

Busy Book for Improving Students' Language Skills

Nuriani, Juli

STAB Bodhi Dharma, Indonesia

nuriani@bodhidharma.ac.id, juli@bodhidharma.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Education for early childhood is a very important educational stage for a child because various developments are taking place, including language development. To optimize children's language development, appropriate learning media is needed, one of which is the busy book. This is a qualitative descriptive research doing library research which aims to describe busy books as learning media to stimulate early childhood language skills. In this study, writer collected data from various research journals and books related to busy books and early childhood education. Research results from various journals show that busy books can stimulate children to recognize symbols and letter sounds, assemble letters into words, and assemble words into meaningful sentences; activities in the busy book can improve speaking skills by mentioning and telling the pictures in the busy book. This study shows that busy books can be used as learning media to stimulate early childhood language skills.

Keywords: Busy Book, Language Skills, Learners

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education is an educational process for learners from a young age aimed at facilitating their comprehensive growth and development to achieve all aspects of child development (Hidayah, 2020). Early childhood education is a significant stage in a child's growth and development process. The Republic of Indonesia Law No. 20 of 2003 states that early childhood education is an educational effort aimed at children from birth to six years old, provided through educational stimulation to support physical and spiritual growth and development. This prepares children for further education. Therefore, early childhood education is crucial to ensure optimal child development.

Early childhood learners are in their golden age, often referred to as the "Golden Age" (Fauziddin & Mufarizuddin, 2018). This period is characterized by significant cognitive, physiological, language, socio-emotional, and motor growth and development. These aspects serve as the foundation for children as they move into the next stage of development (Fauziddin, 2016).

The Minister of Education and Culture Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 137 of 2014 outlines the National Standards for Early Childhood Education. It includes criteria for children's development, covering various areas of growth and development, such as art, physical-motor skills, religious and moral values, language, cognitive development, and socio-emotional development. This includes language aspects such as understanding commands and rules, receptive language, reading and comprehension skills, appreciation of reading, expressing language, the ability to ask and answer questions, oral communication skills, the ability to retell heard or read stories, learning pragmatics, expressing ideas, feelings, and desires through writing or drawing, and literacy skills, including understanding the relationship between letters and their pronunciation, writing letters, and comprehending words in storybooks.

Instructional media used in teaching and learning activities for early childhood learners should align with their needs and the growth aspects to be developed. Instructional media play a diverse role in enhancing and developing vocabulary mastery, cognitive development, speaking skills, creativity, numeracy, language skills, physical motor development, socio-emotional development, and reading skills for early childhood learners (Rupnidah & Suryana, 2022). To achieve optimal growth for early childhood learners, instructional aids suitable for the learners' age and needs are essential in the educational process.

The selection of instructional aids is crucial in early childhood education to develop various skills. According to Qondias et al., instructional media is one of the supporting factors for classroom learning activities (Qondias, Anu, & Niftalia, 2016). Many educators use books as instructional aids in the learning process. The journal "The Use of Busy Books to Stimulate Children's Reading Abilities" states that using busy books is effective in improving students' reading skills. Busy books are made of flannel cloth and contain various playful activities with beautiful and colorful illustrations that attract students. As a result, busy books stimulate students to remember alphabets and their pronunciation, combine letters into words, form sentences, and develop meanings.

Books as instructional media are essential to engage the attention of early childhood learners, allowing for longer periods of concentration. One such book that can be used as an instructional aid in schools for early childhood learners is The Busy Book. In the study conducted by Nilmayani, Ria Zulkifli N, and Devi Risma (2017) was found that using busy books as teaching aids significantly influenced early reading abilities in students. Consequently, the study concluded that using busy books as instructional aids, equipped with various engaging activities, is very effective in improving the early reading skills of young learners (Nilmayani, Zulkifli, & Risma, 2017).

METHOD

In this research, the author conducted a literature review using a qualitative descriptive method. Hidayah states that a literature review is conducted by examining materials and data written by others or researching other reference sources, including literary books, scientific journals, encyclopedias, reference books, scholarly articles, and other sources (Hidayah 2020).

Meanwhile, Sari and Asmendri state that a literature review involves the collection of data and information from various sources on the internet or in libraries. The collected data and information are related to the issues under investigation and the research activities are systematically carried out in data collection and processing using specific methods to find solutions to the issues being studied (Sari and Asmendri, 2020).

