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IMPROVING LETTER RECOGNITION SKILLS THROUGH THE IMLA METHOD ASSISTED BY SNACK PACKAGING MEDIA IN CHILDREN AGED 5–6 YEARS

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Abstract

This study aimed to improve letter recognition skills in children aged 5–6 years through the implementation of the imla method assisted by snack packaging media. The study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the Kemmis and McTaggart model consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. The research subjects were 15 children in Group B at RA Nur Sholih. Data were collected through observation, documentation, and performance assessment and analyzed using descriptive quantitative techniques. The results showed a gradual improvement in children's letter recognition skills. Learning mastery increased from 33% in the pre-cycle stage to 67% in Cycle I and reached 87% in Cycle II. Children showed better ability in identifying letter symbols, mentioning letters, and writing letters according to instructions. The findings indicate that the imla method assisted by snack packaging media provides contextual and multisensory learning experiences that effectively support early literacy development.

Keywords: early literacy, imla method, snack packaging

Abstrak. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh rendahnya kemampuan mengenal huruf pada anak usia 5–6 tahun di RA Nur Sholih. Sebagian anak masih mengalami kesulitan dalam mengenali bentuk huruf, menyebutkan simbol huruf, serta membedakan bunyi dan lambang huruf. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan mengenal huruf melalui metode imla berbantuan media bungkus snack pada anak usia 5–6 tahun. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) model Kemmis dan McTaggart yang meliputi tahap perencanaan, pelaksanaan tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Penelitian dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus. Subjek dalam penelitian ini adalah seluruh peserta didik kelompok B di RA Nur Sholih yang berjumlah 15 anak, terdiri atas 5 anak laki-laki dan 10 anak perempuan. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, dokumentasi, dan penilaian perkembangan anak. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan metode imla berbantuan media bungkus snack dapat meningkatkan kemampuan mengenal huruf anak. Anak terlihat lebih aktif, antusias, dan mudah memahami bentuk serta bunyi huruf karena media pembelajaran yang digunakan dekat dengan kehidupan sehari-hari mereka. Peningkatan kemampuan anak terlihat dari hasil observasi pada setiap siklus yang menunjukkan perkembangan dalam menyebutkan, menunjukkan, dan menuliskan huruf. Dengan demikian, metode imla berbantuan media bungkus snack dapat digunakan sebagai alternatif pembelajaran yang menarik dan efektif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan mengenal huruf pada anak usia dini.

Kata-kata Kunci : anak usia dini; bungkus snack ; metode imla

Background

Early Childhood Education (ECE) plays an important role in supporting children's growth and development during the golden age period, when various developmental aspects grow rapidly and become the foundation for later learning stages. Learning experiences provided during this period should be developmentally appropriate, meaningful, and stimulating to optimize children's cognitive, language, social, and emotional development. Therefore, educational activities in early childhood settings need to provide engaging learning experiences that encourage children's active participation and exploration (Aisyah & Musa, 2023; Retnaningrum & Lathifah, 2020).

One important developmental aspect that needs stimulation in early childhood education is language development, particularly early literacy skills. Early literacy refers to foundational competencies that prepare children for future reading and writing development. One essential component of early literacy is letter recognition ability, which includes identifying letter symbols, distinguishing letter shapes, connecting symbols with sounds, and beginning to write letters. These skills serve as the basis for subsequent literacy development because difficulties in recognizing letters may hinder children's reading readiness in later educational stages (Rani & Kurnia, 2024).

Letter recognition ability is children's ability to recognize, distinguish, mention, and understand letter symbols representing language sounds (Chandra, 2017). This ability is influenced by the teaching methods and learning media used by teachers during the learning process. The use of attractive and interactive media can help children understand letter shapes and sounds more easily compared to monotonous learning that does not actively engage children. According to Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory, children aged 5–6 years are in the preoperational stage, in which they learn more effectively through direct experiences

and the use of concrete objects. In addition, Lev Vygotsky emphasized the importance of social interaction and adult guidance in supporting children's language and literacy development. Therefore, letter recognition learning needs to be presented contextually, interactively, and through concrete media so that children can construct meaningful understanding.

