

Improving Students' Motivation in Learning Phonics through Games

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Abstract. This research was designed to improve students' motivation in learning Phonics through games. It is a classroom action research with two cycles. The procedures of each cycle were planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The research subjects in this research were 21 K2 students of Tunas Bangsa Kindergarten. The data collected qualitatively by using classroom observation, interview, and documents. The research finding showed that the students' motivation in learning Phonics through games has increased due to the application of games during teaching and learning process. The students were more engaged in learning when lesson presented involved games, and they also put more concerned about their assignments, attendance, and activities during the learning process. They stated that it became easier to understand the lesson because they can directly practice it the game application in the learning process. From this, the games guaranteed to increase students' motivation in learning Phonics..

Keywords: phonics, motivation, games

1 Introduction

Phonics instruction aims to teach kids, especially English Language Learners (ELL), how to decode words by dissecting letters or word components into their separate sounds. This skill is essential for children to be able to independently read unfamiliar words. According to [1], learning to decode words using phonics has a considerable impact on comprehension and reading aloud accuracy. Children are better prepared to learn word recognition when they have mastered the phonetic decoding of words. Fluency in reading rises as a result, which enhances comprehension of what is being read. Once word decoding is no longer a challenge, students can focus on understanding the text's meaning. Furthermore, because it emphasizes spelling patterns that readers become accustomed to, phonics teaching enhances spelling skill. According to studies, one letters corresponds to one sound, making it possible to spell half of all English word.

Phonics is introduced to students in Tunas Bangsa Kindergarten because it uses a British curriculum. As a topic geared toward kids, phonics is typically taught in a playful and engaging manner through the use of flash cards, films, and workbooks with engaging pictures. This is true for the author, who has been teaching phonics to K2 (Kindergarten 2) students for

a year in an international kindergarten in Pontianak, Indonesia. Phonics is utilized in this setting to teach kids how to write simple words by dictating the words that are covered in the phonics lessons.

In this school, teaching phonics is the mainstay of the daily responsibilities. Phonics, a subject that teaches the relationship between the grapheme and the phoneme in order to decode a word for reading or writing, is often thought of as a basic technique for teaching literacy to youngsters. Letter sounds, CVC words, short and long vowels ('a' and 'ea', respectively), consonant blends, and digraphs like 'bl' and 'sh' are among the common concepts taught in phonics lessons. Children should be able to begin reading simple words after learning the fundamentals of phonics. For instance, by mastering the pronunciation of the consonant "m" and the short vowel "a" in the word "an," the words "c" + "at" can be joined to produce the word "cat." In order to reinforce the ability to read (and understand) words by sight rather than solely through decoding the phonics rule, phonics instruction is frequently supplemented with sight-reading instruction.

One English subject not included in the unit of inquiry is phonics. This subject helps students in improving their command of English word pronunciation. The distinctions between the English consonants and vowels will also be taught to the students, in addition to the alphabets. One of the resources that may be used in the teaching and learning of English phonics is using the play-based technique. When developing successful activities for teaching phonics, teachers should produce learning materials that are useful and fun, especially for youngsters. It might stimulate and inspire children to study phonics.

Based on the preliminary observation, teaching and learning Phonics at Tunas Bangsa faced some challenges. First, there is no guide book for K2 teachers in teaching phonics. In teaching phonics, the teachers only used the Curriculum maps as the guide for teaching. Second, low motivation in learning Phonics. It's because it's challenging for students to remember the letter sounds. Therefore, the teacher must work extra hard to ensure that they like the teaching and learning process. The students lacked the confidence to participate in the learning process, the researcher discovered. Nobody wanted to try to read the CVC (Consonant-Vowel-Consonant) words the teacher write on the whiteboard. Following that, the class was ineffectual and unproductive even while the teacher explained the content. According to the study, they are hard to pay attention to the teacher's explanation. In addition, a few students showed signs of boredom by talking to their friends instead of listening to the teacher explain things. The pupils were hesitant to respond when the teacher asked them about how the content had been given, so they pretended to be busy by pointing at their friends. In order to achieve the learning objectives and make the phonics environment more lively and energetic, the researcher made the decision to improve their motivation. They lack motivation because they think learning phonics is challenging, and the learning environment in the classroom deters them from being interested in the material.

