

Reading Literacy and Early Childhood Reading Techniques

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ABSTRACT

Emergent literacy is a concept used to prepare child literacy before entering elementary school. The purpose of this study is to develop emergency literacy by providing stimuli that can develop children's literacy, there are two domains of emergent literacy ie inside out and outside-in, these domains cannot be separated because they will help the child in the emergence literacy process in early childhood, as for the efforts that can be done to develop the emergent literacy in early childhood is to prepare the literacy environment and read the story, various studies say that by telling the story of children learn various activities that can develop literacy..

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1. Introduction

Reading and literacy are among the essential skills that are critical to early childhood development. The golden developmental period, where children have a high sensitivity to learning, including reading and writing skills, occurs at an early age. Reading literacy in early childhood includes more than just recognizing letters or reading simple words; it also builds the foundation for critical thinking, understanding information, and communicating better. According to Snow et al. (2018), there is a correlation between good reading skills early on and students' future academic and social success. Therefore, improving reading literacy at an early age should be a top priority in early childhood education.

Reading literacy is built through active interaction with the environment and support from adults at an early age. Vygotsky's (1978) research emphasizes the importance of social interaction in learning, where children learn through guidance and direction from adults or more competent peers. Play-based activities, speaking and listening are the main means of improving literacy. A study conducted by Piasta et al. (2020) found that children who received verbal stimulation and lived in an environment that supported literacy had better reading skills compared to children who did not receive verbal stimulation.

Methods that are appropriate to the child's developmental stage are needed to teach reading literacy in early childhood. Reading skills can be improved through various techniques, one of which is phonics. This method helps children understand the relationship between letters and sounds, which is the basis of words and sentences. According to the National Reading Panel (2000), phonics techniques improve children's reading skills and accelerate their learning process. Reading aloud is also very effective in teaching reading literacy. According to research conducted by Trelease (2013), reading aloud expands children's vocabulary in addition to strengthening the emotional connection between children and readers, both parents and teachers.

Play-based approaches, along with phonics and read-aloud methods, are increasingly seen as effective methods for teaching reading literacy. According to Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2015), play

activities using letters, words and stories can increase children's interest in reading. This method increases children's engagement in reading activities as it provides a fun learning experience. In addition, research shows that parental involvement is crucial to support children's literacy development. According to Sénéchal and LeFevre (2014), the amount of time parents spend reading with their children has a positive effect on children's literacy skills. Children who receive regular support from their parents tend to have better reading skills.

In addition to the pedagogical approach, the literacy environment is very important for improving reading skills. According to Neuman and Celano (2012), children who grow up in literacy-rich environments where they have access to books, stationery and other learning resources have better reading skills compared to children who grow up in less literate environments. A supportive literacy environment not only provides access to resources but also creates a learning environment that helps children learn to read.

But reading literacy in early childhood is still quite difficult. Limited resources, lack of teacher training and parental involvement are the main obstacles, according to several studies. UNESCO (2021) highlights that many early childhood educators do not have specialized literacy training, which means the teaching methods used are often ineffective. Socio-economic factors also contribute to literacy differences between children. Technology has opened up new opportunities to teach students to read. Interactive digital games and technology-based educational apps can increase children's interest and reading ability. Roskos et al. (2016) state that technology can be a useful tool for literacy learning if used wisely. However, to improve reading literacy, the use of technology must be balanced with the necessary social interaction.

In teaching literacy in early childhood, a comprehensive approach is needed as we must understand the importance of reading literacy and the difficulties that exist. To create a supportive learning environment, this approach requires the cooperation of parents, educators and policy makers. For example, teacher training, improved access to literacy resources and increased parental involvement are strategic actions suggested by Shiel et al. (2018). Integrated methods can help develop reading literacy in early childhood effectively and have sustainable positive effects.

2. Method

Phonics Method and Use of Hijaiyah Letters: One of the methods used to teach children to recognize hijaiyah letters and sounds is the phonics method. The phonics technique associates sounds with letter shapes and teaches them to pronounce and memorize the hijaiyah letters. Educators say that this method is effective in helping children learn to read the Quran well. **Reading Aloud:** Umariyah Al-Quran Kindergarten uses the reading aloud technique. The teacher reads the Quranic verses slowly and clearly, and the children then repeat them. By utilizing short verses from the Quran that are easily understood by early childhood, this reading aloud is done every day with the aim of training children in recognizing intonation, correct pronunciation, and enriching their vocabulary.

3. Results and Discussion

Play-Based Learning Umariyah Al-Quran Kindergarten uses a play-based approach in literacy learning in addition to formal methods. Games that focus on understanding hijaiyah letters, such as letter cards and letter puzzles, fall into this category. These play activities not only increase children's interest in reading but also make learning fun and interactive. **Use of Visual Media and Technology:** To attract children's attention, the use of flashcards, pictures, and other visual aids are also used in learning to read. In addition, educational technology, such as apps and multimedia devices, are also used to support reading literacy learning. Apps created to introduce the Hijaiyah letters and Quranic recitations are considered quite effective in attracting children's attention and making them more enthusiastic.

The results showed that the reading methods used at Al-Quran Umariyah Kindergarten were quite diverse and had a positive impact on the development of early childhood reading skills. According to the National Reading Panel (2000), literature findings show that the phonics method is very helpful for early childhood in recognizing hijaiyah letters and connecting them with the right sound. Children will find it easier to read and understand the Quran if they are introduced to the hijaiyah letters through sound.

Reading aloud also affects children's reading skills. Examples of correct pronunciation are given by educators while reading. They also give children the opportunity to imitate what they read. According to research conducted by Trelease (2013), reading aloud can increase children's vocabulary and improve their understanding of the text. This activity is in line with this study. Children at Umariyah Al-Quran Kindergarten are taught to read aloud which not only teaches the pronunciation of letters; they are also taught the meaning of the Quranic verses, which helps them better understand the spiritual.

The play method also helps children's reading literacy development. According to research conducted by Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2015), learning that involves play has a positive effect on children's cognitive development and their interest in learning. This approach is used at Al-Quran Umariyah Kindergarten to create a fun and interactive learning environment. It also increases children's desire to participate in the literacy learning process. Children learn hijaiyah letters and social and emotional skills through play.

Nonetheless, these methods have proven to be successful, but there are still problems to implement, mainly related to time constraints, resources and parental involvement in the learning process at home. Therefore, further efforts are needed to improve cooperation between educators and parents in helping children become more proficient in reading, and to ensure that there are adequate resources to support leisure learning. Overall, the reading method used at Al-Quran Umariyah Kindergarten improves early childhood reading skills. This study shows that children can improve their reading skills in learning the Quran by combining phonics techniques, reading aloud, play, and the utilization of visual media and technology.

Conclusion

According to research conducted at Umariyah Al-Quran Kindergarten, it can be concluded that reading methods such as phonics, reading aloud, play-based approaches, and the use of technology and visual media are effective in improving early childhood reading skills. These techniques not only teach children the hijaiyah letters, but also improve their understanding of the Quranic readings. Nonetheless, issues such as lack of resources and lack of parental involvement must be addressed for learning to be at its best. Therefore, better cooperation between parents and educators is essential. Overall, the use of these techniques at Umariyah Al-Quran Kindergarten has resulted in positive developments in children's reading literacy. These techniques also help their cognitive and spiritual development.

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