ALPHABET BUSY PICTURES AS AN EFFECTIVE MEDIA FOR TEACHING ALPHABET AT PAUD ZALFA NAQIYYA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of Alphabet Busy Picture media in improving early childhood letter-recognition skills at PAUD Zalfa Naqiyya Samarinda. Addressing the urgent need for engaging literacy strategies in early education, this research offers a novel application of Busy Picture media to strengthen children's alphabet mastery. Using a quantitative approach supported by classroom observations and interviews, the study involved 16 Class A students across two meetings. Early literacy development—especially letter recognition and identifying initial letters of familiar objects—is essential for foundational reading skills. Findings demonstrate that Alphabet Busy Picture media significantly enhanced students' ability to recognize and memorize letters. The practical and visually stimulating nature of the media contributed to increased student engagement and learning outcomes. This research contributes empirical evidence supporting the integration of interactive visual media in early childhood literacy instruction, particularly for improving alphabet mastery in similar educational contexts.
Keyword: Alphabet Busy Picture, PAUD, letters, quantitative method

INTRODUCTION

The alphabet is considered one of the most essential linguistic components in learning English (Yu & Altunel, 2018). Students who have a strong grasp of the alphabet tend to feel more confident and enjoy learning English because they are not afraid to explore or experiment with new vocabulary. Sadiku (2015) points out that to fully acquire the English language, learners must master the four key skills: speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Before developing these skills, however, students need to understand the alphabet. Therefore, it is crucial for primary school learners to be equipped with alphabet knowledge so that they do not encounter difficulties when they continue to junior high school.

At the elementary level, teachers often introduce the alphabet in concrete ways and relate it to students' everyday lives to help them remember it. In practice, however, teachers face challenges in teaching the alphabet because students are easily distracted, forget quickly, and struggle to use the alphabet in real-life situations. Annashih and Subroto (2019) emphasize that teachers should incorporate media to make the learning process more enjoyable and meaningful.

Using media can help students stay focused and improve their ability to remember the alphabet. Muzaiyanah and Fanani (2018) also highlight that incorporating media in instruction can capture students' attention and boost their motivation to learn.

According to Wulansari (2018), the Alphabet Busy Picture is a two-dimensional medium that emphasizes the use of varied colors in its materials. This is beneficial because elementary students often have limited attention spans when learning is based solely on textbooks. This idea is supported by Untari et al. (2018), who note that three-dimensional books can enhance students' motivation. The Alphabet Busy Picture is more appealing than a regular course book because it contains numerous images that appear lifelike. The visuals should be genuinely connected to the theme to increase students' engagement in the activities. Teachers may also enrich this medium by adding extra pictures or words to support students' memorization of the alphabet.

Based on preliminary data gathered by a previous researcher, the teacher at Paud Zalfa Naqiyya Samarinda has been teaching English from the lower grades, yet the use of media in instruction is infrequent. In contrast, elementary school students tend to be more engaged when they can physically interact with the learning media, as they remember objects they can touch more easily than those they only observe.

For this reason, the researcher is interested in exploring how teachers utilize an alternative medium, namely the "Alphabet Busy Picture", for teaching the alphabet, especially since almost no studies have examined the use of "Alphabet Busy Picture" as a teaching tool at Paud Zalfa Naqiyya Samarinda.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Alphabet Busy Picture

Alphabet Alphabet Busy Picture vave long been recognized as an essential element of early literacy instruction (Nodelman, 2001). Learning the alphabet is a fundamental step in acquiring the complex skill of reading (Piasta & Wagner, 2010a). Without a solid understanding of the alphabet, the reading process cannot develop effectively. According to Nodelman (2001), the significance of Alphabet Busy Pictures lies in their function as puzzles that prompt children to draw on their prior knowledge and reasoning skills to connect the symbols on the page with the corresponding letter names and sounds.

The significance of Alphabet Busy Pictures as a teaching aid has been widely acknowledged by leading early childhood educators, and they remain a staple resource in early reading instruction. For instance, a joint position statement from the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children notes that "Alphabet Busy Pictures and alphabet puzzles that allow

children to view and compare letters may serve as an important means for efficient and effortless learning" (IRA & NAEYC, 1998). The main value of Alphabet Busy Pictures lies in their capacity to support the development of letter-name and letter-sound knowledge. Since letters are the basis of any alphabetic writing system, improvements in letter recognition are expected to enhance reading proficiency. Research has consistently shown that understanding letter names and sounds is a strong predictor of literacy development, while limited ability in these areas has been associated with greater difficulty in acquiring reading skills.

Relevant Books for EYL

There are various sources of English learning materials for young learners, including the internet, television, and books. The first is the internet, which students today can easily access to search for information or watch instructional videos. Young learners increasingly engage with digital media in their daily lives (Lee, 2015). This makes the internet a valuable resource for teachers, as it enables them to provide engaging materials and videos, such as those from YouTube that can make the learning experience more meaningful and appealing.

