



The Use of Letter Puzzle Media in Improving Reading Skill in Low Grade Student at SDN 02 Banglarangan

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Abstract. The main problem in this study is whether the use of letter puzzle media can improve the reading skills of low-grade students at SDN 02 Banglarangan. This research aimed to enhance the reading abilities of elementary school lower-grade students through the utilization of letter puzzle media at SDN 02 Banglarangan. The method employed in this study was the classroom action research method. This research is included in descriptive qualitative research. The data collection techniques used were observation. The research was conducted from March to June 2023. The results of this study showed an increase in students' reading skills seen from pre-cycle data which showed only 62.7% of low grade students had good reading skills, but after cycle 1 it increased to 74.4% of low grade students who had good reading skills. In cycle 2 it increased again so that 90.6% of low grade students had good reading skills. Based on this data, it can be said that the use of letter puzzle media can improve reading skills in low grade students. Through applying letter puzzle media, students found it easier to recognize letters, construct words, and read. Additionally, students exhibited heightened enthusiasm and motivation due to the media's engaging, colorful, illustrated, and tactile nature. This hands-on approach allowed students to engage directly in learning.

Keywords: Media, Letter Puzzle, Reading Abilities.

1 Introduction

The National Education Number 20 of 2003, Article 1, Paragraph 1 states that education is a conscious effort of humans to develop their own potential through the learning process [1]. Through the education process, individuals are expected to develop their potential and become active, creative, independent, and possess useful knowledge for life. The purpose of education is to realize and develop the existing human potential in the context of diversity, morality, individuality/personality, sociality, and culture comprehensively and integratively [2]. Education is a process of receiving and providing information to develop one's potential, implemented using various models, methods, and media to achieve objectives. Educational goals will be achieved if students are able to understand the knowledge provided, to understand a knowledge well students must have good reading skills as well.

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Reading is an activity of comprehending something through the content of the text. Reading is an activity that a person does through oral or speech that can make it easier to explore and understand information from books, newspapers, and other reading media [3]. Reading is a process carried out to obtain a message conveyed through spoken or written words [1]. In reading, it is important for students to understand the meaning of each word in the text so that information can be received correctly and effectively. The purpose of reading will affect the type of reading chosen [4]. However, not all students can have the ability to read quickly, as each student has different characteristics and abilities, especially in elementary school students. The ability to read in children develops in several stages. Divides the stages of development into four parts, namely: 1] The stage of awareness of writing 2] The stage of reading pictures 3] The stage of reading recognition 4] The stage of fluent reading [5].

At this stage, students still find it difficult to comprehend things independently, so the role of teachers and the methods used significantly influence the learning process. Literacy learning should be carried out through fun activities so that the learning carried out can increase students' love of reading activities [6]. The importance of literacy skills of primary school children will provide information related to reading and writing difficulties and writing difficulties [7]. It is crucial for teachers to understand the abilities of each student in comprehending and participating in the learning process, as not all students have the same abilities, both in the cognitive and psychomotor domains. Letters and words are something abstract for children, therefore teachers and parents can make it real in a simple way, namely by using fun ways with media that are interesting to children [8]. In reality the learning process in the classroom is directed at children's ability to memorize information, children are forced to remember without connecting information with existing media. And sometimes teachers do not innovate the learning system by using pictures or media that are in accordance with the learning material so that children can absorb it well [4]. This causes the reading learning process to be unpleasant.

There are several ways to assist children in improving their reading abilities, and one of them is through the use of appropriate and engaging media. Learning media are tools, approaches, and tactics used in the classroom to improve communication and engagement between teachers and students [9]. Media selection can be done in three ways: 1] the media must be right on target. 2] the media must be able to describe the material. 3] the media must be flexible. 4] the media has learning quality [10]. In addition, in the process of introducing reading, if it is delivered through games and interesting activities, children do not feel forced to learn. This approach ensures that the learning process becomes more fun and is perceived as play [11].

Educational media is an interconnected part of teaching methods and strategies within the learning system. The role of media is crucial in the learning process, as educational media serves as an intermediary to convey information in a way that is easily comprehensible and understandable for students. The functions or uses of media include: [1] clarifying message presentation that is too verbalistic, [2] overcoming limitations of time, space, and sensory capacity, [3] addressing passive attitudes in children, [4] utilizing the unique nature of each medium to overcome differences in environment and experiences [12]. Media plays a significant role in the learning process, especially

in elementary education, where students greatly benefit from media as tools to comprehend the provided information. Furthermore, educational media also helps enhance students' abilities to engage with various topics, including fundamental skills such as letter recognition and reading. One influential medium in improving reading skills among elementary school students is letter puzzle media [13].