Additionally, the researcher discovered two previous research. The first study is a development study carried out by [2]. This study attempts to produce basic phonics materials in order to increase the correctness of Indonesian university students' English speaking. To help kids enhance their speaking accuracy, basic phonics classes may prove to be beneficial. According to [3], excellent teacher preparation is crucial for bettering phonics education.

Phonics instruction should also be integrated into standard textbooks. The other research conducted by [4] finding's showed that basic phonics lessons may prove to be useful to improve the speaking accuracy of the students. Those lessons are short in duration, and are made up of Phonics sounds that are most needed for Indonesian speakers.

This study will ideally encourage students in understanding phonics and provide them with the knowledge necessary to know which letter combinations to employ anytime they are writing. This is why phonics is a crucial part of a child's development as a reader. If the reading material is engaging and enjoyable, it can help students become better readers by making it simpler and most importantly quicker for them to read. This boosts a child's self-esteem and fosters a lifelong love of reading.

According [5], the students' motivation holds a crucial function for students to push and regulate themselves by making some attempts to attain the particular goals. It is because motivation has several effects on learning and students' attitudes. Through motivation, students have their spesific aims, which they make efforts to reach. Motivation also improves students' energies to determine whether they do their works with an optimised feeling. Besides that, motivation can increase students' consistency in every activity, although they will be distracted by some interferences while they do it. In addition, motivation can foster their performance in their study [6]. Based on the prior study mentioned above, the researcher selected Classroom Action Research (CAR) and chose to concentrate on the area of motivation as the research's gaps.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Motivation

Worldwide, people each have their own motivations, causes, and acts, which we refer to as goals. The word "motivation" derives from the Latin verb "movere," which means "to move," and is seen as the ability or force that propels behavior [7]. [8] asserts that motivation is an urge that urges a person to act in a way that gives him the internal capacity to accomplish a previously determined objective. Along with [8] defined motivation as a person's want to shape their behavior in accordance with the planned goal. [6] added that motivation is maintained, provided with direction, and keeps behavior consistent. Every human being that raises a high level of morale and accepts full responsibility for the work uses motivation as an indicator or a supporting medium. Although motivation cannot be directly observed, it can be understood by noticing alterations in attitudes or behavior. Therefore, motivation is essential for life because it acts as a source of energy that can spur on individuals to achieve achievement in the world.

2.2 Type of Motivation

In essence, motivation has an impact on both the mind and how well people perform, depending on the type. [7] categorized motivation into two groups. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation is a form of stimulation that comes entirely from within the individual without any outside input. The desire to complete a task is an innate human trait that results from self-awareness. According to [9], a person will complete a work if he is aware that it will assist him reach his objectives. For instance, if someone enjoys reading, he will do so on his own

initiative and without outside encouragement. The instructor must support and guide his students in order to foster intrinsic motivation in them. Second, extrinsic motivation is a learning process that results from support, and some people require this even when it has nothing to do with their learning exercises. It is triggered by a number of outside sources. [8] asserts that there are a variety of elements, such as the teacher's duty to value all of the students' input, that might aid students in developing extrinsic motivations. The teacher uses a number of methods during classes and learning activities. provide guidance and support for the student's personal or academic life. The teacher is an authority in the subject. Most importantly, an educator must take pleasure in their work education.

2.3 Games

A game is characterized as an activity that can amuse pupils and encourage playing and interpersonal interaction. According to [10], a game is referred to as an activity with a goal, a set of rules, and a component of enjoyment. The game can be used for individual, couple, and group projects. People find a variety of difficulties through games to choose the outcomes that can be enjoyable.

Playing games is a staple of every teaching and learning strategy in the classroom. As a result, utilizing games to teach and learn languages offers several benefits for both the teacher and the pupils. In English classrooms, using games can help stimulate students' attention and inspire them to learn the language. The most enjoyable way is a game, which the students quickly accept because it can help them relax and enjoy using the language. It is not simply the students that gain from the games; the teacher also does. The teacher can create the terminology to make it more practical and relevant. It serves as a technique for determining how well students know their subject matters that the teacher has taught.

