



## The Implementation of the Singing Method to Enhance Early Reading Skills of Children Aged 4–5 Years at PAUD Dakar

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### Abstract

This research was conducted at DAKAR Early Childhood Education (PAUD) in Cilegon City, Banten, with the aim of determining the application of the singing method to improve early reading skills in children aged 4-5 years. Initial observations revealed that during learning activities, only a few children recognized letters and words, while the majority did not yet. Therefore, to assess the reading abilities of these young children, it is necessary to develop more engaging and effective learning methods to improve their understanding of letters during the early reading stage, including singing while introducing letters and words. The research methodology was descriptive qualitative, as the researcher aimed to describe or elaborate on an event by conducting in-depth research related to the research topic. The results of the study, through data collection through direct observation, interviews, and documentation, concluded that the implementation of the singing method was highly effective in improving early reading skills in children aged 4-5 years. Evidenced by the use of the singing method, children listened to the alphabet song sung with enthusiasm, repeated the vowel and consonant sounds requested by the teacher, imitated the pronunciation of letters A to Z, increased their vocabulary for communication, and developed their speaking skills.

**Keywords:** Early childhood, singing method, early reading ability.

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## INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a critical developmental stage characterized by unique growth in physical, cognitive, social-emotional, language, and communication domains (Sari et al., 2023). This period is considered an optimal time to provide appropriate stimulation to support early literacy development, particularly vocabulary growth as a foundation for reading skills. One essential aspect of language development in early childhood is letter recognition, which serves as a preparatory skill for higher levels of education. Letter recognition activities can be effectively facilitated through engaging approaches such as the singing method combined with alphabet learning using letter cards (Sudrajat et al., 2025). Singing as a learning method utilizes songs with lyrics aligned with instructional content to support children's learning experiences.

Song lyrics are typically adapted to match specific learning concepts or themes. According to Akbar (2020), singing in early childhood learning creates a joyful and enthusiastic atmosphere, making learning more effective and developmentally appropriate. In this context, the letter-singing method is considered a meaningful strategy to support early reading skills. PAUD curriculum implicitly emphasizes the importance of introducing letters and sounds as early steps toward more advanced reading skills. However, challenges often arise when learning methods are monotonous and less engaging, resulting in reduced motivation among young learners (Sujiono, 2017). Children learn more effectively through enjoyable, interactive, and developmentally suitable activities.

Language development in early childhood includes abilities such as asking and answering questions, verbal communication, storytelling, expressing ideas and emotions, and early writing through scribbling (Astori, 2020). This developmental process occurs gradually as children acquire the ability to understand and use language to communicate with others. Language development is influenced by both biological maturation and environmental factors. Juliani (2019) highlights that language development evolves alongside physical and psychological growth, while Khairil (2015) emphasizes the importance of a supportive environment in optimizing early childhood language development.

Children aged 4–5 years demonstrate varying levels of language development according to the Standards of Child Development Achievement (STPPA). When children's language development does not meet expected standards, educators and parents play a crucial role in providing appropriate stimulation to support development (Susanto, 2015). Singing is an integral activity in children's lives, particularly songs with cheerful rhythms. Singing-based learning involves managing instruction through lyrics tailored to learning materials, serving as a medium for expressing thoughts and emotions while creating a joyful learning experience (Astuti, 2022).

Research shows that singing activities—often accompanied by clapping or movement—enhance children's language skills, memory, confidence, emotional expression, motor development, and social interaction (Aib, 2015; Sabil, 2015). Singing also helps reduce anxiety and increases motivation and engagement in learning. According to Fadillah (2020), singing in learning functions as a relaxation tool, enhances interest, supports memory retention, internalizes values, builds emotional engagement, and motivates learners. Within the Merdeka Curriculum, singing is commonly used before and after lessons to enrich vocabulary and create a positive learning environment, particularly when songs are thematically appropriate and aligned with children's developmental stages (Afifah, 2022).