Other websites that offer content similar to "PBSKids.org" include "thekidzpage.com," "Disneyjunior.com," "learninggamesforkids.com," and "discoverykids.com." Thus, the internet can be an effective platform for learners to access authentic and varied English materials. Another valuable medium is television, which also provides English exposure for young learners through cartoons, songs, and short stories. Using cartoons to teach the alphabet has been shown to be more engaging and can enhance students' motivation (Pitriana & Jufri, 2013). When television programs are viewed repeatedly, they can help children retain alphabet knowledge because the learning process becomes enjoyable. "Blue's Clues" is one example of a useful cartoon that teachers can incorporate when teaching the alphabet to young learners (Pitriana and Jufri, 2013).

The final medium is books. Books are commonly used in teaching as an additional resource alongside the internet and television. There are various types of vocabulary-teaching books, such as big books, picture books, magic books, and Alphabet Busy Picture books. These materials are effective for teaching the alphabet because they are engaging, colorful, and present simple themes like animals, colors, numbers, and shapes. Mahayanti and Suantari (2012) note that several types of media such as pictures, course books, and boards are frequently

utilized in teaching and learning.

Teachers in Indonesia commonly use books as teaching media. However, materials like Alphabet Busy Picture books, magic books, and big books tend to be more appealing than conventional course books. Although course books are considered effective, they are less visually engaging due to the limited number of pictures (Mahayanti & Suantari, 2012). In contrast, Alphabet Busy Picture books offer many illustrations and enjoyable activities such as matching, puzzles, and counting where students can remove and attach items, making the learning of new alphabet items more engaging.

Regarding the study on "pengembangan media "quite books" my family theme in thematic learning for grade 1 elementary school students'," the findings indicate that this type of book is more effective because it offers various activities that make students more active and interested in learning. The researcher also recommends that teachers continue to develop such books creatively.

Alphabet Books, Letter Names, and Letter Sounds

Children's understanding of letter names and letter sounds represents two essential components of emergent literacy development (Piasta & Wagner, 2010b). The alphabetic principle refers to the concept that individual letters and combinations of letters correspond to specific sounds.

Engaging with alphabet books, together with exposure to the sounds of language, can serve as an effective approach for developing this knowledge (Bus & van IJzendoorn, 1999). Research consistently highlights the significance of letter-name recognition as a strong predictor of later reading achievement.

Foulin, in his review of research on letter-name knowledge, explained that "the positive longitudinal relationship between prereading letter naming and later literacy achievement shows that children entering school with stronger LNK (letter-name knowledge) tend to learn to read and spell more quickly and effectively than peers with weaker LNK" (Foulin, 2005, p. 132).

Letter-sound knowledge also plays a crucial role in early literacy development. Hulme, Bowyer-Crane, Carroll, Duff, and Snowling (2012), for instance, found that children's understanding of letter sounds contributed significantly to their reading improvement. Evidence suggests a potential causal link between acquiring letter names and acquiring letter sounds. (Share, 2004).

However, this connection is influenced by the particular form of acrophony

found in the English alphabet. Acrophony refers to the practice of naming letters using the initial sound of the letter itself. Children tend to learn letter sounds most effectively when the target phoneme appears at the beginning of the letter name (as in consonant–vowel letters such as D and T), somewhat less effectively when the phoneme appears at the end of the name (as in vowel–consonant letters such as F and N), and least effectively for letters whose names do not contain the corresponding sound at all (such as Y and W) (Evans, Bell, Shaw, Moretti, & Page, 2006).

Kim, Petscher, Foorman, and Zhou (2010) suggested that phonological processing abilities influence how children derive letter sounds from letter names; however, other studies have challenged this view when cognitive factors are taken into account (e.g., Evans et al., 2006; Piasta & Wagner, 2010b).

The Affect in the Classroom Activity

There are three major benefits of using high-quality books in classroom activities: young learners become more active, they enjoy the learning process, and their motivation to participate increases.

The first impact is that young learners become more engaged. This occurs because they do not feel as though they are simply reading a book; instead, they interact with it. The "Alphabet Busy Picture" book, for example, offers activities such as matching, arranging numbers, and other tasks that stimulate learning (Amaris, Rakimahwati, & Marlina, 2018). Students become more active because they can manipulate the book rather than just read it.

This interaction with the media encourages active participation. Students tend to ask questions when they encounter unfamiliar tasks, and they also become curious when they discover new elements such as colors and shapes. Such experiences nurture their curiosity far more effectively than books filled with text.

