role to facilitate fun learning. As explained above, the research question of this study is how the implementation of teaching storytelling with flashcards provides an alternative for emergent literacy activity in ECE.

Literature reviews

According to Amalia, Rahmawati, and Farida (2019), language development consists of the ability to listen, speak, read and write. The ability to master language enables humans to survive (Hidayat, 2012). Humans find it easy to express thoughts and feelings through language (Devianty, 2017). It can be concluded that language is essential and critical for human interactions. There are approximately 6000 languages in the world (Ibrahim, 2011), and language development is important for early childhood (Isna, 2019). Thus, The Indonesia

ministry of education and culture put language development in the spotlight in ECE, as cited in their laws number 137 of 2014 (Husna and Eliza, 2021). Even so, language is a familiar aspect of humans since language existed when a human was born (Isna, 2019).

Early childhood is the best time for children to develop their potential (Salsabila, 2021). Stimulation of the surrounding environment can support children's language development. The process of developing children's language and vocabulary can nurture children to interact with a wider world (Permata, 2022). It also affected their emotional and cognitive aspect (Basyiroh, 2017). Storytelling is one way to create a fun environment for children to develop their literacy skills (Rambe, 2021).

Storytelling is a kind of face-to-face communication and can be delivered through vocal qualities, facial expressions, and hand and body movements (Salsabila, 2021). This activity could elevate children to develop imagination, learn new things, improve communication skills, practice thinking skills and train their ability to adapt (Asmawati, 2020).

For this study, we integrated a storytelling method using flashcards as the teaching medium. Flashcard is a learning support tool to enhance children's motivation Kusumawati and Mariono, 2016). It's an easily designed tool that has several features such as easy to carry, educative, full of pictures and fewer words. Storytelling using flashcard nurture children's character through the moral value inserted in the story (Purnamasari, 2019).

Methodology

This study applies a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. This activity was part of the university community service through classroom practice. The participants in this study were 12 students aged 2-4 years at a school for early childhood in a big city in East Java, Indonesia. This school is a form of informal learning initiated by the city government and carried out by volunteers who were originally part of the health cadres. The volunteers are full-time mothers who long to contribute to the world of ECE. At first, the mothers were involved in this education system with a firm determination to pay attention to the development of toddlers in their area. As the government bureaucracy becomes more mature, mothers as educators receive training and provision to teach ECE. Some mothers also receive the opportunity to enroll at the undergraduate level for early childhood education programs with full scholarships from the city government.

The teaching and learning process was carried out in a multipurpose building located at the community hall. The 15 by 10-meter building is used three times a week for ECE from seven to ten in the morning, and at night it was used as a badminton court for local residents. Sometimes this multi-purpose building was even converted into a wedding party room for local residents. The condition was not ideal; these volunteers had to prepare the multipurpose room into a ready classroom. They arranged carpets and prepared wooden planks as a barrier between the two study groups but not completely covering them. The students were the children of local residents, and there was no compulsory school fee, but they were free to contribute as much as they could afford..

Researchers, as part of the university community service, worked closely with two instructors to carry out research. After obtaining permission and agreement to conduct initial observations and interact with students, the researchers developed a learning plan adapted to the children's needs. The teaching process was lasted for four weeks, from observations to the teaching. During teaching, the second and third researchers were also active in making observations and taking notes for additional analysis. In addition, the researcher also collected the opinions of two teachers and several parents of students who were present to accompany them during the

learning process. Interviews were conducted to collect supporting data in the data triangulation process so that the formulated results were valid and complete.

Results and discussion

Implementation of story telling with flashcard media in emergent literacy

Teaching literacy to early childhood requires awareness that children's literacy skills can be taught through fun activities. In this section the researcher explains in detail the procedures for teaching literacy and positive responses from students, teachers and parents involved in the learning process. The learning activities were divided into three main parts. First, the opening part were began by greeting from teachers such as "good morning", then the teacher asks how the students are doing and the answer is "Thank God, Allahu Akbar, it's amazing, yes yes yes.". Teachers always used this kind of uplifting cheers to build the children's mood so they were ready to join.

