

Crossword Game Media to Improve Language Aspects in Early Childhood

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Abstract: This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of crossword game media in improving language aspects in children aged 5-6 years. This research uses Research and Development (R&D) research methodology. The primary data source in this study were 33 children aged 5-6 years at Nahdlatul Wathan Kindergarten in West Nusa Tenggara. The results of this study show that crossword game media effectively improves the language aspects of children aged 5-6 years. This is evident from using the crossword game media 11 children obtained the undeveloped category, six children in the Begin to Develop category, while no children obtained the Developing As Expected and Developing Very Well categories. After using the crossword game media, eight children obtained the category Starting to Develop, six children in the Developing As an Expected category, and two children in the Very Good Developing category, while no more children obtained the Undeveloped category.

Keywords: Crossword Game Media, Early Childhood, Language Development

INTRODUCTION

The meaning of media is a term for everything that conveys information between the source and the receiver (Geertsema-Sligh, 2019). Media can also disseminate learning materials by involving students' attention, interests, thoughts and feelings in learning activities that aim to achieve learning targets (Azhar Arsyad, 2011). Learning media can also be interpreted as a tool presenting information entirely and as educational support in teaching and learning (Junaidi Junaidi, 2019).

In the process of early childhood education, it is conveyed that an effort in fostering children from birth to 6 years old by stimulating children about education so that the physical and spiritual children can grow and develop, as well as have the readiness to take further education (Maftutah, Jannah, & Utama, 2021). This is the background for the importance of caring for children through profound ways to realize quality students. Based on the explanation above, the purpose of education is not only to gain language knowledge but also to find abilities other than language that exist in children.



The golden age occurs in children aged 0-6 years because, at that age, children experience rapid growth and development in every aspect of their development (Ferdian Utama, 2020). Based on the Standard Levels of Child Development Achievement (STPPA) of the 2013 PAUD Curriculum, Permendikbud No. 137 of 2014 concerning National Standards for Early Childhood Education, states that six aspects of development need to be developed in children, namely, Religious Morals, Language, Cognitive, Physical Motor, Social Emotional, and Art.3 One aspect that needs to be developed is the language aspect (Culture, 2013). Language is a moment used to think, express oneself and communicate (Shneiderman, 2020).

In Indonesia, in the world of school education, Indonesian serves as an introduction to all education from PAUD (Early Childhood Education) or RA (Raudhatul Athfal) to the University level (Kohler, 2019). Therefore, language plays a vital role in improving the quality of education (Hamied & Musthafa, 2019). The language aspect in preschool children develops very rapidly. Suppose active communication with excellent and correct speech stimulates its potential optimally (Nur Tanfidiyah & Ferdian Utama, 2019). The quality of the language of the father, mother, or other family members affects the child's ability to speak (Ansorida, 2022). However, the process of developing language in early childhood is quite tricky. This is because the language has components that include vocabulary, pronunciation, and meaning (Asro'atul Khoiriyah, 2022). These components are taught to children as a whole. Many disorders arise when children begin to develop language. These disorders can be caused by the inability to process information through audio or visual (Nurjanah, 2022). Listening skills can be influenced by receptive language skills, including reading and writing (Primartin, Dea, & Yusuf, 2021).

The indicators of the ability of language aspects (understanding language) of children aged 5 - 6 years are listed in the indicators of child development achievement according to the 2013 curriculum, namely:

Understand several commands simultaneously. They are repeating more complex sentences. Understand the rules of a game. Enjoy and appreciate reading. Based on these indicators, researchers will make achievements in knowing children's language development. Researchers chose to develop children's language skills in children aged 5-6. In addition, the ability of language aspects is one of the primary abilities that early childhood must have to participate in learning properly (Walker et al., 2020).

Optimizing aspects of children's language development in terms of several parts, such as mental factors, health, gender, social strata, family harmony, and environment, significantly affects children's language development (Widya et al., 2019). Given the importance of language for human life, it is essential to develop language skills that individuals have from an early age. Language skills that individuals have developed over time are influenced by factors that support and inhibit language development.