2.4 Phonics

The use of phonics is a skill that all readers and writers of alphabetically written languages, like English, must possess. According to [11], students need to be able to recognize words quickly and correctly in order to teach and learn using phonics. Phonics is one of the subjects that can help children understand letter sounds in reading and spelling, according to [12]. With this approach emphasis is placed on reader's understanding of the letters and their capacity to pronounce them correctly while engaging in reading activities. Furthermore, phonics is the systematic teaching of the sounds that letters and groups of letters represent, as well as the training of how to combine and blend these sounds to read and write words, according to [13]. Students can read printed letters by sound using this technique, which uses the grapheme as a reference. The phonics method also helps kids, especially those who are learning to read at an early age [14]. By enabling children to learn the regular word pattern, including the conventions of letter pronunciation, it facilitates reading for younger readers.

3 Methodology

The present investigation was carried out in a Classroom Action Research (CAR). To help teachers discover what works best in their classroom environments, this kind of research includes research, action, and analysis [15]. Cycles for implementing classroom action

research are used [16]. Each cycle has four steps. Their planning, acting, observing, and reflecting are shown in Figure 1.

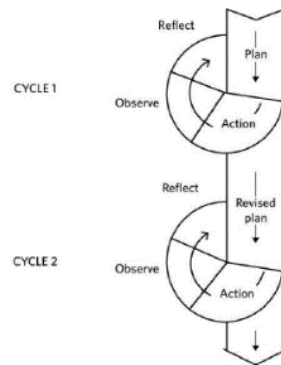


Fig. 1. Steps of Action Research Design by Burns (2010)

As may be seen in the accompanying figure, the first stage involved planning for teaching and learning. This step involves putting up the devices to collect the data as well as researching the problems and situations that were discovered during the previous teaching and learning process. The researcher and the teacher sought to use games to boost students' motivation in the pertinent lesson. After that, the scenario, directions, resources, and protocols for instruction and learning were created.

The following step was acting. Throughout this stage, the teacher taught the students phonics using simple games while carrying out the teaching and learning activities described in the previous phase. During this cycle, the teacher went through the material with the class. After that, phonics game were presented to them for group play.

In the third phase was observing. Various methods were used to collect the research data up to this point. The tools utilized to observe were observation list, a field note, documentation, and an interview. In observation checklist, the researcher intpretation guidelines for analyzing students' success criteria. To support this assessment, the researcher need to know the following criteria by [17], the lowest score is given 5 and the highest score is given 25. The scoring in each category srated from the lowest or highest score and it can be seen below.

- 5-8 : Poor
- 9-12 : Low
- 13-16 : Moderate
- 17-20 : High
- 21-25 : Excellent

The goal of the interview is to gain additional insight from the teacher about how teaching and learning are handled in the classroom. The researcher will interview the teacher and the students to get information from them both before and after the research is put into practice. She will be able to understand from this how the teacher and the pupils reacted to the researcher's use of games in the teaching and learning process. Field notes were also useful for recording everything that happened in the classroom with reference to the behavior of the children during the games. The documentation is last. It serves to document an action or process). It refers to gathering information from anecdotal records, curricular diagrams, lesson plans, meeting minutes, etc.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used the data analysis procedure from Huberman (1994) that is reducing the data, displaying the data, drawing conclusion and verification. In the criteria of success and by looking to the students' behaviours by following 75% students give their contributions and response during the learning process by showing their confidence. Next, students should be able to do their tasks by themselves, and students can be focused and give their attention during teaching and learning process. If the students met the criteria that is 75%, the games successfully improve their motivation in learning phonics.

Reflection came next, and the teacher went over all of the material covered in class during this phase. The data was examined and analyzed by the researcher and the teacher to determine whether the kids became better after each round. The results of reflection would be applied to cycle planning if it was still required.

The subjects of the present research were the Kindergarten-2 students of Tunas Bangsa. They had poor motivation in learning phonics.

