

Implementing Flashcard to Improve the Early Reading Skill

Nuligar Hatiningsih
University of Muhammadiyah Malang
nuligarhati@umm.ac.id

Putri Adriyati
University of Muhammadiyah Malang
putriadriyatii@gmail.com

Abstract. Early reading skill has important positions and roles in the human life and. This ability becomes a media for students to have interactive abilities in learning process among their friends and teachers. Students will face more barriers to learn the next level of reading and writing when their reading skill is defectively indicated. Reading is an activity that can stimulate the brain and obtain more vocabularies so that students are expected to concentrate well. The early reading skills can be improved through the use of attractive and innovative media. The purpose of this aimed to identify whether or not the flashcard can improve the early reading skills. In this current research, the writers used single subject of experimental design. The research subject was a student who has reading difficulties. So as to gather the data, observation was employed in line with descriptive graph analysis. The result has shown that the implementation of flashcard helps student to improve the early reading skills.

Keywords: Flashcard, early reading skills

Introduction

Middle childhood is a period of exploring everything where discovering, developing and growing are likely found. This stage is regarded as crucial for children because their social skills will be well-developed. Moreover, it is also important to keep an eye on their development. Furthermore, children must be trained in order to obtain matured condition in emotional, social and cognitive aspects (Berk, L. E, 2012). So as to increase these potential aspects, many parents send their children to either formal or non-formal education. Formal education starts from playgrounds, kindergartens, elementary schools, junior high schools, senior high schools, and universities. Whereas, non-formal education is usually held outside the formal education unit (Prianto, 2011).

Kindergarten is basically an initial literacy development of preschool children. It is because the literacy skills of preschool children are predictors of their literary skills at elementary school level (Levy, Gong, Hessels, Evans, & Jared, 2006). On the other hand, good literacy skills of preschoolers will help them to read more at ease and will increase their reading ability at higher school levels. Senechal et. Al (1998) explain that condition of fluent reading children who will affect he children learning process in addressing problems they face in real life.

Initial reading skill plays an important role in the human life (Praxis, 2003). Subsequently, reading is a bridge for students to have interactive and integrated abilities in the learning process among teachers and students. Therefore, early reading skill is very important in the education process at school (Levy et al., 2006). Children will face numerous barriers in the future if the reading ability in the early education unit is considered inadequate (Diamond & Baroody, 2013).

Reading is an activity that can stimulate the children's' brain to perform well. Moreover, through reading, children may are able to attain excellent academic performance, develop great communication skills, and collect vocabulary that help them to communicate well (Goodchild, 2006). Likewise, excellent academic performance acquired by students through reading will assist them to understand other subjects.

Initial reading activities should be given by exciting and interesting media. The ability to read early can be improved by implementing interesting and eye-catching media (Both-de Vries& Bus, 2010). Kornell (2009) elucidates that flashcard is one of the learning media that can be used to improve the initial reading skills. Flashcard is a small card which contains pictures, text, or symbols that reminds and guides students' imagination (Doman G. & Doman J., 2006).

In addition, Kupzyk et. Al (2011) states that flashcard is a learning media in the form of a picture card with a size of about 25 cm x 30 cm. Images are displayed in the form of hand drawings, photos, or existing images attached on the sheets of card. The flashcard provides advantages in its practicality in making and using. It is easy to remember because the images are colourful and they attract student's attention.

The flashcard which contains words or a series of letters can be described through images. This flashcard can be used to introduce words to subject by using the process of introducing letter sounds. For example, there is a picture of a book and its written form "book". At first, students are asked to see the picture and later teacher gives example of how to pronounce it. This is given in order to attract more attention of students as they may be bored and not interested in the media only made up by letters (Kupzyk et Al., 2011).

Learning activities followed by attractive flashcard as a media can stimulate students to develop their initial reading skills. Finding out on the use of flashcard media for improving the early reading skills is important to study. From this research, it is expected for teachers and parents to obtain new innovation in using effective media to improve initial reading skills of the children.

Literature Review

Early reading skills

de Vries & Bus (2010) have stated that reading is a type of receptive written ability that by reading, somebody will be able to obtain information, gain knowledge and acquire new experiences. Thus, reading becomes an important element for the development of human knowledge.

In addition, the early reading skill in elementary school students is defined as the ability to change written symbols or sounds into meaningful sounds. Early reading skill is ability of students to recognize the symbol of writing, various sets of letters, syllables in a word or sentence with the correct use of pronunciation and intonation. This research is in accordance with the study accomplished by Purcell-Gates et Al (2007). They explain that early reading ability can recite written symbols into meaningful sounds for further reading. Therefore, early reading skill is important since the earliest time of a child (Doman G. & Doman J., 2006).