Preliminary observations conducted at RA Nur Sholih indicated that children's letter recognition skills had not yet developed optimally. Of the 15 children observed, 10 children experienced difficulties in recognizing letter symbols, differentiating letters with similar shapes, and connecting sounds with letter symbols correctly. Classroom observations also showed that learning activities still relied on teacher explanations and board-based exercises with limited use of interactive learning media. As a result, children tended to lose focus quickly, showed low participation during literacy activities, and demonstrated inconsistent performance when asked to identify or write letters.

Several previous studies have reported that both learning media and *imla* methods contribute positively to children's literacy development. However, previous studies generally examined instructional methods and learning media separately. Research integrating contextual media derived from children's daily environment with multisensory literacy strategies remains limited. In addition, studies investigating the use of familiar environmental materials to strengthen auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning experiences simultaneously are still relatively scarce. This situation indicates the need for learning innovations that integrate methods and contextual media in early literacy instruction.

Based on these conditions, The *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media was selected as an alternative strategy to address these challenges. The *imla* method encourages children to listen, repeat, recognize, and rewrite letters, thereby strengthening the relationship between sounds and symbols. Meanwhile, snack packaging media were chosen because they are familiar to children, visually attractive, easy to obtain, and closely related to children's daily experiences. The integration of these media is expected to increase children's engagement and facilitate more meaningful literacy learning experiences.

The combination of the *imla* method and snack packaging media makes letter recognition learning multisensory, as it simultaneously involves auditory, visual, and kinesthetic aspects. This approach is consistent with child development theories emphasizing the importance of direct experience in the learning process. Furthermore, the multisensory approach is believed to create a more enjoyable, meaningful, and effective learning experience in improving the letter recognition ability of children aged 5–6 years. This approach is also supported by Multisensory Learning theory and findings from educational neuroscience, which state that emotional involvement and contextual experiences can strengthen children's learning processes and memory retention (Immordino-Yang, 2020).

The novelty of this study lies in integrating the *imla* method with snack packaging media to create a contextual multisensory literacy approach that combines auditory, visual, and kinesthetic experiences simultaneously. Unlike previous studies that focused only on instructional methods or media separately, this study combines both elements to support letter recognition development through familiar learning contexts. Therefore, this study aims to improve letter recognition skills among children aged 5–6 years through the implementation of the *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media.

The research problem in this study is how to improve letter recognition ability through the *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media in children aged 5–6 years at RA Nur Sholih. This study focuses on improving letter recognition ability, including the ability to recognize letter shapes, mention letters, and write simple letters through the implementation of the *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media. The research subjects are limited to Group B children aged 5–6 years at RA Nur Sholih. The objective of this study is to improve letter recognition ability through the *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media in children aged 5–6 years at RA Nur Sholih.

The originality of this study lies in the use of the *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media to improve the letter recognition ability of children aged 5–6 years at RA Nur Sholih. This study not only focuses on the outcomes of improving letter recognition ability but also on the implementation process of the *imla* method using concrete media closely related to children's daily lives. In addition, the use of snack packaging as multisensory learning media in the context of early childhood education is still rarely found in previous studies; therefore, this study is expected to provide a new innovation in early literacy learning for young children. Based on previous studies, it can be concluded that most research on letter recognition in early childhood has used dictation/*imla* methods or concrete media separately. Studies using the *imla* method generally have not utilized concrete media closely related to children's daily lives, while studies using snack packaging media have not systematically integrated the *imla* method as the main learning strategy. In addition, there is still limited research combining auditory, visual, and kinesthetic approaches simultaneously in letter recognition learning. Therefore, research combining the *imla* method with concrete snack packaging media is needed to create learning that is more contextual, engaging, and effective for children aged 5–6 years.