Puzzle is a game in which pieces of pictures are arranged to produce a complete picture. He found that the puzzle learning media could also be used as a learning media after that. It can be used to help children improve their reading skills [14]. Playing with letter puzzle media is one approach that is in accordance with the characteristics and growth and development of children [15]. Letter puzzle media is commonly found in schools, yet many teachers still haven't fully utilized its potential in the classroom. Letter puzzle media provides letter pieces along with corresponding images, which can be arranged to form words and matching images. The use of letter puzzle media involves inviting students to arrange the letters to create words that correspond to the provided images. Letter puzzle media engages students, combining focus and stimuli to make decisions within a play-and-learn format. In the cognitive domain, the use of puzzle media is essential; it not only brings enjoyment to students through play but also helps them memorize and recall events through the puzzle game [16]

2 Methods

The method used in this research is applying the Classroom Action Research method, referring to Kurt Lewin's model, which consists of 2 cycles and has a total of 4 stages comprising planning, action, observation, and reflection

2.1 Subjects and Research Location

The subjects of this study were 16 students consisting of grade 1, grade 2 and grade 3 students who did not have the ability to read. This research was conducted at SDN 02 Banglarangan which is located at Jl. Banglarangan, Kec. Ampelgading, Kab. Pemalang, Central Java.

2.2 Research Techniques and Instruments

In this study, to obtain information, several techniques were used in data collection, including: interview techniques, observation and documentation studies. The interview technique was carried out to explore information through grade 1, grade 2 and grade 3 teachers at SDN 02 Banglarangan, besides that the researcher also made observations and observations of students who did not have the ability to read in accordance with the data generated from interviews with teachers.

Table 1. Reading Ability Instrument.

Variables	Subvariables	Indicators
Cycle I Beginning Reading	Recognise symbols and letter shapes	Able to mention the given letter symbol Able to show the location of the letter symbol mentioned
Cycle II Literal Reading	Read and compose words according to the picture	Able to arrange words according to the pictures on the puzzle board Able to read the word arranged on the puzzle board

2.3 Research Techniques and Instruments

The success criteria in this study are indicated by the ability of students to achieve instrument indicators in cycle I and cycle II.

2.4 Data Analysis Technique

- a. Data Reduction
Data reduction is summarizing the data collected from the field and then summarizing it to make it easier to understand.
- b. Displaying data
Displaying data is presenting data in the form of tables and matrices to make it easier for research to see the improvement of reading skills in each cycle.
- c. Conclusion Drawing/Verification
This stage is the stage of concluding the research results..

3 Result and Discussion

The results of this study reveal that the letter puzzle media is capable of enhancing reading proficiency among elementary school students in Class 2 at State Elementary School 02 Banglarangan. The implementation of the letter puzzle media over a period of 3 months through 2 cycles resulted in positive outcomes, as evidenced by a reduction in the percentage of students lacking reading proficiency from an initial 37.2% to 9.3%..

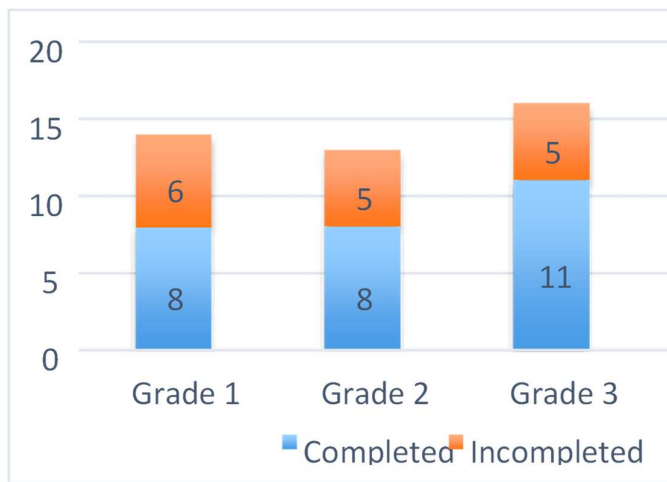


Fig. 1. Pre-cycle

During the first cycle, the utilization of letter puzzle media involved introducing each letter segment to the students, followed by requesting the students memorize each letter's names and forms. This cycle yielded results where the number of students lacking reading proficiency reduced from 16 students to 11 students.