There are aspects to pay attention to in improving the early reading skills, including; accuracy of uttering letters, fairness of pronunciation, smoothness and clarity of voice (Praxis, 2003).

Flashcard

Doman G.& Doman J., (2006) who are known as the founders of the Institute for the Achievement of Human Potential (IAHP), have introduced the concept of teaching based on the level of the limited child's brain development. The Glenn Doman method is started from the concept of teaching reading for babies is very suitable for children with mental retardation who experience a delay of reading. They believe that conventional teaching methods greatly exploit children's passion to have other skills and knowledge.

According to their age, children still have limitations that cannot be imposed. For instance, when an adult whispers to an 18-month-old baby, he will not respond because his listening capability has not developed enough to catch the whisper. In another case, the child cannot also read clearly because his visual ability has not well-developed to see lowercase letters. Those are the reasons why presenting cards with bright colours and large images are important. This method can be employed for toddlers who are in between 10 to 18 months old.

Reggio-Emilia Approach

This method has begun to be well-known since the 1960s in Italy, based on children involvement to participate in the learning process. Teaching activity is

focused on the length of the child's learning period through exploration of an object and children fulfil their curiosity about the object to the maximum. Children are trained to observe things based on learning plans and planned time.

In addition, Kupzyk et. Al (2011) explain that flashcard is a learning media in the form of a small card which contains images, text, or symbolic signs that reminds or guides students to do something related to the picture. Furthermore, flashcard is a learning media in the form of a 25 cm x 30 cm picture card. The pictures on the flashcard are series of messages presented with information on each picture. It is a clue to help students to remind or direct to something related to the images on the card (Ruhaena, 2005).

Indriana (2011) states that flashcard media provides advantages for the reason that it is comfortable to carry due to its size and easy in making and implementing. In addition, flashcard media is also easy to remember because the presented images are colourful, attractive and easy to remember. Likewise, this media also provides better long-term memory dealing with the contains in the cards. Meanwhile, it is also possible to be used as an eye-catching learning media and enjoyable playing cards. Based on above statements, there is a research question arises, namely can flashcards improve the early reading skills?

Methods

This current study used a single subject of experimental design which evaluates the effect of a treatment to a single case. This research design was recruited for the reason it is aimed to focus on the examination on cognitive changes in an individual or a few individuals (Robinson, Simpson, &Hott, 2017). A-B-A design category was employed in order to recognize the causal relation between independent variables and dependent variables. The A-B-A design was carried out by adding the second starting point phase after the treatment phase (Latipun, 2004), which the starting point phase A1 (pre-test) was condition before the treatment was given. Meanwhile, B was the treatment phase when treatment was given, and the starting point phase A2 (test post) was after intervention.

In this study, there was a seven-year-old-child as a research subject who experienced reading delays. The method used was purposive sampling method, such as the selection of samples in accordance with the purpose of the researcher (Latipun, 2002).

There were two variables employed, namely the independent variable (flashcard) and the dependent variable (reading skills). Flashcard was a learning media in the form of a small card contained of images, text, or symbolic signs that reminded or guided students to do something related to the picture. In addition, flashcard was a learning media in the form of a 25 cm x 30 cm picture card. The pictures on the flashcard were a series of words presented with information on each picture. This was attached to help students to remind or direct

them to perform something related to the image on the card. Whereas, early reading skills were the ability to change written symbols or sounds into meaningful sounds and measured by post-test.

In this study, a direct observation to record the data of the dependent variable at the time of an event or behaviour was selected. Observations were performed during pre-test (starting point phase A1) and during treatment (intervention phase B) and at the time of post-test (starting point phase A2). In the pre-test (starting point A1), observation was conducted to determine the initial state of the subject before being treated. It was aimed to obtain initial data. This starting point phase was conducted by giving questions to the subject. Furthermore, during the treatment period (intervention phase), the observation was conducted to determine the development of the subject in reading, and the post-test (starting point A2) was carried out to determine the reading progress of the subject after intervention.

The preparation phase including the making of a research design in the form of a research proposal, problems asked by the writers, selected and determined the subject and place of research. The researchers compiled a schedule of activities and prepared a research instrument in the form of a flash card. Then, writers prepared the equipment needed in the implementation.