Language development begins to appear in children aged one year when the child starts babbling (which is unclear). As the child grows older and efforts are made to improve the child's language skills, the child's vocabulary will increase. Language development requires attention to different parts or areas, including reading, writing, listening and speaking (Suhartining, Winda Fauzia, 2022). Several factors influence children's language development (Kidd & Garcia, n.d.). Health factors, if hearing or speech is impaired, then language development will also be constrained. Intelligence factors, children whose intelligence is good to encourage good language. Otherwise, someone with mental retardation will be late or have difficulty speaking. Family economic factors children who come from underprivileged families. Sex factor. Women are faster than men because the left brain of women moves faster than men. Finally, the family relationship factor, this relationship is recognized as a way of communicating and engaging with the community environment, especially with parents who teach, educate and provide language models for their children (Lubis, 2018).



To improve language skills, researchers create game media that are expected to help improve the language aspects of children aged 5-6 years. Starting from the researcher's penchant for playing crossword games in general, the researcher wishes to be able to develop the game media to suit children aged 5-6 years. The game media is Crossword. Crossword, commonly called a crossword puzzle, is a game where we have to fill in empty or white spaces with letters that form a word according to the instructions given (Ritonga, Ritonga, Septiana, & Mahmud, 2021). Crossword games can be utilized in the early childhood learning process, as research written by Tutin Priatin showing the results of her research that through STEAM-based crossword games by taking action cycle I and cycle II, aspects of children's cognitive development increased, the results of children who appeared as expected as much as 80% and appeared very well as much as 20%. In a further development, this game is also shown for questions that must be filled in with numbers. The clues are usually divided into "horizontal" and "descending" categories (Priatin, 2021).

This research used a combination of simple crosswords with pictures. Because images can have many meanings, various images make it easier for children to add vocabulary. Besides that, with various images, children will feel happy and not quickly bored while learning. Researchers also combine pictures with various colours, making everything the child sees more alive.

METHODS

This research uses R&D (Research and Development) development research; Sugiyono has an opinion, a method of research and development of specific products, and testing the effectiveness of these products. This research was conducted at Nahdathul Wathon Kindergarten in West Nusa Tenggara, with 33 students. The development study procedure used in this Styrofoam media study refers to the research and development guidelines using the 4D model. The R&D methodology in this study refers to the 4D R&D procedure developed by S. Thigarajan, Dorothy Semmel, and Melvyn I Semmel. The stages of this development are: Define, Design, and Develop (Sugiyono, 2010).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Crossword Game Media

Learning media is very important in the learning process. The relationship between learning media and learning system components is a form of solving learning problems where methods, strategies and media are interrelated. In the learning process and material delivery, the presence of media will be beneficial. In learning, we conducted in early childhood, using crossword game media from styrofoam material. Crossword game is one type of puzzle.

According to Hafield there are five types of puzzles: Spelling puzzle, which consists of random letters that are matched into the correct vocabulary according to the question or statement. Jigsaw Puzzle is a puzzle in the form of several questions or statements to be answered. Then, from the answer the first letters are assembled into a word which is the answer to the last question. The Thing Puzzle is a puzzle in the form of a description of sentences related to pictures of objects to be matched. In the end, the description sentences will be matched with the pictures that have been provided. The Letter(s) Raedniess Puzzle is a puzzle in the form of pictures accompanied by letters and the name of the picture, but the letter is incomplete. Crossword Puzzle is a puzzle in the form of questions that must be answered by inserting the answers (letters/numbers) into the available boxes horizontally or vertically. This type of puzzle is often referred to as Crossword or TTS.