In this research, the author collected information in the form of data and information from libraries and internet sources, specifically related to cloth books and early childhood education. These sources include the research data of Risa Mufliharsi (2017) with research subjects being students in PAUD RW 10 Pisangan Baru, East Jakarta (Mufliharsi, 2017), the research by Nilmayani, Ria Zulkifli N, Devi Risma (2017) with research subjects being children aged five to six years in Integrated Philosophia Kindergarten, Kubu Babussalam, Rokan Hilir (Nilmayani, Zulkifli, & Risma, 2017), the research conducted by Azra Aulia Ulfah, Elva Rahmah (2017) on early childhood education students in Paud Budi Luhur, Padang (Ulfah & Rahmah, 2017), the research by Lela Nurlaela (2018) with research subjects being students in the Islamic Play Group of Bina Balita Way Halim, Bandar Lampung (Nurlaela, 2018), and the research conducted by Erika Rizki, Riza Oktariana, and Fitriah Hayati (2021) in TK Save The Kids, Banda Aceh, using the Research and Development (R&D) method to develop or improve products (Rizki, Oktariana, & Hayati, 2021).

Based on the information and data obtained, the author analyzed data related to the issue to establish the relationship between the use of cloth books as a language learning medium for early childhood students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Busy Book

A Busy Book is an instructional aid made from fabric, primarily flannel. This medium is interactive and designed in the form of a fabric book with colorful activity pages. It consists of various activities that enhance fine motor skills in young learners, such as shape and color matching, sewing, and buttoning (Mufliharsi, 2017).

A Busy Book is an instructional aid presented in the form of a fabric book, typically crafted from patchwork material (often flannel). The book's pages contain a variety of activities filled with colorful content designed to capture the

learners' attention, thereby enhancing their growth and development. It also serves as a teaching aid for educators to improve their students' reading skills (Afrianti & Wirman, 2020).

Busy Books are created using fabric, including flannel, and are used as teaching aids to help develop language skills in early childhood learners (Nurlaela, 2018).

A Busy Book, containing simple activities like mazes, puzzles, drawing, and more, is an effective teaching aid for introducing basic vocabulary in an engaging way. It can be used to teach words related to colors, animals, numbers, and shapes, making vocabulary learning more interesting (Mufliharsi, 2017).

Benefits of Using Busy Books: The use of Busy Books stimulates cognitive growth and fine motor skills in young children. Busy Books, made from colorful fabric with engaging shapes, can transform monotonous vocabulary lessons into enjoyable learning experiences, making it easier for educators to convey vocabulary to children (Mufliharsi, 2017).

The application of Busy Books in early childhood education benefits students by increasing their curiosity, enhancing language skills, improving motor skills, and fostering emotional and mental development (Rizki, Oktariana, & Hayati, 2021).

Advantages of Using Busy Books: There are several advantages to using Busy Books, including:

1. Educators can easily choose lesson topics that align with the content of the Busy Book.
2. It's easier to evaluate students because they can explore various activities in the book according to their abilities.
3. Students can perform the activities in the Busy Book on their own.
4. It increases students' curiosity, encouraging them to complete activities in the Busy Book independently.
5. Fabric-based teaching aids are more durable and less prone to wrinkling, tearing, or getting dirty.
6. The learning process becomes more active and enjoyable for students.
7. Teaching and learning activities become more engaging and lively, allowing students to systematically and enjoyably complete the tasks in the Busy Book (Mufliharsi, 2017).

Relevant Research on Busy Books

Several relevant studies on Busy Books can serve as references to support the idea that Busy Books are effective teaching aids for enhancing early learners' language skills.

1. **Risa Mufliharsi's Study (2017):** This study conducted in PAUD RW 10 Pisangan Baru with PAUD students as subjects showed that using Busy

Books as teaching aids for classroom activities is effective in enhancing early learners' vocabulary skills. Educators applied various creative activities in PAUD RW 10, making Busy Books an engaging, enjoyable, and systematic teaching aid resulting in effective and non-monotonous learning (Mufliharsi, 2017).

2. **Nilmayani, Ria Zulkifli N, Devi Risma's Study (2017):** This research at TK Paud Terpadu Filosofia Kubu Babussalam Rokan Hilir, involving children aged five to six years, found a significant relationship between using Busy Books and improving students' reading skills. This study suggests that Busy Books are effective for early childhood education and beneficial for enhancing reading skills in five to six-year-old students (Nilmayani, Zulkifli, & Risma, 2017).
3. **Azra Aulia Ulfah and Elva Rahmah's Study (2017):** Conducted at Paud Budi Luhur Padang with early childhood students, this research revealed that Busy Books, designed with letters for direct interaction with vocabulary, could enhance students' reading abilities. The study concluded that Busy Books are useful teaching aids for early learners at school, helping stimulate their reading skills (Ulfah & Rahmah, 2017).
4. **Lela Nurlaela's Study (2018):** Executed in Play Group Islam Bina Balita Way Halim Bandar Lampung, this study involved Playgroup students. It focused on developing Busy Books using flannel fabric to help improve early learners' language skills. The Busy Book contained various learning activities related to transportation. It used pictures of air, land, and sea transport, teaching the alphabet to enhance the children's speaking skills. The study found the developed Busy Book to be "Highly Eligible" based on its evaluation (Nurlaela, 2018).
5. **Elika Rizki, Riza Oktariana, and Fitriah Hayati's Study (2021):** This Research and Development study took place at TK Save The Kids Banda Aceh. It followed a systematic and structured cycle of development, starting with an assessment of the product to be improved. The Busy Book activities effectively stimulated children aged five to six to learn about numbers in TK Save The Kids Banda Aceh (Rizki, Oktariana, & Hayati, 2021).