The second benefit is that young learners enjoy the learning process. This is essential because children are easily distracted when a book contains only written text (Setyaningrum, Sumarsono, & Lestiono, 2014). Young learners learn more effectively when they enjoy the experience, especially through play (Ulfah & Rahma, 2017). When children find the learning process enjoyable, they absorb new knowledge more easily. Media such as the Alphabet Busy Picture support this by offering engaging tasks, matching colors or shapes, rearranging ice-cream pictures, counting apples and placing them in a bucket, and many others.

Finally, a well-designed book can help increase students' motivation to

participate in classroom activities. This is essential because learners need to feel comfortable in the classroom environment; if they do not, they are unlikely to stay engaged throughout the lesson. Without engagement, meaningful learning cannot take place. To foster positive learning experiences, teachers should design enjoyable and interactive activities, use plenty of visual support, incorporate games, songs, and simple storytelling (Cameron & McKay, 2010). In summary, a thoughtfully developed book can create enjoyable learning opportunities for young learners, encouraging their motivation by making the activities feel natural and not like formal instruction.

The Students English Development

A good book can enhance students' English skills, including alphabet mastery, speaking, and motivation. Engaging books like the *Alphabet Busy Picture* capture students' attention and spark curiosity about shapes, colors, animals, and familiar objects. Through interactive activities such as matching with classmates, students reinforce basic alphabet items related to everyday themes..

The second benefit is the improvement of speaking skills. Students not only read but also pronounce and spell words during activities. For example, in matching games, they talk about colors and shapes as they identify pairs. This supports their confidence in speaking and helps them learn how to spell vocabulary items correctly.

A good book can also boost students' motivation to learn English, as enjoyable and stress-free activities build confidence and encourage them to explore more both in school and in their daily lives. This is important because children's development occurs not only at school but also through their daily experiences. According to Pitriana and Jufri (2013), teachers need to create a supportive and confidence-building learning environment when teaching the alphabet in order to ensure effective instruction. Therefore, a well-designed book can enhance students' English development, particularly in alphabet learning, speaking skills, and overall motivation.

Definition of English for a Young Learning

English for young learners plays an important role in preparing children for globalization and for English as an international language. Teaching English to young learners has become a significant topic in recent years (Mahayanti & Suantari, 2012). Young learners are typically defined as children aged 5–12 (Cameron & McKay, 2010), and they are usually found at the elementary school

level. Pitriana and Jufri (2013) also classify elementary school students as young learners.

One of the most notable characteristics of young learners is that they become bored easily (Pitriana & Jufri, 2013). Therefore, teachers must create enjoyable learning environments so students do not feel anxious or reluctant to learn English. This differs from teaching adults or older students, who tend to continue learning even when they are not fully engaged. Since young learners require proper guidance at their age, teaching strategies must spark their interest and encourage continued exploration. Another characteristic of young learners is that their mood changes quickly, making it essential for teachers to provide appealing media and effective teaching techniques to maintain their motivation. Overall, EYL refers to teaching English to young learners through engaging and well-designed instructional approaches.

Previous Related Studies

Despite individual differences in how children derive letter sounds from letter names, instruction that targets both letter names and sounds tends to improve letter-sound knowledge more effectively than teaching sounds alone (Piasta & Wagner, 2010b). Research has shown that alphabet instruction supports children's learning of both letter names and sounds. A meta-analysis by Piasta and Wagner (2010b) reported a small effect on letter-name learning ($d = 0.14$) and a moderate effect on letter-sound learning ($d = 0.48$). Because alphabet books emphasize teaching the alphabet, they may produce similar gains in both areas. A small study by Greenewald and Kulig (1995) provides evidence for this possibility.

They assigned 10 kindergarten children to an experimental group that received alphabet book reading and 11 children to a control group that listened to storybooks. For 17 days, each group was read their respective book type for 10 minutes per session. The children who read alphabet books showed significantly greater improvement in letter-name knowledge than those in the control group. Additional evidence supporting the effectiveness of alphabet books comes from a recent study by Both-De Vries and Bus (2014). In that study, 45 children aged four and five were placed into two experimental groups and one control group. The experimental groups met individually with researchers once a week for four weeks to read simple alphabet books presented on a flat screen without animations or sound effects, while the control group continued with regular classroom activities. Results showed a significant increase in letter-name knowledge for the children in

the experimental groups.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design. The population consisted of all students at PAUD Zalfa Naqiyya Samarinda, totaling 32 learners.

The sample represented a portion of the population with specific characteristics. A cluster random sampling technique was used, in which one class was randomly selected. Class "A," consisting of 16 students, was chosen as the sample for this research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents (1) research finding, (2) Results of student's pre-test and pos-test (3) Discussion.

Research Finding

The research findings were derived from the data analysis, which included the classification of students' pre-test and post-test scores, the calculation of the mean scores, the standard deviation, and the results of the hypothesis testing.

