

INTERACTIVE ENGLISH LITERACY ACTIVITIES FOR BEGINNER LEARNERS AT TK TEHILA IN REMOTE SOUTHWEST MALUKU

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the implementation of interactive English literacy activities to support literacy and reading skill development among beginner learners at TK Tehila, Southwest Maluku, Indonesia. The study used a qualitative descriptive approach involving 20 kindergarten learners aged 4–6 years and 2 English teachers. Data were collected through classroom observation, interviews, documentation, field notes, and reflective discussions. The literacy activities implemented included storytelling, phonics instruction, songs, flashcards, games, and Total Physical Response (TPR). The findings revealed that learners became more active, confident, and enthusiastic during English literacy activities. Most learners showed improvement in vocabulary recognition, sound identification, listening comprehension, and reading readiness. Storytelling, songs, and movement-based activities increased learners' participation because children connected language with pictures, gestures, and real-life experiences. In addition, the teachers improved their instructional competence and creativity in using interactive teaching strategies and locally available teaching media. The study concludes that interactive and child-centered literacy instruction effectively supports early English literacy development among beginner learners in remote educational settings. The findings also highlight the importance of teacher creativity, contextual learning, and sustainable literacy support programs in improving educational quality in remote areas.

Keywords: *English literacy activities, beginner learners, interactive learning, remote education, Southwest Maluku.*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education plays an important role in supporting children's language and literacy development. Early literacy includes children's ability to recognize sounds, vocabulary, symbols, and meaning before formal reading instruction begins. Interactive literacy experiences such as storytelling, songs, games, and visual learning activities help children develop vocabulary, listening comprehension, and reading readiness naturally. Young learners aged 4–6 years

learn more effectively through enjoyable and multisensory activities involving movement, pictures, repetition, and social interaction.

In Indonesia, literacy development remains a major educational challenge, particularly in remote and underdeveloped regions known as 3T areas (*terdepan, terluar, dan tertinggal*). Schools in remote islands often experience limited access to books, teaching media, educational technology, and teacher training opportunities. One of these regions is Maluku Barat Daya, where geographical isolation affects educational quality and literacy support for young learners. Teachers frequently rely on simple and locally available materials to conduct classroom instruction.

Based on preliminary observations at TK Tehila, Southwest Maluku, learners showed strong interest in songs, stories, and movement-based activities. However, English literacy instruction was still limited because teachers had minimal teaching resources and limited methodological support. Previous studies mostly focused on storytelling or songs separately, while limited research has examined the integration of storytelling, phonics, songs, flashcards, games, and TPR activities for beginner learners in remote island contexts. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate how interactive English literacy activities support literacy and reading skill development among beginner learners at TK Tehila, Southwest Maluku.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Early Literacy Development

Early literacy refers to the foundational skills, knowledge, and attitudes that support children's future reading and writing development. According to David A. Sousa (2021), children's early literacy experiences significantly influence academic success, cognitive growth, and language acquisition. Early literacy includes phonological awareness, vocabulary recognition, oral communication, print awareness, and listening comprehension. Children begin developing literacy skills through interaction with sounds, pictures, symbols, and spoken language in their daily environments. Research studies indicate that children who receive early

literacy exposure tend to demonstrate better reading readiness and stronger communication abilities in primary education. Therefore, early literacy instruction should be introduced through meaningful, engaging, and developmentally appropriate learning experiences.

Research conducted by Susan B. Neuman and Donna Celano (2022) explains that literacy-rich environments encourage children to develop language naturally through storytelling, social interaction, visual stimulation, and play-based activities. Their study revealed that children exposed to books, storytelling activities, songs, and interactive communication showed significant improvement in vocabulary development and oral language skills. Literacy-rich classrooms also help children build curiosity, imagination, and confidence in communication. Furthermore, interactive literacy experiences support children's ability to recognize letters, sounds, and simple words before formal reading instruction begins. Teachers and parents play important roles in creating supportive literacy environments through daily interaction and meaningful language exposure. Consequently, literacy instruction for young learners should integrate storytelling, songs, visual media, and playful activities to support children's language development naturally.