4 Findings and Discussions

4.1 First Cycle

Both the researcher and the teacher collaborated to create the lesson plan, and they carefully chose the resources based on the K2 curriculum map of the Tunas Bangsa school. The preferred material for this cycle was CVC (-an). The teacher and the researcher set up the activities to achieve the goal of this research, which was to boost students' interest in studying phonics. The author also put up a number of instruments, such as an observation sheet, field notes, a recorder to conduct interviews with the teacher and pupils, and supporting materials for learning and sharing information. These techniques are used to identify and track students' behavior development across activities, reactions, and circumstances during the learning process. Data collection is used to acquire this information.

In the acting stage, the teacher opened the new material by brainstorming to teach them about the CVC (-an). The teacher explain the materials and after that the students were asked to blend the letter sounds to recall their memory in learning letter sounds, but some students kept silent while the others tried to read the CVC (-an). Besides, the teacher also gave the students time to ask questions before continuing the material. No one asked the students, so the teacher continue to deliver the lesson through pictures. The teacher asked the students to mention the letter sounds and blend the sounds of "Pan, Man, Can, Fan, etc.". Some students started talking to each other in class, which was disruptive. Some students laid their heads on the table because they being sleepy. It also because the lesson was the last one of the day, they

began to become tired and bored. Because of this, the teacher appealed for the students' attention to give them the actions needed that is the words game, that would catch their attention. For applying the find words game, the students need to find the CVC (-an) words as many as they can, after that they can read what kind of words they found, if they done read it, they can put it back. The class become noisy because they doesn't want to share it with their friends. Before closing the meeting, the teacher asked the students to asked question and to conclude what they have learnt, but no one answer the teacher's questions, and the teacher make a conclusion by herself.

The researcher monitored the students' progress and development during the observation period while they participated in class activities. The researcher finished this stage before considering the further actions to be taken. The researcher used an observation list and field notes to conduct direct observation in order to ascertain and learn about the change in student motivation brought on by the use of games in the classroom. Because they were still unwilling to try to respond to the teacher's questions in the first session of cycle one, the majority of the pupils still lacked confidence, the researcher noticed. Phonics was the final subject before they left the class, which may also explain why they appear sleepy and exhausted. Many students were still unable to concentrate and pay attention during the class because they engaged in conversation with friends and other activities that were not related to studying. In addition to that, even though some students appeared to pay attention to the teacher's explanation, many students did not. Following the order game, 65.5% of the students became more engaged in the classroom learning process. They also lacked the courage to respond to the next question.

In the reflecting stage, the researcher examined the findings from cycle one and identified a number of improvements that needed to be made for the following cycle. Many children were still failing to participate in phonics instruction, as seen by the first cycle. The percentage of pupils who stayed on task and paid attention to the teacher while they were learning remained low. Moreover, the researcher discovered that they had fallen short of the predetermined goal when it came to their confidence for participating in classroom activities. It also showed that some students laid their heads on the desk while the teacher explained the material. The teacher also observed several students making jokes and small talk with one another after playing "find the words" game which added to the classroom's commotion. However, including games into the classroom might encourage kids to learn phonics more. When the teacher introduced the game during those sessions, they were excited to take part in learning activities. They can also be seen taking part in the game enthusiastically. They were also more focused on understanding and using the material.

The researcher therefore came to the conclusion to implement the second cycle in order to achieve more advancement and boost student motivation after considering those results and talking with the teacher. The teacher and the researcher discussed their reflections and decided that the researcher should create a new lesson plan for the following cycle. In order to make her explanation of the material more fascinating, the researcher should secondly develop it. Last but not least, the researcher should change the game to make it more fascinating and tactical. The researcher thought that by making this reflection, the issues that arose in the first cycle may be resolved. By observing how students' behaviors change in the upcoming cycle, the research goal may be attained.