These studies collectively demonstrate the effectiveness of Busy Books as teaching aids for enhancing language and other skills in early learners.

DISCUSSION

Risa Mufliharsi's Study (2017) revealed that the use of Busy Books significantly improves the teaching-learning process. Educators find it easier to deliver content since students are attracted to the engaging learning materials. Direct interactions between students and educators occur through various

activities featured in Busy Books. Educators can align their teaching materials with the content in the Busy Book. For students, Busy Books make learning more captivating, allowing them to not only pay attention to the provided learning materials but also practice what they have learned immediately. Students who have never used Busy Books before develop critical thinking skills through various engaging activities and do not experience monotonous learning. This fosters creativity and initiative among students, making them more independent and curious about executing educators' instructions. Additionally, Busy Books enable systematic and structured teaching that aligns with students' developmental stages. As a result, there is gradual and diverse vocabulary acquisition among students, transforming the learning experience from a monotonous approach to an engaging one. In conclusion, the utilization of Busy Books enhances early vocabulary acquisition and engages students effectively in the teaching process (Mufliharsi, 2017).

Nilmayani, Ria Zulkifli N, and Devi Risma's Research (2017) demonstrated that Busy Books are an effective teaching aid for enhancing the reading skills of children aged five to six years (Nilmayani, Zulkifli, & Risma, 2017).

Azra Aulia Ulfah and Elva Rahmah's Study (2017) found that Busy Books, especially those designed for developing reading skills, are valuable resources for educators in creating diverse and engaging teaching and learning experiences. When educators used Busy Books in the classroom, students exhibited positive changes. For instance, students expressed interest in the colorful, flannel Busy Books and eagerly interacted with the content. Their reading abilities improved significantly, with students going from not being able to read picture names to confidently and loudly naming the pictures. This interactive approach, combined with activities that encouraged students to describe the images they created, resulted in students having the capability to narrate stories from their own drawings. This study categorized the Busy Book as effective for enhancing students' vocabulary and reading skills (Ulfah & Rahmah, 2017).

Lela Nurlaela's Research (2018) focused on developing a Busy Book made from flannel fabric, designed to stimulate language development in young students. The Busy Book featured a transportation theme with images of various modes of transport, including air, land, and sea vehicles. The activities within the Busy Book were intended to introduce the alphabet and enhance students' speaking abilities through reading, naming, and retelling the images. The Busy Book received high approval ratings from media and subject matter experts, further confirming its "Highly Suitable" status for teaching young students (Nurlaela, 2018).

Elika Rizki, Riza Oktariana, and Fitriah Hayati's Research (2021) demonstrated that the stages of Busy Book development, based on expert assessments, were considered highly valid, leading to a categorization of "Highly Suitable" for both educators and students. The study involved children aged five to

six years in activities such as creating patterns from shapes found in the Busy Book. The validation process also found that activities related to storytelling and pasting were highly suitable for teaching and learning using Busy Books. Overall, the Busy Book, developed and validated in this study, is highly recommended as a teaching aid for early childhood education, particularly for introducing numbers (Rizki, Oktariana, & Hayati, 2021).

The research findings from various journals above indicate that Busy Books can stimulate students' ability to memorize alphabet symbols and pronunciation, arrange alphabets into words, and form meaningful sentences. The activities in Busy Books are beneficial for young learners as they can practice storytelling and reading images within the Busy Book.

Based on these results, it can be understood that a Busy Book is an instructional aid in the form of a book with the primary material being flannel fabric. It is designed with colorful pages that consist of comprehensive activities with corresponding and appropriate images for the students. Using a Busy Book is advantageous for enhancing students' language skills because the engaging activities within it can stimulate students to remember symbols and alphabet pronunciation, combine letters to form words, and then string words into meaningful sentences.

CONCLUSION

The Busy Book is an instructional aid designed with colorful and vibrant flannel fabric, containing various engaging activities. It offers a variety of simple play-based activities to enhance the language skills of young students. The use of Busy Books with activities such as mazes, puzzles, tracing, reading, storytelling, and others can make vocabulary learning more meaningful, particularly focusing on themes like colors, animals, numbers, and shapes. This research concludes that using Busy Books as instructional aids in early childhood education is beneficial for improving students' language skills. Each page of a Busy Book consists of various engaging activities complemented by colorful images, effectively capturing students' interest in learning and stimulating their ability to recognize symbols, pronounce the alphabet, combine letters into words, and then form sentences with meaning.

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