## **METHOD**

Early childhood is a crucial developmental stage marked by rapid and unique growth in physical, cognitive, social-emotional, language, and communication domains (Sari et al., 2023). This period is considered an ideal time to provide appropriate stimulation to support early literacy development, particularly in building vocabulary and early reading skills. One essential aspect of language development in early childhood is letter recognition, which serves as a foundational skill for later reading abilities. Letter recognition can be effectively introduced

through engaging learning approaches such as the singing method combined with alphabet learning using letter cards (Sudrajat et al., 2025). Singing as a learning method utilizes songs with lyrics that are adapted to instructional themes, creating a joyful and motivating learning atmosphere. According to Akbar (2020), singing in early childhood education enhances children's enthusiasm and supports more effective learning, making the letter-singing method a suitable strategy for developing early reading skills. PAUD curriculum emphasizes the importance of introducing letters and sounds as early steps toward more complex reading skills. However, monotonous and less engaging teaching methods often reduce children's motivation to learn (Sujiono, 2017). Research indicates that young children learn more effectively through enjoyable, interactive, and developmentally appropriate activities. Singing, with its rhythm and melody, captures children's attention, stimulates curiosity, and supports language development and social interaction (Astori, 2020; Juliani, 2019).

Singing activities also provide broader developmental benefits, including enhancing memory, emotional expression, confidence, motor skills, and motivation to learn (Aib, 2015; Fadillah, 2020). In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, singing is commonly used before and after learning activities to create a positive classroom atmosphere and enrich children's vocabulary when songs are thematically relevant and aligned with children's developmental stages (Afifah, 2022). Therefore, the implementation of the singing method is considered an effective strategy for improving early reading skills among children aged 4–5 years.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

#### **Findings from Child Observation and Teacher Observation in Class A**

##### ***Findings from Child Observation***

The following are the observations of 5 Kindergarten A children (aged 4-5 years) regarding initial reading abilities using the singing method, referring to 3 (three) observation indicators. It can be concluded that all respondents listened to the alphabet song sung with great enthusiasm and excitement. Out of 5 respondents, only 1 respondent (A4) had difficulty repeating the requested vowel and consonant song, and out of 5 respondents, only 1 respondent (A5) was not fluent in imitating the pronunciation of letters A to Z (details are in the attachment).

##### ***Findings from Class A Teacher Observation***

The following are findings from observing 2 Class A teachers regarding the application of the singing method in improving initial reading abilities in children aged 4-5 years. The teachers were already very good in lesson planning by preparing complete teaching administration such as child attendance lists, teaching modules, lesson plans (RPP), and relevant reference books. The teachers were already very good in using the singing method during lessons, proven by the children's high enthusiasm and excitement in reading and recognizing letters while singing; most children were active, although some were still passive (A4 and A5).

Furthermore, teachers have utilized teaching aids like letter card media to facilitate children's reading, although not yet maximally, especially in utilizing audiovisual media. Teachers were good in directing children's focus, although some

children were still unfocused (A4). Teachers were good in providing appreciation and praise, proven by the children's happiness when teachers gave rewards and assessments. Teachers' responses were very good in addressing children's questions, proven by children quickly understanding and being able to follow lessons well. Teachers always provided evaluation with oral or written questions at the end of the lesson, thus identifying children who easily understood and those who had difficulty.

### ***Findings from Interviews with Kindergarten A Teachers***

The following are findings from interviews with Kindergarten A teachers:

#### **1. The Importance of Early Childhood Language Development**

According to Mrs. Ria Indri Astuti, S.E, as a Kindergarten A teacher, language development for early childhood is very important as it is included in the 6 aspects of Early Childhood Development. She explained that the primary aspect to be developed first in young children is language development, because language is not only about learning but more about skills and communication used in daily life. The answer from the principal of PAUD DAKAR to the researcher's question is as follows (W.01):

"Language development in our school is very important, even prioritized, ma'am, because with good language skills, children will certainly find it easier to follow lessons" (interview with Mrs. Ria as Principal, May 7, 2025).