4.2 Second Cycle

The researcher developed the lesson plan during the revised planning stage before putting cycle two into action. The fresh content dealt about CVC (-at). In order to make the prior topic more engaging, more activity was added to the classroom activities. It still had to do with using games to teach phonics in the classroom. Additionally, the researcher and the teacher offered some games like the "clap hand game" that needed supplies to assist them. These games emphasized encouraging students' phonics learning motivation for this cycle. For the second cycle progression, the researcher additionally prepared several other tools to collect data, such as an observation sheet, field notes, and recorded teacher and student interviews. It might demonstrate how the teaching-learning process affects students. Additionally, it was utilized to decide whether to continue with this research cycle or not based on how much the students' motivation increased as a result of using games in the classroom.

A new activity was incorporated into the teaching and learning process at the acting stage in order to enhance the students' manners throughout this cycle. The second cycle also included the use of easy games. They improved the pupils' collaboration and involvement in their educational process. The teacher opened class by leading the students in a phonics song and introducing the course using powerpoint slides. Most students concentrated on the teachers' explanations and engaged in less classroom conversation than they had during the previous meeting, the classroom environment was also more favorable. The game is known as the "clap hand game" because players must clap their hands before catching the ball after the teacher has explained the elements. In order to make sure that this session goes successfully, the teacher did observations by moving around the class and observing each student's progress. Some students were contacted by the teacher, who enquired if they could respond to those questions. They claimed that because they had mastered the subject, they felt confident in their ability to respond. Some students realized that they were singing or acting comically as a result of the punishment they received from their group mates. They continued to enjoy playing this game until the time limit was reached. The teacher then went over the notes and provided feedback before calling a break. The teacher sought the students' feedback on how the games were being played. They expressed happiness and enjoyment of their educational experience at school. Additionally, they claimed that this time they could comprehend the phonics material. Following their response, the teacher applauded the students for all of their efforts, led a group prayer, and then dismissed the class.

During the observation phase, the researcher observed students and looked at how they changed as they learned. Similar to cycle one, the researcher employed field notes and observation sheet. The researcher asserted that the K2 students' learning process was significantly better than it had been during cycle 1 based on the results of the observation. Their effort and commitment to the teaching-learning process in the classroom could serve as evidence. The researcher found that the majority of students had demonstrated an increase in confidence since they had practiced reading CVC (-at), and they could participate in the game effectively. On the other hand, they were able to handle the challenging sentences that the teacher presented during the guessing game. Additionally, compared to the prior cycle, more students attempted to respond to the teacher's questions. In addition, the students appeared to be more attentive and focused on the teacher's explanation. The atmosphere in the class looked calmer compared to the the last meeting, and fewer students were talking to their friends. After completing this cycle, the researcher conducted interviews with the teacher and the students to

assess their progress and confirm that the game had improved their motivation or not. It also served as a measure of the success or continuation of this cycle. Based on the findings from the observation and interview, it was possible to draw the conclusion that the student's motivation to learn English was increased by the fact that a sizable percentage of students had attained that goal that was 80%.

The second cycle phase was deemed successful and got satisfying results by looking at the attained aim because there had been many advancements, particularly in pupils' motivation for learning, the researcher and the English teacher said during the reflecting stage. It might be demonstrated by drawing conclusions from research-related observations and conversations with the teacher and K2 students. Based on his observation findings sheet, the instructor who took on the role of the observer reported that more than 80% of the students had increased their motivation. Additionally, because they are driven and interested in the activity, the students can become more active individuals by playing the game. The study's findings suggest that playing the game in class may motivate students to learn phonics. It also produced positive results and feelings for delivering the materials in enjoyable ways. Additionally, it subtly alters their behavior so that it becomes better than before. In the end, the researcher chose to stop in two cycles to finalize this class action study.

5 Conclusion

The study's findings suggest that motivating students to learn phonics using games is an effective strategy. It helped children memorize the letter sounds and learn how to read. The results of the study also showed that the students could indicate their level of comfort with reading. Students showed increased learning interest and greater concern for their assignments, attendance, and other learning-related activities when lessons incorporated games, according to the data from each cycle that was acquired for the study. Many claimed that it was easier to absorb the lesson because they could immediately apply it through the game application. The exercises will thereby increase students' motivation to study phonics. The students who were first uninterested in the teacher's explanation started to pay closer attention. The mean score for each cycle shows that the students' improved conduct resulted in more learning engagement, which in turn enhanced mastery.

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