THE STUDY OF MULTISENSORY AS TEACHING PHONICS APPROACH TO IMPROVE THE STUDENTS' DECODING SKILL

(A Classroom Action Research for Kindergarten Students at TK Adicita Mulia)

THESIS

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The writer

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Abstract

The study aimed at determining the improvement of students' decoding phonics using a multisensory teaching approach for kindergarten students of the K1 level at TK Adicita Mulia. The method used in this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR). The multisensory approach involved the students' auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and tactile senses to understand better decoding concept instruction in recognizing individual sounds and combining them into Consonant, Vowel, Consonant (CVC) words. The improvements focused on the learning outcome of developing decoding skills as the fundamental stage for reading readiness. This research also observed the students' engagement during the learning process to be attracted to the learning media such as Play-Doh, sand, and flashcards as the interactive learning style for the students. Also, it observed the students' disruptive behavior, such as uncontrolled behavior, impatience and lack of focus in the classroom. The results showed that 60% of the students who did not initially improve could demonstrate notable progress in the second cycle. The learning media also generated great enthusiasm during the learning process and positively influenced the change of disruptive behavior into controlled behavior during phonics learning.

Keywords: Multisensory, Phonics, Decoding Skill, Kindergarten Students

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Decoding for kindergarten students in TK Adicita Mulia has always found some existing problems, such as difficulty understanding the decoding concept in phonics. It is supposed to be the learning achievement students must master to concentrate on decoding skills, particularly decoding concepts. According to most of the teachers in the school, some factors influenced the students' phonics decoding skills. The problems are the inability to comprehend the decoding concept, lack of awareness, and lack of confidence in using English as a required language in a bilingual school. Also, students' negative behaviors in the classroom include lack of focus, disruptive actions, daydreaming, and others. It negatively impacted the quality of the learning process. Therefore, the learning instruction taught to the students seems difficult to understand, and most students cannot focus, reducing student motivation during the learning process.

In the phonics instruction used in this school, the important part is that the students should be able to master the fundamental lesson by recognizing the individual sounds (phonemes) of the written symbol (graphemes). When the students can identify each sound, they start to link or combine the individual sounds to decode the CVC (Consonant, Vowel,

Consonant) words consisting of three phonemes in one syllable. For example, for the word “can,” /c/ is the consonant, /a/ is the vowel, and /n/ is the consonant. For instance, the students were introduced to some words with ending sounds, and one of them is /an/. Then, they learned to combine with the first consonant letter sound of /c/. Afterward, they know how to break down (segment) words into their component sounds and connect those sounds to letters to spell words to be c + an, which becomes “can.” However, these blending sound instructions cause the students notable problems comprehending the decoding concept. Most students still can not recognize the basic individual sounds and have low interest in them during the learning process. Not to mention, the students’ focus is still divided and hard to handle because there are some special need students in the classroom, and learning phonics decoding concepts is very difficult for the students to comprehend.

Therefore, the basic teaching technique commonly used to teach phonics is still challenging for the students to understand. The researcher’s idea is to use the multisensory approach by using Play-Doh to learn the code. The code segments the words and uses sand to rewrite the letters to strengthen letter cognition. It provides another variety of teaching methods to attract the students’ interest and improve their decoding skills. Hence, the researcher focused on solving the students’ problems by improving their decoding skills based on phonics with the support of a multisensory

teaching approach, which has become the purpose of this research. This approach helps the students to find their decoding skill concept at an early age, especially for 4 to 5-year-old students, to avoid confusion in comprehension. Besides that, multisensory provides an activity that involves some of their senses to strengthen their memory of the learning concept. The senses can be influenced by their sense of sight, sense of hearing, sense of taste, sense of touch, sense of smell, and motor skills to reach the cognitive level. Apart from that, this approach can also reduce the burden of students' learning difficulties by creating a learning perception in a fun way so that it can change the learning response of students who are not motivated to learn to decode.