#### **2. Preparation Needed for Teaching and Learning**

According to Mrs. Fajaroh as a Group A teacher, preparations needed before starting teaching and learning activities include preparing several media such as learning materials, teaching media, and enjoyable learning methods for children (W.02).

"Before learning begins, I prepare the material, media, and teaching methods first so that the teaching and learning activities are more directed and enjoyable" (interview with Mrs. Fajaroh as Class A teacher, May 7, 2025).

The researcher's interview results with Mrs. Fajaroh align with the researcher's observations during pre-learning activities, where at this stage the teacher first prepared the material, media, and teaching methods (CL.01). It can be concluded from the interview and observation results that Mrs. Fajaroh, as the Class A teacher, prepares beforehand before conducting teaching and learning activities.

#### **3. Tools or Media Used in Initial Reading**

The researcher's interview results with Mrs. Fajaroh as the Class A teacher stated that the media used during learning includes alphabet letter cards from A to Z. Using these teaching aids, the children were very enthusiastic when pronouncing the alphabet letters.

"For the media I use in initial reading, I use letter cards prepared before the learning session begins" (interview with Mrs. Fajaroh as Class A teacher, May 7, 2025).

Before the learning activities began, the researcher directly observed the teacher preparing letter cards starting from A to Z. This aligns with the researcher's observation that during initial reading activities, the teacher used alphabet letter

card media (CL.02). It is known from the interview and observation results that the tools or media used for initial reading activities are alphabet letter cards from A to Z.

#### 4. Strategies Used in Teaching and Learning

The researcher interviewed Mrs. Fajaroh as the Class A teacher, who explained that the teaching methods used for initial reading at PAUD DAKAR are the singing method, the question-and-answer method, and the demonstration method to help children focus on developing vocabulary and further increasing their word repertoire (W.02).

"Our school uses 3 methods during teaching: singing, question-and-answer, and demonstration. But for initial reading, we use the singing method" (interview with Mrs. Fajaroh as Class A teacher, May 7, 2025).

According to the researcher's observation, Mrs. Fajaroh's statement as the Class A teacher explains that during initial reading activities, the teacher uses the singing method (CL.03). It is concluded from the interview and observation results that teaching and learning activities at PAUD DAKAR use the singing, question-and-answer, and demonstration methods. To develop children's language, the teacher focuses more on using the singing method.

#### 5. Implementation of the Singing Method in Teaching and Learning

According to the interview and observation results with Mrs. Fajaroh as the Class A teacher, the implementation of the singing method in teaching and learning at PAUD DAKAR runs very well. This is because the teacher's preparation is quite good and carried out according to the daily activity implementation plan.

"Before the lesson is conducted, I always prepare a learning plan such as an RPP that matches the learning theme" (interview with Mrs. Fajaroh as Class A teacher, May 7, 2025).

#### 6. Evaluation and Assessment

According to Mrs. Fajaroh as the Class A teacher, learning evaluation is an activity that measures and assesses the achievement of learning objectives because evaluation is an important matter that can determine the initial reading activities, thus helping teachers to improve the language development aspect in early childhood according to desired goals.

The assessment at PAUD DAKAR is conducted by the teachers using a developmental achievement scale. In this child developmental achievement scale, there are several levels: BB (Belum Berkembang / Not Yet Developed), MB (Mulai Berkembang / Beginning to Develop), BSH (Berkembang Sesuai Harapan / Developing as Expected), and BSB (Berkembang Sangat Baik / Developing Very Well), (W.02).

"When conducting evaluation and assessing children, I use the child developmental achievement scale such as BB (Not Yet Developed), MB (Beginning to Develop), BSH (Developing as Expected), and BSB (Developing Very Well)" (interview with Mrs. Fajaroh, Class A teacher, May 7, 2025).

Meanwhile, the interview results with Mrs. Rina Agustina as a Class A teacher explain that assessment is very important because it facilitates the assessment of the language development aspect in early childhood.

"It's the same as class A, ma'am, in class B we also conduct evaluation and assessment using the developmental achievement scale" (interview with Mrs. Rina Agustina as Class B teacher, May 7, 2025).