Reading Skills for Beginner Learners

Reading skills for beginner learners focus on recognizing sounds, letters, simple vocabulary, and meaning through gradual exposure and repetition. Young learners require interactive and multisensory learning approaches because they learn effectively through visual, auditory, and kinesthetic experiences. According to Timothy Rasinski (2022), beginning reading instruction should involve repeated language exposure, oral reading activities, and enjoyable classroom interaction. Children develop reading readiness more effectively when teachers use songs, flashcards, games, and picture-based learning materials. Interactive learning activities help children associate sounds and symbols with meaningful experiences. Therefore, beginner reading instruction should emphasize participation, repetition, and active learning rather than memorization.

According to Wiley Blevins (2023), phonics instruction helps children

understand the relationship between letters and sounds, which strengthens reading readiness and pronunciation skills. His research showed that systematic phonics instruction significantly improved children's ability to recognize words and decode simple texts. Activities such as alphabet songs, sound games, flashcards, and picture-word matching support children's phonological awareness development. In addition, repetition and interactive practice help children remember vocabulary and improve reading confidence. Beginner learners become more motivated when reading instruction is presented through enjoyable and meaningful activities. Consequently, phonics-based and multisensory instruction is considered highly effective for supporting early reading development among young learners

English for Young Learners

Teaching English to young learners requires enjoyable and meaningful activities that suit children's developmental characteristics. According to Lynne Cameron (2021), children learn foreign languages effectively through songs, storytelling, movement, repetition, visual support, and communication-based activities. Young learners tend to acquire language naturally when they are actively involved in enjoyable classroom interaction. Children also learn more effectively when teachers connect language learning with real-life experiences and familiar contexts. Visual media, games, and songs help children understand vocabulary and sentence patterns more easily. Therefore, English instruction for young learners should focus on communication, participation, and meaningful interaction rather than formal grammar teaching.

Furthermore, Herbert Puchta (2022) emphasizes that emotional engagement and motivation are important factors influencing successful language learning among children. His research explains that supportive and stress-free learning environments encourage children to participate more actively in language activities. Young learners who feel confident and emotionally comfortable tend to demonstrate better vocabulary retention and classroom interaction. Teachers should provide positive reinforcement, interactive games, and collaborative learning opportunities to increase children's motivation. In addition, movement-

based activities such as Total Physical Response (TPR) help children associate language with actions and improve understanding. Consequently, teachers need to create enjoyable and supportive English learning environments to encourage confidence and active participation among beginner learners.

Storytelling and Interactive Learning

Storytelling is widely recognized as an effective strategy for developing listening and reading readiness among young learners. According to Andrew Wright (2020), storytelling improves vocabulary acquisition, imagination, comprehension, and children's interaction with language. Stories help children understand meaning through context, repetition, visual images, and emotional engagement. Children who participate in storytelling activities tend to demonstrate better listening comprehension and oral communication skills. Storytelling also encourages creativity and helps children become more confident in expressing ideas and responding to language. Therefore, storytelling is considered an effective and meaningful approach for introducing English literacy to beginner learners.

Interactive learning activities such as songs, games, and Total Physical Response (TPR) also encourage active participation among young learners. According to Molly Ness (2022), interactive literacy instruction helps children connect language with movement, sounds, pictures, and real-life experiences. Songs and games create enjoyable learning situations that improve children's vocabulary retention and classroom engagement. TPR activities support language comprehension because children respond physically to spoken instructions and expressions. Research studies have shown that interactive learning approaches increase children's motivation, participation, and confidence in language learning activities. Consequently, combining storytelling, songs, games, and TPR activities can effectively support literacy and reading skill development among beginner learners.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate the implementation of interactive English literacy activities for beginner learners at TK Tehila, Southwest Maluku. The study was conducted for six weeks from February to March 2026 and consisted of 12 classroom meetings conducted twice a week. Each meeting lasted approximately 60 minutes.

The participants consisted of 20 kindergarten learners aged 4–6 years and 2 English teachers. The participants were selected purposively because they were directly involved in English literacy learning activities at TK Tehila.

