

THE APPLICATION OF PUZZLE GAMES TO IMPROVE LINGUISTIC INTELLIGENCE

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ABSTRACT

Linguistic competence is the ability to use written and spoken forms of language. Playing puzzles, children can compose words through puzzle media, and can name animals through the puzzle media. With the application of puzzle games can improve linguistic intelligence and is expected to help language development in children. Improving children's linguistic competence through play at As-Sayyidi Kindergarten is the purpose of this study. This kind of research is known as classroom research. The findings showed that children's proficiency in the target language can be improved through play, with levels I and II reaching 50% and 75% respectively. The main finding of this study is that teaching children to play puzzles can improve their language skills.



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INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECED) helps children develop in all areas. Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a coaching effort aimed at children from birth to six years of age which is carried out through providing educational stimuli to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children have readiness to enter further education, in accordance with Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (Fitria, 2020). Early childhood education (PAUD) stimulates the physical, spiritual (moral and spiritual), motor, intellectual, emotional, and social development of children from birth to six years of age (Sitorus et al., 2023). Linguistic intelligence, according to Atika Dhini Nasution (2023), is the ability to use language, including one's mother tongue, to communicate thoughts and understand others. Linguistic intelligence is the ability to use language to communicate oneself and thoughts clearly in written and spoken form (Atika Dhini Insani Nasution et al., 2023). Linguistic intelligence is the proficiency in using words. Children with high linguistic intelligence are good at expressing thoughts, telling stories, and listening or reading. Invite children to talk, read stories, play letters

and numbers, string stories, discuss, role play, listen to nursery rhymes, and others to improve linguistic intelligence (Harahap, Lubis, Arianto, Lubis, & Atiqoh, 2023). Play improves language intelligence. According to Suarca Soetjiningsih in (Astuti, 2016) language intelligence includes understanding phonology, semantics, and pragmatics to help people remember and explain information. Media and games can improve language intelligence (Tabi'in, 2017).

In the first year of high school, the information acquisition rate reaches 80%, or in other words, from the first year of high school to the second year, the information acquisition rate does not fall below 20%. Therefore, childhood is called the golden age. Near early childhood intelligence is needed with various types of stimulation. Language competence is one of the areas that need to be improved (Sugiarto, 2021). The development of children's language skills is an integral part of their overall growth and serves as a foundation for further growth. This development extends the critical period when resources are needed for potential to grow. In daily life, humans rely on language skills (lingual proficiency) and must be able to use language skills (lingual proficiency) as a means of communication; with these skills, they will more easily live together, communicate effectively, and adapt to everyday life. forest. The development of linguistic competence should start from this area because it covers so many important aspects of human life (ADI Nasution et al., 2023).

The ability to use words correctly is linguistic competence. Children who are good at expressing opinions, enjoy telling stories, listen attentively, and read aloud have good linguistic intelligence. Some things that can be done to improve children's verbal abilities include teaching them to read, write, play catch and other matching games, discuss topics, play games, and teach them songs such as singing together. Improving linguistic intelligence can be done through play (Suhartati, 2016). As a linguist, you should also understand phonetics, semantics and pragmatics, which are tools that can help you understand and explain information better.

Linguistic intelligence can be optimized in many ways, including through the use of media and games. Play is a fundamental activity that children do either alone or in groups with adults, such as teachers, classmates, and relatives, and is fun and spontaneous because it does not require planning. Children can understand rules, work together, and interact by playing. Armstrong in (Aidil, 2018) suggests four indicators of linguistic intelligence that refer to Gardner's theory, namely rhetoric (influencing others to take action or action by using language, mnemonics / memorization (using language to master and remember information), explanation (using language to convey / provide information), and metabases (using language to analyze the language itself). According to (Rohmah, 2016) language intelligence has indicators, namely the ability to use words effectively, either orally or in writing, the ability to manipulate language structure/syntax, sound/phonology in language, language/semantic meaning, and practical/pragmatic use of language (Sit, 2021).

It is the most important and fundamental step in the development and improvement of human life. This period is compared to several important basic periods in the child's life from the next stage of development until the end of his life. There is a golden (typical) period when children are still young. There are many concepts and facts that explain the period of child development when the maximum potential is realized. There are a number of concepts that are compared to children of the same age, including exploration, identification/imitation, feeding, play, and the first year of life. In contrast, childhood is a critical period sometimes known as the golden age, which is a time when a child's potential cannot be fully developed until childhood. In the following golden age, it fails to fulfill certain potentials required for the child's next stage of development. Thus, this grace period can only be experienced once and cannot be extended.