Second, teachers invited students to make a circle while holding hand and forming a circle. Teachers used a song while giving instruction. Here is the song lyric "Big circle small circle, Big circle, small circle, Big circle, The bigger the bigger, The greater it is". Then, it was continued by the second song titled "who makes the flowers", which later it become the main activity. The second song lyric is "Who makes flowers, I can't, Who makes flowers, Only God". After singing the second song, teacher starts to tell the story with flashcards (see image 1 for the flashcards). The story title was Meena's Funny Little Pet which has been translated into Indonesian. Below is the story line:

Meena has a dog named Fluffy. Fluffy is a cute little dog. Fluffy really likes the game of hide and seek. One day, Fluffy wasn't at home, Meena went looking for him "Where are you hiding, Fluffy?" asked Meena. "Are you hiding in the toy place?" Meena asked again while opening the toy box, "Are you hiding in the basket?", "Are you hiding behind the curtain?" Meena continues searching. Turns out Meena found Fluffy while she was playing in the park. Apparently, Fluffy is chasing butterflies and playing in the mud. Fluffy is now dirty, and Meena wants to give her a bath. "I'm not going to take a shower woof woof woof," said Fluffy as he barked and ran away. While running, Fluffy meets Meena's father who is watering the plants. Fluffy keeps running around the garden. While running, he saw a very fragrant flower, namely jasmine. Fluffy also notices that a flower has thorns. Fluffy is afraid to go through it. Turns out it was a rose. Fluffy ran again and saw a near the pond a flower floating. The flower is a lotus flower. Fluffy turns out to have been splashed by Meena's father and Fluffy is wet from the water. "I'm not going to take a shower woof woof woof," said Fluffy barking again. Finally, Meena picks up Fluffy and says, "My cute Fluffy, you are now clean. So you don't need to take a shower anymore."

Figure 1 flashcard for learning media

The third activity was the wrap-up. After telling the story, the teacher asked some questions related to the story that had been told, such as: Who created flowers? What is Meena's pet name? What flowers did Fluffy pass? As Fluffy was running, she saw a flower with thorns. What flower is it? In this stage, there were two ways interactions between students and teachers. Then, it followed by introducing flowers, which were tulips and cherries. The teacher also showed students how to take care of plants by applying fertilizer and watering them.

Picture 2 craft activity to make flowers

Students do a tulip flower craft from origami (see picture 2). The teacher gives the opportunity for students to choose two colours for the tulip petals, yellow or red. Then, the teacher gave instructions to fold origami step by step. While directing to creation of the flower crafts, some parents also assisted their children in doing the hands-on activity.

Benefits of applying storytelling with flashcard media in emergent literacy

ECE learning is a series of activities involving all development components from motoric, cognitive and psychomotor. An interesting learning design usually consists of some elements such as song, story, dance, and handcraft. This study proves that integrating storytelling using flashcard media is an interesting method and is easily implemented by teachers in the classroom.

We received some parents' feedback after the class. A parent said that her three-year-old daughter is still in the bubbling stage. She could not fully communicate one single word. She partially said words such as tar for guitar, ndi for shower (the original word in Bahasa is mandi) and aca for mirror (the original word in Bahasa is kaca). Children aged 2-3 years are able to grasp language by using the telegraphic language of 2-3 words (Zubaidah, 2004). Telegraphy is the pronunciation of two-word sentences (Palupi, 2015).

Another parent also admitted that she often gave her child a cell phone when she was at home. She said it was easier to calm down her child by giving her a gadget. She acknowledged that her decision influenced her child's ability to communicate; however, she did it due to her busy schedule. Gadget could cause a bad visual disturbance and hinder speaking ability (Fitri, 2022).

These days, many parents are filling their time with work responsibilities, which cannot be denied due to financial conditions. This creates a dilemma that they don't have time for reading with their child while they understand the importance of it. Now, many parents put literacy responsibility on schools. They expect that a child will be able to read and speak through schooling activities. This phenomenon gives a strong reason for ECE educators to put more effort into emergent literacy.

Even though it cannot be denied that parental participation in the development of children's literacy is crucial, research shows that parents who are actively involved and continue to monitor children have a positive impact on the child's literacy skills. Teachers and parents have an important role in stimulating children's language development (Rezieka, 2021). This study proves that the storytelling method with flashcard media is a varied teaching method that is able to attract children's attention to be actively involved in the learning process by responding to questions given by the teacher in the form of answers or body movements. Using varied storytelling methods can attract children's attention to understand stories and improve their language skills (Ichsan, 2021). Getting used to literacy activities from an early age will better prepare children to enter formal education (Astuti, 2014).

The results and discussion above show that emergent literacy is very important in early childhood. Therefore, teachers need props that can attract children's attention and improve language skills, namely flashcards and storytelling methods to optimize children's language development. The media will help children learn a lot of vocabulary and articulation in language.

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