There are some existing researches related to multisensory and teaching phonics with this research. Research by Patria (2023) found that the problem of diminished student motivation in acquiring phonics skills was attributed to implementing traditional teaching approaches, which resulted in disinterest and inadequate involvement. A demanding curriculum and a poor learning environment worsened the absence of enthusiasm. Then, Novena (2021) addressed the issue of the students' struggle with word recognition and spelling due to insufficient phonics abilities. The problem originated from difficulties in acquiring phonemic awareness, phonics skills, and proper handwriting, which had a negative effect on their overall spelling and literacy progress.

Meanwhile, Myréen (2017) found that conventional language courses may not effectively engage adult learners and may not effectively improve their motivation and language learning. Many learners face motivation and cognitive engagement challenges in traditional educational environments, resulting in less-than-ideal language acquisition results. The project sought to investigate the potential of using multisensory features to enhance these qualities by establishing a more captivating and nurturing learning environment.

These existing studies addressed the problems of improving the students' skills in various ways, and the teaching strategies have been explored as a solution for specific problems. This research explores teaching phonics to kindergarten students and engaging their motivation to provide positive learning behavior. Specifically, this research designed the teaching approach to observe the students' progress and find the improvements in a multisensory approach to simplify the concept that is meaningful for phonics decoding skills in the long term.

B. Research Questions

This research focused on one research question to be observed in this study, such:

1. How does the multisensory improve the students' decoding phonics skills?

2. How does the use of media in the multisensory promote the students' engagement in decoding activities?
3. What are the students' behaviors toward the multisensory approach to learn phonics?

C. Objectives of the Study

There are three objectives of the study, which are the primary purpose analyses. The objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the students' improvements in comprehending the decoding concept based on the phonics lesson.
2. To find out the students' engagement toward the media as the code to blend sounds into a word.
3. To find out the students' behaviors in responding to the multisensory activity during the learning process.

D. Scope of the Study

This research focused on the kindergarten students of TK Adicita Mulia, whose ages range from 4 to 5 years old. The students in this research aimed to address issues with decoding skills through a multisensory approach to phonics learning. This approach is designed to improve students' decoding abilities, by combining sounds into words, improving their overall English language decoding skills. Multisensory is

another way to comprehend the concept of spelling by designing some activities in the class to learn phonics. The activity involved some of their senses, such as auditory, visual, and motoric. The purpose of the multisensory approach activity is to comprehend the concept of learning uniquely and differently, which helps the students absorb the idea of decoding in phonics and build their interest in the learning concept to avoid confusion. This research is observed in the classroom with a teacher who helped this research smoothly at the school.

E. Terminology

There are some key terms for investigation to discover the topic area of this research. The description of the key terms are:

1. **Multisensory** is a learning approach used specifically for early-age students by involving visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile senses simultaneously in the learning process.
2. **Phonics** is a decoding method taught to kindergarten students at TK Adicita Mulia. The teachers lead a decoding concept of blending sounds by using an engaging activity to improve the students' decoding skills.
3. **Decoding Skill** is the code used to figure out how to say a word by segmenting it into smaller and blending sounds. It is a concept that

translates written words into spoken form by recognizing and blending individual sounds or letter patterns.

4. **TK Adicita Mulia** is a private school with a bilingual base where the students and the teachers communicate in English as their daily language. This school applies the curriculum set in the Merdeka Curriculum.

F. Significances of the Study

The researcher expects this study to be beneficial to enrich the teaching approach, mainly related to the study of multisensory learning for phonics as a teaching approach. The benefits obtained from this study include the following:

1. **The Teachers of TK Adicita Mulia Pontianak**

   This study is necessary for kindergarten teachers to support their teaching approach to phonics. The writer expects this study to benefit the kindergarten teachers who teach phonics by improving the students' decoding fundamentals in English and solving the problem of the students' confusion about the decoding concept based on Phonics learning.

2. **The Students of TK Adicita Mulia Pontianak**

   This research supports students' skills in improving their understanding of decoding concepts in decoding phonics by using the

multisensory approach to solve the student's problems and difficulties during the learning process. The writer expects the students to build their motivations through it and no longer have an impediment in comprehending the subject.

3. **The Next Researchers**

   This study is helpful for other researchers with the same topic about teaching phonics to support the researcher as the previous study or as a reference. The writer also expects this study to be helpful for the next researcher in strengthening the analysis arguments based on the theory and the method used in this study.