The first stage of life development includes the first stage of linguistic competence, and serves as the foundation for the next stage of development. In human life, linguistic competence (language) is an absolute necessity; linguistic competence (language) must be able to be used as a means of communication so that individuals can easily adapt to their environment. The development of linguistic competence must start from this field because it covers so many important aspects in people's lives (Zahro & Kusrini, 2018). Competence in language refers to the ability to use and develop language in general, as well as to change the spelling of words effectively, both written and spoken. This certainty will also help you succeed in politics and lobbying. For example, being creative at home, writing stories about fantasies, jokes, and short stories, reading books at night, making word and picture games, enjoying playing Scrabble or other word games, and so on. Occupations that fall into this category include: teachers, public speakers, movie crews, television show producers, writers, etc.

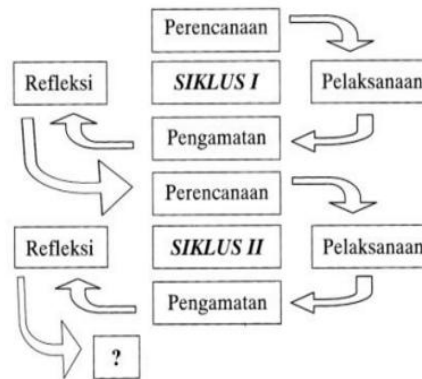
Gardner observed that language intelligence in early childhood in the future is to observe readiness and ability to speak, observe children's ability to joke with words and appreciate comedy, observe classroom activities, observe children's participation in letter games, and observe excitement. Regarding books and their reading and writing challenges (Masganti, Arlina, & Widai, 2021). In PAUD, children learn best when they play, thus providing them with structured learning time and fun learning experiences. Play is also one way of teaching material through activities that include educational units that can improve children's concentration and self-control, making learning more enjoyable and less stressful for them.

Playing games can help children develop their motor skills and cognitive abilities simultaneously. One of the benefits of exercise for children is the development of their motor skills. One activity that helps children develop their brain is playing puzzle games. Because, playing is one of the needs of children, and learning should be fun and conceptual. Playing puzzle games can help children develop core skills such as counting, estimating, and spelling. Children will have a better time and understand their teachers' messages more easily if the learning environment is conducive to their needs (Handayani, 2022).

According to Atika, et al, puzzles are one of the learning tools for learning writing skills. This media is very easy to make and use by teachers at all levels, both beginner, intermediate, and advanced, and the material can also be selected according to the learning objectives (Pulungan, 2019). One of the language games that can be used to relieve stress and improve reading comprehension is puzzles. According to Suarca 2016, TTS or also called crossword puzzle is a type of game where players are required to fill in the blanks (also called white boxes) with letters that comprise a word based on the information provided (Suarca, Soetjningsih, & Ardjana, 2016). These special letters contain phrases that serve as answers to the following questions.

METHODS

The researcher in this study used the model developed by Kemmis and Tanggart and the action research method to produce a series of findings based on action. The object of this research focuses on the use of word games to improve children's language skills. This research was conducted at As-Sayyidi Kindergarten which is located in Laut Dendang Kec. Percut Sei Tuan. The research started on November 29th and 30th, 2023. This research is a two-sigma research on Teaching and Learning (PTK). PTK consists of eight activities implemented throughout the year. Each cycle consists of three main activities: planning (planning), action (implementation), observation (observation), and reflection (reflection). Nonetheless, the author's research methodology is based on the following assumptions (Adeniran in (Sugiarto, 2021)):



Picture 1.
Classroom Research Model

In this study, the data collection techniques used a variety of different approaches to obtain valid and objective research results from previous studies. The techniques used are observation and interview. The data analysis technique in this study is to determine the success or failure of the research. This can be seen from the varying percentage of yield that will be produced..