The literacy activities implemented during the research included storytelling, phonics instruction, songs, flashcards, games, and Total Physical Response (TPR). Storytelling activities used picture books and big books to introduce vocabulary and simple sentences. Phonics instruction focused on letter sounds, alphabet recognition, and sound repetition using phonics boards and flashcards. Songs and games were used to improve vocabulary retention and classroom participation. TPR activities encouraged learners to respond physically to simple English instructions such as “stand up,” “clap your hands,” and “touch your head.”

Data were collected through classroom observation, interviews, field notes, documentation, and reflective discussions. Observation sheets focused on learners’ participation, vocabulary recognition, classroom interaction, listening comprehension, and reading readiness. Interview guidelines explored teachers’ experiences, instructional challenges, and perceptions regarding literacy instruction. Field notes recorded classroom situations, learner responses, and important learning events during classroom activities. Documentation included lesson plans, photographs, teaching media, and learners’ classroom activities.

The data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The researcher organized and interpreted the findings based on learners’ literacy development, teachers’ instructional practices, and classroom interaction during the implementation of interactive literacy activities.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Learners' Literacy Development

The findings showed that learners became more enthusiastic and active during English literacy activities. Most learners were able to recognize simple vocabulary such as colors, animals, numbers, and classroom objects after repeated exposure through songs and flashcards.

During storytelling sessions, learners responded actively to pictures and repeated simple words from the stories. For example, when the teacher showed a picture of a cat and said "This is a cat," several learners repeated the word loudly while pointing at the picture. Some learners also responded physically during TPR activities by following instructions such as "jump," "sit down," and "clap your hands."

The observation results also showed improvement in sound recognition and phonological awareness. Learners began recognizing letter sounds such as /a/, /b/, and /c/ during phonics activities. One teacher stated:

"Children became more confident repeating English sounds and vocabulary after using songs and movement activities."

Teachers' Instructional Development

The study found that the two English teachers improved their creativity and confidence in conducting English literacy instruction. Before the research, teachers mainly used translation and repetition methods. After the implementation, teachers began using storytelling, phonics games, flashcards, and TPR activities more actively.

Teachers also developed simple learning media using locally available materials such as cardboard flashcards, handmade phonics boards, and picture cards. Reflective discussions revealed that teachers felt more motivated and confident in creating interactive classroom activities.

Discussion

The findings indicate that interactive literacy instruction effectively supported beginner learners' literacy and reading readiness at TK Tehila. Storytelling, songs, phonics, and TPR activities encouraged learners to participate actively and connect language with movement, pictures, and real-life experiences. These findings support Susan B. Neuman's theory that literacy-rich and interactive learning environments improve children's vocabulary development and oral communication skills.

The improvement in learners' participation and confidence also aligns with Lynne Cameron's view that young learners acquire language naturally through enjoyable and meaningful interaction. Songs and movement-based activities helped learners remember vocabulary through repetition and physical response. In addition, phonics instruction supported learners' ability to recognize sounds and letters, which is important for reading readiness as explained by Wiley Blevins.

The study also revealed the importance of teacher creativity in remote educational settings. Although TK Tehila experienced limited educational resources, teachers successfully used contextual and low-cost teaching media to support literacy learning. This finding is consistent with previous studies emphasizing that locally relevant and child-centered learning strategies can improve literacy engagement in remote schools.

Therefore, the integration of storytelling, phonics, songs, games, flashcards, and TPR activities can become an effective approach for supporting early English literacy development among beginner learners in remote island contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that interactive English literacy activities effectively supported literacy and reading skill development among beginner learners at TK Tehila, Southwest Maluku. Storytelling, phonics instruction, songs, flashcards, games, and TPR activities increased learners' participation, confidence, vocabulary recognition, and reading readiness. The study also showed improvement in teachers' instructional competence and creativity through the use

of interactive and locally available teaching media. These findings highlight the importance of child-centered, contextual, and multisensory literacy instruction in remote educational settings. Future research is recommended to explore the long-term impact of interactive English literacy instruction in other remote schools across Indonesia.

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