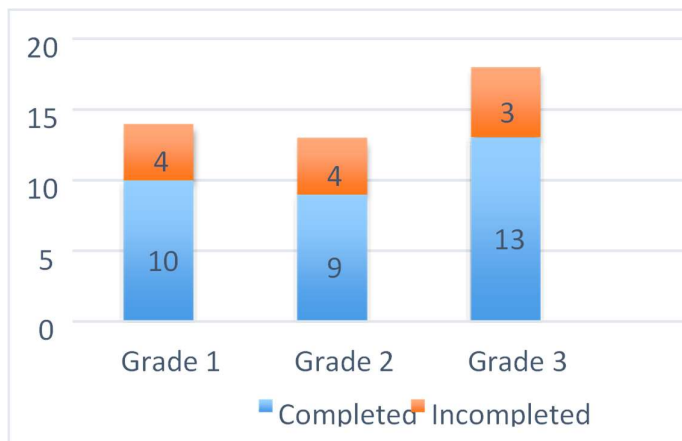


Fig. 2. Cycle I

Table 2. Result implementation of the letter puzzle media in March-April

No	Name	Class	Action	Result
1.	B.A	1	Introduced letters through letter pieces in the letter puzzle media.	Only able to memorize vowel letters (a, i, u, e, o)
2.	F. I	1		Can memorize letters but not fluent yet
3.	F.S	1		Only able to memorize vowel letters (a, i, u, e, o)
4.	R.N	1		Already recognizes letters and understands how to compose letters into words.
5.	F.N	1		Already recognizes letters and understands how to compose letters into words.
6.	Y.F	1		No result yet
7.	S.F	2		Can memorize letters but not fluent yet
8.	A.B	2		Already recognizes letters and understands how to compose letters into words
9.	F.N	2		No result yet
10.	F.H	2		Can memorize letters but not fluent yet
11.	A.A	2		Can memorize letters but not fluent yet
12.	A.G	3		Already recognizes letters and understands how to compose letters into words.
13.	P.A	3		Can memorize letters but not fluent yet
14.	H.R	3		Can memorize letters but not fluent yet
15.	F.R	3		Already recognizes letters and understands how to compose letters into words.
16.	N.L	3		Can memorize letters but not fluent yet

In the second cycle, the utilization of letter puzzle media involved guiding the students to assemble letters into words according to the images presented in the puzzle media. In this second cycle, the number of students lacking reading proficiency decreased to 4 students.

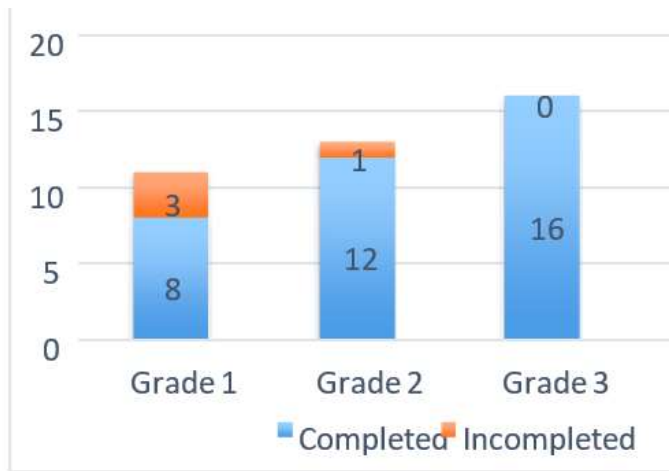


Fig. 3. Cycle II

Table 2. Reading Ability Instrument.. Result implementation of the letter puzzle media in April-May

No	Name	Class	Action	Result
1.	B.A	1	Constructing words based on Pictures provided in the letterpuzzle media	Unable to construct words yet and still in the phase of memorizing letters
2.	F. I	1		Can construct words based on pictures accurately
3.	F.S	1		Unable to construct words yet and still in the phase of memorizing letters
4.	R.N	1		Can construct words based on pictures accurately
5.	F.N	1		Can construct words based on pictures accurately
6.	Y.F	1		Unable to construct words yet and still in the phase of memorizing letters
7.	S.F	2		Can construct words based on pictures accurately
8.	A.B	2		Can construct words based on pictures accurately
9.	F.N	2		Can construct words based on pictures accurately
10.	F.H	2		Unable to construct words yet and still in the phase of memorizing letters
11.	A.A	2		Already able to read sentences fluently

12.	A.G	3	Can construct words based on pictures accurately
13.	P.A	3	Can construct words based on pictures accurately
14.	H.R	3	Can construct words based on pictures accurately
15.	F.R	3	Can construct words based on pictures accurately
16.	N.L	3	Can construct words based on pictures accurately

The outcomes of the combined actions in the two cycles undertaken by the researcher demonstrate that the utilization of letter puzzle media is indeed effective in enhancing reading proficiency among lower-grade students at State Elementary School 02 Banglarangan.