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100\% \quad (1)$$

Description:

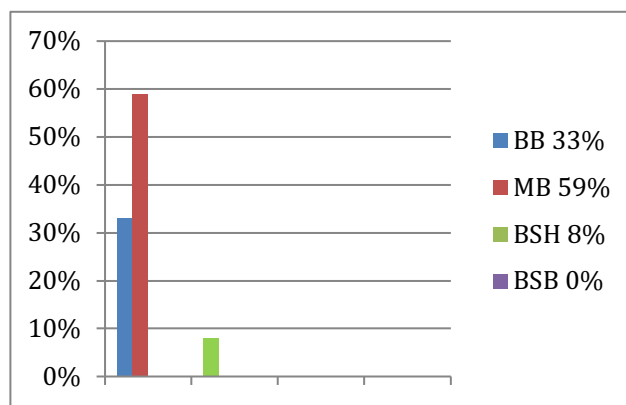
P : Percentage gain

f : Number of indicator achievements

n : Total number of indicators

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of collecting initial data at As-Sayyidi Kindergarten was to gather information before the research with a sample size of twelve students could begin. The data used is observation, which is needed by researchers to find out the facts needed for reference regarding learning improvements on existing channels. The learning process begins with the initial activity and ends with the completion of the task. The research project is a process carried out in school research, and the implementation is carried out according to the teaching idea. In general, children have language skills, but the development is not optimally developed because it is very influential in the environment..



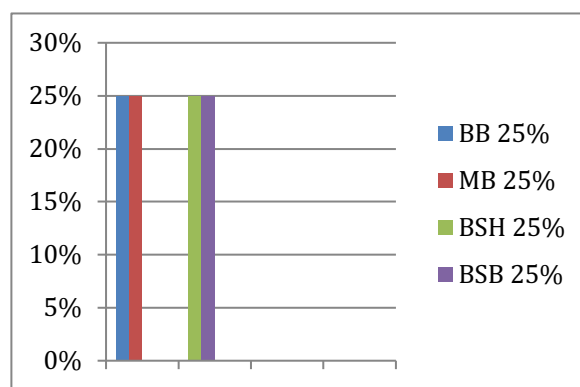
Histogram I.
Pre-Classroom Condition

Pre-cycle

During the observation we made observations of the class that we will take the research sample, and during the observation we saw that the children were able to recognize letters but the children were not able to remember letters that were the same shape. For example, in the small letter b and the small letter d, children have not been able to distinguish them. So we took the initiative to make a picture puzzle that has provided the names of letters and sentences to be pasted on the crossword board that we have made. So in addition to honing children's language skills and playing puzzles, we also train children's memory about the differences in letters that are almost the same in writing.

Cycle I

In cycle I of early childhood language development, researchers interpreted the general theme of animals that researchers brought up and then the children guessed the animal puzzles that the researchers had presented. The results of this first cycle were only 6 children out of 12 children who showed the ability to guess animal puzzles.



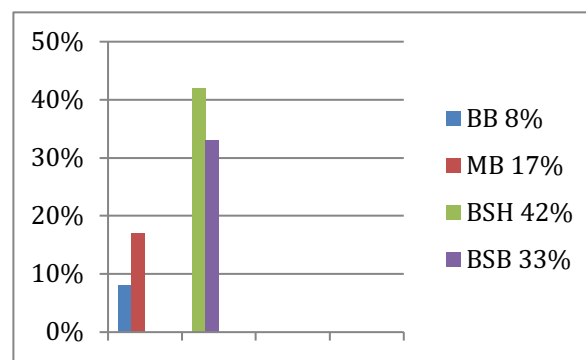
Histogram 2.
Cycle I Condition

The results showed an increase in the number of children attending school, although the results were not optimal; initially, only 50% of the children received treatment that improved their health as expected. Therefore, the second phase will begin with a reflection of the results because

it has not yet achieved success. The early childhood group is generally the preschool group. Imitating, asking questions, doing group exercises, exploring, in general, is done by children aged 2 to 4 years who are still excited and want to play to explore their energy.

Cycle II

Researchers conducted experiments to improve children's language competence based on observations of the second situation. The researcher did the work by discussing, evaluating, and observing the learning process and any problems that might arise. In order for there to be an increase in children's language competence, researchers also look at the results of observations. The results of the observation analysis of the improvement of linguistic competence of second semester students can be seen in the graph below.



Histogram 3.
Cycle II Condition

The results showed that the number of children could increase further; initially, there were only six children, and 75 percent of them grew well and met expectations. Compared to the I-slip of 50%. Playing matching games can help children improve their language skills. The study could not be continued based on these results because the results of the intellectual process met the success criteria.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study are summarized based on the discussion on the development of children's language skills can be improved by using picture word games. Before the action, the action of cycle I to cycle II, the percentage of linguistic intelligence aspects of children can be seen from the percentage of skills of each respondent. From this percentage it can be concluded that the average level of competence in children's language acquisition reached 50% in the first semester, then increased to 75% in the second semester.

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