This result aligns with the researcher's interview results after the lesson; the assessment of the language development aspect in early childhood conducted by Class A and Class B teachers uses the developmental achievement scale.

#### 7. Obstacles Faced in Teaching and Learning

According to Mrs. Fajaroh as the Class A teacher, every teaching and learning activity certainly has obstacles or constraints that affect the process and results. Some constraints faced during the teaching process include children sometimes lacking discipline and some children having slower development, so the teacher must provide more attention to those children. Each child's development is different, so the teacher must provide more attention in developing language in early childhood (W.02).

"When the lesson is in progress, there are always obstacles. Because indeed the development of each student is different, for example when pronouncing the alphabet, there are some children who are slow in pronunciation" (interview with Mrs. Fajaroh as homeroom teacher of Class A, May 7, 2025).

Similarly, according to the statement from Mrs. Rina Agustina as a Class B teacher, she explained that lack of discipline and delays in speech in language development are obstacles at PAUD DAKAR. Therefore, the teacher must provide more attention to those children (W.03).

"Obstacles in teaching activities lie in the differing development of students, therefore the teacher must provide more attention to those children" (interview with Mrs. Rina Agustina as Class B teacher, May 7, 2025).

It is concluded from the interview results with Mrs. Fajaroh as Class A teacher and Mrs. Rina Agustina as a Class A teacher that the obstacles faced during teaching activities are lack of discipline and some children having slow development in pronouncing alphabet letters.

#### 8. Solutions to Obstacles in Teaching and Learning

According to Mrs. Fajaroh as the Class A teacher, solutions to overcome obstacles or constraints in teaching include implementing discipline during learning and providing attention to children who have limitations or difficulties in understanding the lesson, especially difficulty in reading. Therefore, teachers must provide more attention in developing language and reading in early childhood (W.02).

"Obstacles in teaching as mentioned can be resolved by applying learning discipline in children, providing attention and focus to children who experience difficulties in reading, thereby influencing children to be enthusiastic in their learning" (interview with Mrs. Fajaroh as homeroom teacher of Class A, May 7, 2025).

From this interview, it can be concluded that every obstacle in teaching can be solved in various ways by the teacher when guiding children's learning, including applying discipline, focus, and more attention to children who experience difficulties in learning and reading.

## **Discussion**

From these research results, the teacher's role in using the singing method to improve early childhood initial reading ability is very important because as a teacher, they play a crucial role in guiding, directing, stimulating abilities, potential, as well as interests and talents of a child (Khoiriyah, 2016). By conducting direct observation in the classroom at the initial stage, the researcher can understand children's development in the language development aspect based on achievement indicators previously set in the research instrument.

Looking at the research process regarding the language development aspect, the Implementation of the Singing Method in Improving Initial Reading Ability of Children Aged 4-5 Years at PAUD DAKAR, it can be interpreted that language development in children aged 4-5 years is very important. Therefore, as parents and educational institutions, it is essential to provide guidance and stimulation to early childhood regarding language development. The language development aspect grows very rapidly when children are still in the golden age, which is also why implementing learning activities through singing is felt to be very important. It not only influences the language development aspect but also affects all aspects of early childhood development.

The developmental aspects in early childhood are the most important parts to be developed, especially language development. Because language is the primary means of communication. Providing stimulation for this language development can be done not only at school but also at home with parents, especially since children spend more time at home with parents than at school. The implementation of the singing method in improving initial reading ability of children aged 4-5 years using alphabet letter card media functions to expand children's vocabulary so that they become braver and more confident, and children are able to gradually capture and convey what they see and hear.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that the implementation of the singing method is very effective in improving the initial reading ability of children aged 4-5 years at PAUD DAKAR. This is proven during the use of the singing method, as children listened to the alphabet song sung with great enthusiasm and excitement, could repeat the requested vowel and consonant song, were able to imitate the pronunciation of letters A to Z, gained new vocabulary in communication, and developed speaking ability.

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