The crossword game media is made from styrofoam because it can be formed easily and practically. Styrofoam is generally white and looks clean, light and straightforward. Styrofoam is the name of a trademark. The Dow Chemical Company of the United States



introduced polystyrene to the American market in 1937. Its trade name is Styrofoam, polymerized from styrene monomer and alanine gas. It was initially used in handicrafts and construction materials such as insulating pipes. This material takes 500 years to decompose. The material can withstand temperatures, so the contents remain warmer or colder than paper or other materials. As for the Styrofoam grants used as the primary material media for crossword games, the materials used are easy to use and easy to play, and 2) Crossword games make children develop faster because the shape is attractive and safe, the media for learning Styrofoam materials are straightforward to find so it is not too difficult to obtain. However, there are weaknesses in crossword game media made from Styrofoam; it is easily damaged if I am careful in playing it. Styrofoam media used for crosswords is very vulnerable because it is made of plastic material that is easily damaged if exposed to excessive touch, easily porous, flammable and not resistant to chemicals. When one crossword piece is missing, the game cannot be played. The following is an image of Styrofoam-based crossword game media that has been modified and adapted to colours and shapes that are attractive to early childhood.



Figure 1. Crossword Game Media

There are several steps to using the crossword game media: The teacher prepares the crossword game media. The teacher explains how to play the game. The child sees the picture and then guesses the picture's name. The child arranges the letters into the media box to become a word according to the writing instructions in the picture. Thus, on until the child finishes playing. When the children finish playing, the teacher asks them what vehicle names they already know.

Crossword Game Media for Early Childhood Social-Emotional Development

The results of this research are not only to develop a product but also to find knowledge or answers to practical problems. The following is a daily learning implementation plan (RPPH) using crossword game media, namely:

Material

The materials in this study are:

- 1) Mentioning the name of the vehicle in the picture
 - 2) Matching the corresponding letters in the picture
 - 3) Repeating sentences with complex
 - 4) Understand the rules in the crossword game
- a) Opening (15 minutes)
- 1) Line up, and pray together
 - 2) Share stories about various vehicles
 - 3) Listening to the stories of the righteous people



- 4) Always be grateful for the gifts given by God
- b) Core (45 minutes)
 - 1) The researcher explains the material to be learned
 - 2) The researcher explains the rules of the crossword game until the children understand how to play so that the crossword game can be started.
 - 3) Children are asked to name the vehicle in the picture in the crossword game
 - 4) The child is asked to mention what letters are in writing under the picture
 - 5) Children are asked to find letter blocks that have the same letters in letters in the picture.
 - 6) Children are asked to put the letter blocks in the box holes on the crossword board and arrange them to become words.
- c) Rest (15 minutes)
 - 1) Wash hands
 - 2) Eat and drink
 - 3) Play
- d) Closing (15 minutes)
 - 1) Ask about feelings during the day
 - 2) Discussing what activities have been played today, what is the favourite toy
 - 3) Informing the activities for tomorrow
 - 4) Pray, greetings.

The steps for applying crossword game media to children aged 5-6 years are as follows:

a. Preparing the crossword game media

Before starting learning, prepare the room, prepare the crossword game media, and try to prepare yourself before learning. This is to the results of interviews with Mrs. Sri Wahyuni, S.Pd as a group B teacher at Nahdlatul Wathan Kindergarten, who said that: "an educator needs to prepare everything that supports the learning process including daily lesson plans, learning materials, learning media, and if necessary an educator must first organize the room so that while learning the teacher can control all students".

b. Explaining the material and rules of the game using crossword games.

When going to start learning, especially by using a new learning media, an educator needs to explain the rules of the media game first to the child so that the child can understand the use of the media properly before starting to play". Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation, explaining the rules of play helps children in improving children's language skills, especially in the indicator of understanding the rules when playing.

c. Children are asked to name the vehicle in the picture in the crossword game.

The crossword game begins with the child mentioning the names of any vehicles in the picture to explore the child's memory of vehicle vocabulary. The activity of mentioning the names of vehicles helps children in improving children language skills, especially in the indicator of enjoying and appreciating reading.

d. Children are asked to find the exact letter blocks as the letters under the picture.