Method

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which consists of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. Classroom Action Research was selected because it aims to improve learning practices directly through cyclical interventions implemented in classroom settings. The study used a

descriptive quantitative approach to examine improvements in children's letter recognition skills after the implementation of the *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2014).

The research was conducted at RA Nur Sholih, located in Jatisari Village, Jenggawah District, Jember Regency, during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The participants consisted of all 15 children in Group B aged 5–6 years, including 5 boys and 10 girls. Participants were selected using total sampling because all children in the class became research subjects in accordance with the characteristics of classroom action research.

The research procedure was carried out through several stages. In the planning stage, the researcher prepared the Daily Learning Implementation Plan (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran Harian / RPPH*), snack packaging media, observation sheets, and assessment instruments for letter recognition ability. In the action stage, the *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media was implemented in learning activities. Children were invited to listen to letter sounds, mention letters, recognize writing on snack packaging, and rewrite letters according to the teacher's instructions. Furthermore, the observation stage was conducted to observe children's activities and the development of their letter recognition ability during the learning process. The final stage was reflection, which was carried out to evaluate the results of the actions in each cycle as the basis for improvements in the next cycle.

Data collection techniques included observation, documentation, and performance assessment. The instruments used consisted of observation sheets for children's learning activities, performance assessment sheets, and documentation guidelines. The assessed indicators included recognizing letter shapes, mentioning letter symbols, and writing letters according to teacher instructions.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques through percentage calculations and comparisons of achievement levels across cycles. The percentage formula used was (Anas Sudijono in Waraningsih, 2014:35):

$$P = (f/N) \times 100\%$$

where P represents the percentage of mastery, f represents achieved indicators, and N represents the total indicators assessed. Qualitative observation data were analyzed through data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and reflection to support quantitative findings.

The results of the data analysis were used to determine the improvement in children's letter recognition ability during the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II stages. The study was considered successful when at least 75% of children achieved the categories of Developing as Expected (BSH) and Developing Very Well (BSB).

Discussion

This classroom action research was conducted at RA Nur Sholih, located in Krajan Hamlet, Jatisari Village, Jenggawah District, Jember Regency, involving Group B children consisting of 15 students, including 5 boys and 10 girls. This study aimed to improve the letter recognition ability of children aged 5–6 years through the implementation of the *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media. The research was carried out through three stages: pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II. Each cycle consisted of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection stages. The research data were obtained through observations of children's activities and assessments of their letter recognition ability.

In the pre-cycle stage, learning activities still used conventional methods in the form of explanations and simple exercises on the whiteboard. Based on the results of the initial observations, most children still experienced difficulties in recognizing letters, including mentioning letters, identifying letter shapes, and writing letters according to the teacher's dictation. The children appeared less focused and less interested in the learning activities because the learning media used were still limited and less attractive to the children.

Pre-Cycle Results

The pre-cycle stage was conducted to identify children's initial letter recognition abilities before implementing the intervention. Learning activities at this stage still used conventional approaches dominated by teacher explanations and board-based exercises. Observation results showed that many children experienced difficulties in identifying letter symbols, differentiating similar letters, and writing letters according to teacher instructions.

Table 1 shows that only 33% of children reached the Good and Very Good categories, indicating that children's letter recognition ability had not yet achieved the predetermined success criteria of 75%.

Table 1 Pre-Cycle Letter Recognition Ability Results

Category	Number of children	Percentage
Very Good	2	13%
Good	3	20%
Fair	6	40%
Needs Guidance	4	27%
Total	15	100%

These findings indicate that learning activities before intervention had not optimally facilitated early literacy development.

Based on the data above, only 5 children (33%) were categorized as Good and Very Good. These results indicate that the children's letter recognition ability was still low and had not yet achieved the research success indicator, namely that at least 75% of the children should be in the Good or Very Good category. Therefore, improvements in the learning process

were needed through the implementation of the *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media.