Results of student's pre-test and pos-test

1. The Means Score

    After analyzing the results of the students' pre-test and post-test, the mean scores are presented in the table below.:

Table 1 The Means score of the students pre-test and post-test.

Type of test	Means Score
Pre-Test	34.6
Post-Test	96

Table 1 presents the students' average scores in the pre-test and post-test. The mean score in the pre-test was 34.6%, which falls into the fair category, whereas the post-test mean score increased to 96%, categorized as very good. These results indicate that the students' post-test performance was significantly higher than their pre-test performance.
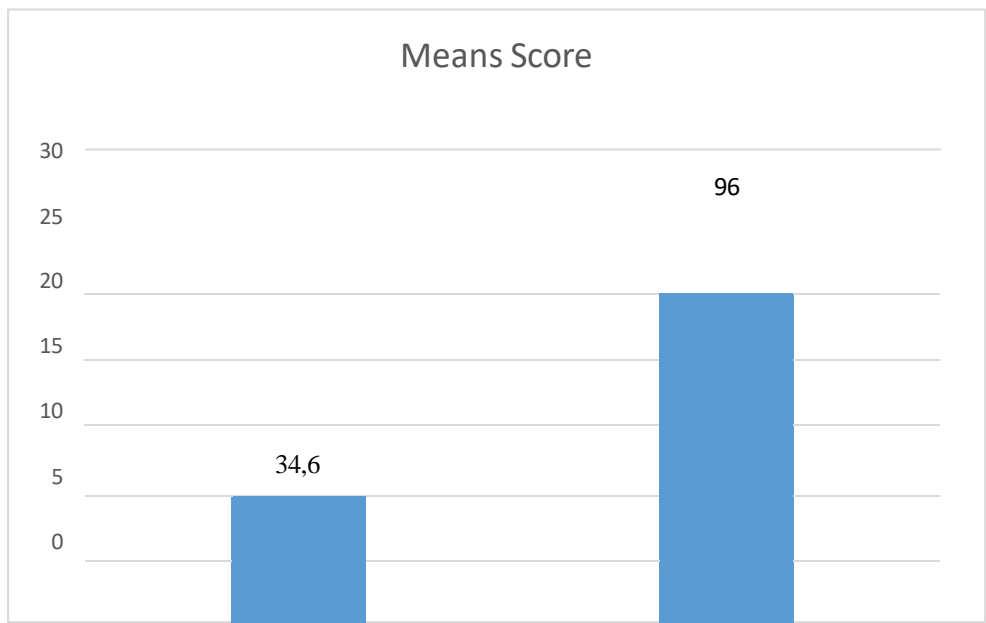
Figure 1: the means score of the students' pre-test and post-test.

2. The T-test Value of The Students' recognizing Alphabet after the treatment

    The results of the t-test analysis on students' content and organization in writing using the mind mapping method are presented in the table below. Table 4.2 displays the t-test value for students' alphabet recognition after the treatment. As shown in Table 4.3, the t-test value exceeds the t-table value, indicating a significant difference between the students' performance after receiving the treatment. This means that the use of the mind mapping method had a meaningful effect on improving students' content and organization in writing

DISCUSSION

This section presents the discussion of the research findings based on the students' alphabet scores in the pre-test and post-test. The data obtained from the tests, as described earlier, indicate a clear improvement in the students' alphabet mastery. This increase is evidenced by the difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test.

Students' vocabulary, including alphabet recognition, can be enhanced through various strategies, one of which is the use of instructional media such as the Alphabet Busy Picture. This medium is considered effective because it is easy to access, practical to use, and available in diverse forms. The findings of this study demonstrate that implementing the Alphabet Busy Picture contributed to the

students' progress in mastering the alphabet.

Previous studies have also highlighted the role of visual media in improving vocabulary skills. The data from the tests, as explained in the earlier section, showed that students' performance in recognizing and organizing alphabet-related tasks improved significantly. This improvement is further supported by the frequency and percentage differences between the pre-test and post-test results.

Based on these findings, the application of the Alphabet Busy Picture in the classroom clearly enhanced students' alphabet recognition skills. The post-test scores increased notably after the treatment was provided. Prior to the treatment, students' alphabet recognition was categorized as poor; however, after the implementation of the Alphabet Busy Picture, their performance improved significantly.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that the use of the Alphabet Busy Picture significantly enhanced the alphabet mastery of Class A students at PAUD Zalfa Naqiyya Samarinda. This improvement was reflected in the increase from the pre-test to post-test scores. The average pre-test score was 34.6, categorized as fair, while the post-test average rose to 96, categorized as good. An analysis of students' responses in both tests demonstrated clear progress following the implementation of the treatment. Moreover, the Alphabet Busy Picture was found to be simple and practical to apply in the classroom setting.

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