

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Research

Language acquisition is a natural process that occurs during childhood when children acquire their first language or mother tongue (Septianingsih et al., 2024). This process happens through exposure, imitation, and interaction with the surrounding environment without requiring formal teaching. Children listen to the speech of their parents and people around them, recognize sound patterns, and gradually develop the ability to produce words and sentences. Environmental factors such as family interaction, social communication, and daily stimulation play an important role in supporting children's language development because the family environment is the first place where children gain language experience and interact directly with others (Alfira & Siregar, 2024). Therefore, understanding the characteristics of children at the early stage of learning is important to support their language development.

At this stage, children are often referred to as young learners, which means children who are at the beginning stage of education and are experiencing rapid cognitive, social, emotional, and language development. This stage generally refers to young children aged 4–6 years. At this age, children are in an important developmental period often called the golden age, when many aspects of development grow very quickly (Uce, 2017). During this period, providing appropriate stimulation is very important because this stage only happens once in a child's life. One important aspect that needs attention is language development, because children's language skills develop better when they are frequently involved in meaningful communication and interaction (Susanto, 2012; Khaironi, 2018; Morrison, 2012). In formal education, children aged 4–6 years are generally enrolled in kindergarten, which becomes an important environment for supporting their language development.

To support language development among young children in kindergarten, learning strategies that match children's characteristics are needed. One strategy is the use of learning media that can help children understand vocabulary more easily and in an interesting way. Learning media that use sound and visual elements can provide more meaningful learning experiences for children. Audio-visual learning media involve both hearing and sight so children can receive information through two senses at the same time (Jamila & Ammar, 2024). Through the combination of sound and pictures, children not only listen to explanations but also see visual representations of the information. In addition, multimedia-based learning media can help improve English vocabulary among young children and encourage them to be more involved in the learning process (Ilham et al., 2023).

However, the use of audio-visual media in learning also has some limitations. Most of the media used are in the form of videos or digital applications, which can make children passive viewers rather than active learners (Triana et al., 2023). Excessive use of screen-based media may also lead to screen dependency and reduce direct interaction between children and parents or teachers (Takaeb & Billik, 2023). This condition shows that children do not only need media that present information through audio or visual elements, but also media that allow them to interact more actively during the learning process. However, learning media that combine audio elements with children's sensory activities in a simple form that is easy to use in kindergarten learning are still rarely developed.

A strategy to support young children's language learning is developing learning media that combine audio with hands-on sensory activities, allowing children to see, touch, and hear while learning new vocabulary. Young children learn more effectively through concrete experiences that involve their senses directly. Media that combine visual elements, touch, and sound can help children understand vocabulary in a more interesting way. One example of such media is an audio sensory play book, which is a learning book that combines visual elements, textures, and audio to help children learn English vocabulary more interactively. In this media, the audio can be accessed through a barcode that is scanned using a digital device, so

children can listen to the pronunciation of vocabulary with guidance from parents or teachers.

Previous studies have shown that the use of audio and multimedia media can support language learning for young children. However, studies about learning media that combine audio elements and sensory activities in the form of interactive books are still limited, especially for teaching English vocabulary to children aged 4–6 years. Based on this issue, this study aims to develop a learning media in the form of an audio sensory play book equipped with barcode-based audio to help children learn English vocabulary. This media is designed to provide a learning experience that involves multiple senses while also encouraging assistance from parents or teachers during the learning process.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the research background, this study aims to address the following questions:

1. What are the processes of developing an integrated audio sensory play book for teaching English to young learners?
2. What was the feedback from experts and users on the development of the integrated audio sensory play book for teaching English to young learners?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the research questions, the objectives of this study are:

1. To describe the processes of developing an integrated audio sensory play book for teaching English to young learners.
2. To analyze the feedback from experts and users on the developed integrated audio sensory play book.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The development of appropriate learning media plays an important role in supporting the quality of young learners education. Media designed based on children's developmental characteristics can provide more meaningful and effective learning experiences, particularly in language learning.

This study introduces an audio sensory play book that combines audio elements with sensory activities for children aged 4–6 years. The stories and sentences in the book are kept simple, while audio accessed through barcodes is available only for selected key vocabulary. Parents or teachers scan the barcodes using digital devices, allowing children to hear correct pronunciation while still engaging in tactile and visual exploration. This approach helps children learn English vocabulary interactively and enjoyably, while still receiving adult guidance during the learning process.

In practice, the book enables children to explore textures, shapes, and visual elements while listening to the audio. Parents or teachers act as learning companions, guiding children to imitate words and practice pronunciation. By combining sensory exploration with audio input, the book offers an interactive English learning experience that is developmentally appropriate and enjoyable for young learners.

1.5 Output of the Research

This study produced an audio sensory play book entitled *Mumu's Garden Adventure*, designed to teach English to children aged 4–6 years. The book combines sensory activities with audio-based English learning. Each page presents simple themes and vocabulary suitable for kindergarten children, along with tactile elements such as different textures, shapes, and interactive materials that encourage children to explore using their senses.

Some key vocabulary words are accompanied by QR codes/barcodes, which are scanned by parents or teachers using a digital device. By scanning the barcode, children can listen to the correct pronunciation of English words and simple expressions. Parents or teachers act as learning companions, playing the audio together with the child and guiding them to imitate and pronounce the words correctly.

By integrating sensory exploration with auditory input, this book is designed to provide a more engaging, interactive, and developmentally appropriate learning experience for young children.