Cycle I Research Results

The implementation of Cycle I introduced the *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media. Children were involved in observing letters on snack packaging, listening to teacher instructions, mentioning letters, and rewriting dictated letters.

Observation results showed improvements in children's engagement and participation during learning activities. The percentage of children achieving the Good and Very Good categories increased from 33% to 67%. However, several children still experienced difficulties when writing letters independently. Although improvement occurred, the achievement had not yet reached the predetermined success criterion.

At this stage, the researcher prepared the Daily Learning Implementation Plan (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran Harian / RPPH*), snack packaging media, observation sheets, and assessment instruments for children's letter recognition ability.

The learning activities were carried out by introducing various snack packages containing written letters. The children were asked to observe the letters on the packaging, after which the teacher dictated letters for the children to mention and write down. This activity began to attract the children's attention because the media used were closely related to their daily lives.

The observation results showed that the children became more active and focused during the learning process. However, some children still required assistance when writing the letters dictated by the teacher.

Table 2 Letter Recognition Ability Results in Cycle I

Category	Number of children	Percentage
Very Good	4	27%
Good	6	40%
Fair	4	27%
Needs Guidance	1	6%
Total	15	100%

The number of children who achieved the Good and Very Good categories was 10 children (67%). These results indicate an improvement compared to the pre-cycle stage; however, they had not yet reached the predetermined indicator of success.

Based on the reflection results, the snack packaging media proved to be effective in attracting the children's attention. However, several children still experienced difficulties in writing letters correctly. Therefore, improvements were made in Cycle II by providing clearer examples of letter writing and adding more varied learning activities.



Figure 1. Implementation of Snack Packaging Media During Letter Recognition Activities

Cycle II Research Results

Cycle II focused on improving learning activities through additional letter-search games and clearer writing demonstrations. Learning activities became more interactive and provided greater opportunities for children to engage actively.

The results showed substantial improvement in children's letter recognition ability. A total of 87% of children achieved the Good and Very Good categories. Children demonstrated greater confidence in identifying letters, connecting sounds with symbols, and writing letters according to instructions. These findings indicate that the intervention successfully achieved

In Cycle II, the learning activities were improved by adding a letter-finding game using snack packaging media and by providing clearer examples of letter writing from the teacher.

The learning activities became more active and enjoyable. The children not only observed letters on snack packaging but also searched for specific letters and then wrote them according to the teacher's instructions.

The observation results showed a significant improvement. The children became more enthusiastic, focused, and were able to follow the learning activities effectively.

The results of children's letter recognition ability in Cycle II are as follows:

Table 3 Letter Recognition Ability Results in Cycle II

Category	Number of children	Percentage
Very Good	7	47%
Good	6	40%
Fair	2	13%
Needs Guidance	0	0%
Total	15	100%

The number of children who achieved the Good and Very Good categories was 13 children (87%). These results indicate that the research success indicator has been achieved, as it exceeds the minimum criterion of 75%.

Based on the reflection results of Cycle II, the implementation of the *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media proved to be effective in improving children's letter

recognition ability. Since the success indicator had been achieved, the research was terminated at Cycle II.

Table 4. Research Data Tabulation

No	Student Name	Saying letters	Recognizing Letters	Writing Letters	Total Score	Percentage	Kategori
1	Azka	2	2	1	5	41%	Fair
2	Zaskia	2	1	1	4	33%	Fair
3	Kayla	3	2	2	7	58%	Good
4	Alfa	2	2	2	6	50%	Fair
5	Niken	3	2	2	7	58%	Good
6	Rama	2	1	1	4	33%	Fair
7	Noval	2	2	1	5	41%	Fair
8	Umma	3	3	2	8	66%	Good
9	Kania	2	2	1	5	41%	Fair
10	Nina	3	2	2	7	58%	Good
11	Nada	2	1	1	4	33%	Fair
12	Barok	3	2	2	7	58%	Good
13	Imel	2	2	1	5	41%	Fair
14	Qiesya	3	3	2	8	66%	Good
15	Putri	2	1	1	4	33%	Fair

The results of the study showed an improvement in the letter recognition ability of children aged 5–6 years through the implementation of the *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media. This improvement was evident from the results at each stage of the research, namely 33% in the pre-cycle, increasing to 67% in Cycle I, and reaching 87% in Cycle II.