After the preparation phase completed, writers continued proceeding the implementation phase, including data collection by using observation and pre-test techniques. Before performing the intervention, the researchers observed the subject to find out the starting point data of each subject. After the initial data was obtained, researchers made flash cards intervention according to the activity schedule prepared by the researchers. This intervention was used as treatment phase. In this phase, the subject was given a treatment. The intervention would be carried out in 3 sessions. To find out the effect of the given treatment, researchers gave a question after intervening and comparing the subject's condition from different time period. The questions were given during the intervention in order to find out the results differences.

After the data was collected, data analysis was performed to obtain the results of treatment. The obtained data were written, reduced (on average) and analysed quantitatively. Furthermore, the data were classified based on its use. In addition, the effect of flash card treatments would be identified by using comparison of the pre-test and post-test results to determine the differences before and after the intervention was given. Graphical and descriptive data analysis techniques were recruited to determine whether or not there were differences found in the early reading skills before and after the intervention. Then, it was also used to prove the existing hypothesis that would be described in simple, clear and comprehensible language (Latipun, 2004).

Research result

The followings are characteristics of subject involved in the research with the flashcard method. Characteristics

of the research subject are adjusted to the subject selection method, by using purposive sampling. Researchers use a seven-year-old-male children as a subject.

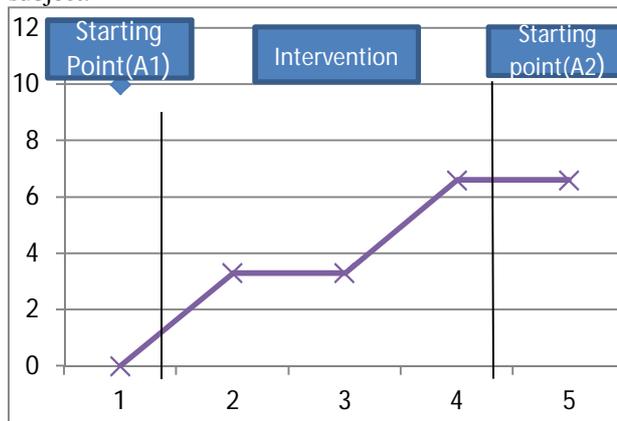


Figure 1. Changes in the early reading skills improvement of TM subject

Based on the picture in graph 1, there is an upsurge in the early reading skills of the TM subject. It can be seen from the change of the starting point A1 to the starting point A2. The starting point A1 is the condition before treatment is given. At starting point A1 (pre-test), the subject attains an average score of 0. At starting point A1 to B, intervention is given. After giving the first intervention, the subject obtains an average score of 3.3. Second intervention is given and the subject acquires an average score of 3.3. There is an escalation, however, after the third intervention, the subject acquires an average score of 6.6. Then, a post-test is held that can be seen at the A2 starting point. Subject gets an average score of 6.6. It has shown a difference in the early reading skills of the subject before and after the giving of flashcard media in the reading activity.

The results have shown that reading skill level of the subject at starting point A2 is higher than the starting point A1. Moreover, it can be said that flashcard may improve the early reading skills. Likewise, based on the results of presented graph analysis, it can be concluded that the hypothesis proposed in this study can be accepted: Implementing flashcard is able to improve the early reading skills.

Discussion

This study has succeeded in showing a change in the early reading skill level of the subject after giving flashcard media for learning, in which the subject's early reading skill level in the starting point A2 and starting point A1 show a significant proliferation. This is because the techniques use to improve the early reading skills has already designed for children with difficulties and delays of reading, one of them is proposed by implementing flashcards (Kornell, 2009; Kupzyk et al., 2011). In addition, there are some internal factors existing in the subject, the desire to be able to complete all activities carry out during intervention, and external support from

parents, as well as researchers motivation to the subject during intervention with flashcard media. Moreover, evaluation techniques used by researchers have helped to reveal the results of data obtained at starting point A1 and after intervention (starting point A2).

The intervention provided in the form of flashcard learning method is a stimulus for children in reading skills acquisition. The symbols seen by the child will be processed into the brain to be comprehended in accordance with Doman G. & Doman J., (2006) theory that flashcards given repeatedly will give benefits in short-term memory, and if it is repeated from short-term memory, it can be further a long-term memory.

In short, flashcards are more attractive to children so that they feel comfortable while learning. Therefore, the choice of learning methods is one of the most important factors in influencing children's early reading skills as stated by Mashburn et. Al (2009).

Conclusions

In short, based on the results of the research performed, it can be concluded that flashcard can improve the early reading skills.

For parents and teachers, it is expected to provide contributions in formal and informal schools, in which flashcard may be able to improve the early reading skills. For further researchers, it is suggested to implement flashcards related to research for longer and more intensive time that proves a higher level of effectiveness.

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