In addition to its impact on reducing the number of students with insufficient reading abilities, the utilization of letter puzzle media also contributes to an increase in student learning motivation. By incorporating letter puzzle media into learning, students' learning activities are enhanced as they actively engage in assembling words and writing them directly. This engagement occurs both cognitively and physically, as the playful and enjoyable elements of the puzzles stimulate their participation [9].

In this section we will discuss the results of the research in general in the form of qualitative analysis results. Based on the indicators that have been applied, namely the indicators of the success of this class action research to determine the extent of improvement in the reading ability of low-grade students using letter puzzle media at SDN 02 Banglarangan. Based on the results of data analysis carried out in cycle I and cycle II, it shows that the reading ability of low-grade students at SDN 02 Banglarangan has improved when using letter puzzle media.

In cycle 1, the activity was carried out by engaging students in recognizing letter pieces within the letter puzzles. Students were asked to mention the letter pieces ranging from A to Z, then arrange them in order and memorize them. The activities in cycle 1 were conducted for 1.5 months, specifically from mid-March to April 2023. By the end of this cycle, students were capable of recognizing and memorizing the letters sequentially and accurately. As a result, the intervention proceeded to cycle 2.

In cycle 2, the activity was conducted by guiding students to assemble the letter pieces into words based on the assistance of images displayed on the puzzle board. Cycle 2 took place for 1.5 months, specifically from early May to mid-April 2023. By the end of cycle 2, students were capable of reading words and sentences quite proficiently, and some students could even read sentences fluently.

The results of this study are in line with research conducted by entitled *The Use of Letter Puzzle Media in Improving Reading Skills. The Beginning of Elementary School Level 1 Learners*. The study states that letter puzzle media is considered to be able to solve the problem of students' initial reading difficulties because this media is an innovative, interesting and fun media for grade 1 elementary school students. Playing using letter puzzle media is one of the approaches that is suitable for the characteristics and

development of children. In addition, the results of the study showed an increase in beginning reading skills by using letter puzzle media in grade 1 elementary school students around the researcher's environment [17]. In addition, the results of research from Islamiyah, with the title *The Effect of Scramble Cooperative Learning Model Assisted by Puzzle Media on the Early Reading Ability of Indonesian Language Elementary School Students* stated that there was a significant effect of the application of cooperative learning models assisted by puzzle media on the early reading ability of grade II students at Al-Fatih Integrated Islamic Elementary School, Pangkep Regency [2]. This is in line with the results of research with the title *The Effect of Letter Puzzle Media on the Ability to Recognize Letters in Early Childhood 4-5 Years in Tk Islam Hanifa Karawang* states that there is an average difference between pretest and posttest, so it can be concluded that Letter Puzzle media has a significant effect on the ability to recognize letters in early childhood. -5 at Hanifa Islamic Kindergarten, Karawang [13]. Other research explains that, it is believed that this puzzle learning media will help children improve their letter recognition skills, and teachers can use this puzzle learning media as a complement to classroom learning. This can be seen in the increase in the ability to recognize children's letters due to the use of this application-based puzzle learning material. [18].

4 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to assist teachers in enhancing the reading abilities of low-grade students at State Elementary School 02 Banglarangan using letter puzzle media. Letter puzzle media is a tool that provides letter pieces along with corresponding images, which can then be arranged to form matching words and images. The utilization of letter puzzle media has been proven effective in improving the reading abilities of low-grade students at State Elementary School 02 Banglarangan. This is evidenced by the decrease in the number of students lacking reading skills, from an initial 37.2% to only 9.3%. In Cycle 1, the number of students lacking reading skills decreased from 16 students to 11 students, and by Cycle 2, this number was further reduced to only 4 students. Conducted over a span of 3 months through 2 cycles, this research not only yielded results in terms of improved reading abilities but also saw an increase in student motivation and engagement. The use of letter puzzle media heightened student enthusiasm and facilitated easier recognition and arrangement of letters to form words.

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