After the child knows the name of the vehicle, then the child looks for the letter block and places the letter block in the empty white box found in the crossword game so that the development of children's abilities in the language aspect can develop, especially the child can understand orders simultaneously ". Finding letter blocks and placing them in the empty white column in the crossword game can improve children's language skills, especially in understanding orders simultaneously.

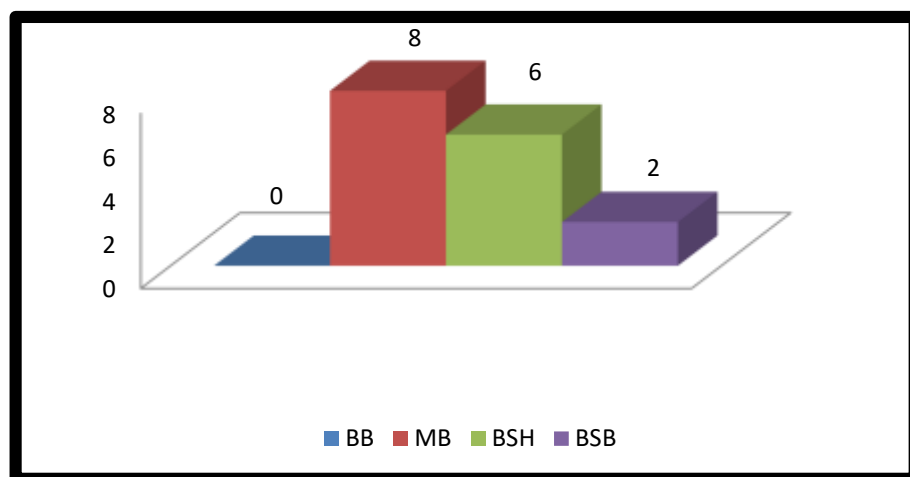


e. Explaining back the vocabulary contained in the game

When the child has finished the game, the educator should explain again what the child has played and what vocabulary the child has gotten so that the teacher can determine the child's ability. Whether children can understand the material that has been obtained ". Repeating sentences from the teacher can improve language skills, especially when repeating more complex sentences.

Significant results can be found in the use of crossword media games, as shown below:

Improvement in language skills of 5-6 year old children



Keterangan :

- BB : Not Developing
- MB : Starting to Develop
- BSH : Developing as expected
- BSB : Developing Very Well

The effectiveness of using crossword game media can improve the language skills of children aged 5-6 years. This is evident from before using crossword game media 11 children obtained the undeveloped category, 6 children in the Begin to Develop category, while no children obtained the Developing As Expected and Developing Very Well categories. Meanwhile, after using the number card media, 8 children obtained the category of starting to develop, 6 children in the category of Developing as expected, and 2 children in the category of Developing Very Well. At the same time, no more children obtained the category of Not Developing. So it can be said that the use of crossword game media is very effective in improving language skills in children aged 5-6 years, with the following advantages: The images on the crossword game media are interesting for children because there are several kinds of vehicle images. The colours in the crossword game media are interesting for children because they consist of several colours, so they do not look monotonous. Children quickly understand the material using crossword game media, because there are also pictures and writing that explain the picture.

CONCLUSION

The development of crossword game media to improve the language skills of children aged 5-6 years at Nahdlatul Wathan Kindergarten in West Nusa Tenggara is by paying attention



to the following points: 1) Explaining the material to be learned. 2) Explain the rules of the crossword game until the child understands how to play so that the game can be started. 3) The child is asked to name the vehicle in the picture in the crossword game. 4) The child is asked to find the same letter blocks as the letters under the picture. 5) The child is asked to insert the letter blocks into the available columns to compile a "vehicle name" vocabulary.

The effectiveness of using crossword game media can improve the language skills of children aged 5-6. This is evident from before using crossword game media; 11 children obtained the undeveloped category, 5 children in the Begin to Develop type, while no children received the Developing As Expected and Developing Very Well varieties. After using the number card media, 8 children obtained the category starting to develop, 6 children in the Developing As an Expected class, and 2 children in the Very Good Developing category, while no more children received the Undeveloped type.

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