In the pre-cycle stage, children's letter recognition ability was still low because the learning process was conventional and less engaging. The children tended to be passive and less focused during learning activities. After the implementation of the *imla* method with snack packaging media in Cycle I, there was an improvement because the children became more interested in the media used, which was closely related to their daily lives. In Cycle II, the learning process was further improved by adding varied activities such as letter-finding games and more structured letter-writing exercises. This made the children more active, enthusiastic, and better able to understand letter shapes and sounds. These improvements indicate that contextual learning involving concrete media can help children better understand letter concepts.

These findings are consistent with Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory, which states that young children learn more effectively through direct experiences and the use of concrete objects. In addition, multisensory learning that involves listening, seeing, and writing simultaneously also helps strengthen children's understanding (Bude, et.al., 2023).

Thus, it can be concluded that the implementation of the *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media is an effective learning strategy to improve letter recognition ability in children aged 5–6 years at RA Nur Sholih.

Stage	Good + Very Good	Percentage	Category
Pre-cycle	5 children	33%	Low
Cycle I	10 children	67%	Moderate
Cycle II	13 children	87%	High

The findings demonstrate a progressive increase in children's achievement across research cycles, suggesting that contextual and multisensory learning activities positively influenced letter recognition development.

Discussion

The improvement in children's letter recognition ability indicates that the *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media contributed positively to early literacy learning. The increase occurred because learning activities involved multiple sensory experiences simultaneously, including listening to letter sounds, observing letter symbols, and rewriting letters. Such multisensory experiences may strengthen children's understanding because learning becomes more concrete and meaningful (Mahzuna, et.al., 2023).

These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that contextual learning media improve children's engagement and literacy achievement. Mahzuna et al. reported that snack packaging media increased children's attention because the materials were familiar and attractive. Similarly, Rahmawati and Setiawan found that combining auditory and visual stimulation supports phonemic awareness development among preschool children.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings support Piaget's theory that children in the preoperational stage learn more effectively through direct experiences and concrete objects. Snack packaging media provided real-world learning contexts that facilitated symbol recognition. Furthermore, Vygotsky's perspective emphasizes that guided interaction during *imla* activities enabled children to construct literacy knowledge through teacher support and social interaction.

The novelty of this study lies in integrating contextual environmental media with the *imla* method within a multisensory learning framework. Unlike previous studies that examined instructional methods or learning media separately, this study combined both elements to create learning experiences that simultaneously stimulated auditory, visual, and kinesthetic processes. Practically, these findings suggest that early childhood teachers can utilize environmental materials available around children as literacy resources. The use of familiar objects may increase participation, reduce boredom, and create more meaningful literacy experiences.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the classroom action research conducted at RA Nur Sholih in Group B, it can be concluded that the implementation of the *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media is effective in improving the letter recognition ability of children aged 5–6 years. This improvement is shown by the results of 33% in the pre-cycle, increasing to 67% in Cycle I, and reaching 87% in Cycle II. These findings indicate that the research success indicator has been achieved, namely that at least 75% of the children reached the Good and Very Good categories.

The improvement in children's letter recognition ability occurred because the learning process became more engaging, contextual, and closely related to children's daily lives through the use of snack packaging media. The *imla* method also helped children practice listening, pronouncing, and writing letters in a more structured way. In addition, active involvement of children in learning activities made the learning process more enjoyable and less monotonous. Therefore, it can be concluded that the *imla* method assisted by snack packaging media is an effective alternative learning strategy to improve letter recognition skills in early childhood education at RA Nur Sholih.

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