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ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Application of Magic Words Habituation (Please, Thank You, Sorry, and Excuse Me) in Building Character of Children Aged 5-6 Years

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ABSTRACT

Based on the problems identified at KB/TK AZ-Zaitun Bekasi, the polite character of children aged 5-6 years still needed improvement. This was evident from the fact that many children were not accustomed to saying "please," "thank you," "sorry," and "excuse me" in their daily interactions. Therefore, this study aimed to build children's polite character through the habituation of magic words in learning activities and daily school routines. The study focused on developing polite character in children aged 5-6 through the habituation of using the words "please," "thank you," "sorry," and "excuse me." The participants of this study were 10 children in Group B aged 5-6 years at KB/TK AZ-Zaitun Bekasi. This research employed the Classroom Action Research model of Kemmis and McTaggart, conducted in two cycles. Data were collected through observation, documentation, and field notes. The success criterion of this study was set at a minimum achievement of 80% in the development of children's polite character. The findings showed that the habituation of magic words was effective in building polite character among children aged 5-6 years. The observation results increased from 20.00% in the pre-cycle to 50.00% in cycle I and reached 80.00% in cycle II. These findings indicate that the consistent habituation of using the words "please," "thank you," "sorry," and "excuse me" can help children develop polite behavior in their daily lives.

Keywords: Magic Words Habituation, Polite Character, Early Childhood

ABSTRAK

Berdasarkan permasalahan yang teridentifikasi di KB/TK AZ-Zaitun Bekasi, karakter santun anak usia 5-6 tahun masih perlu ditingkatkan. Hal ini terlihat dari kenyataan bahwa banyak anak yang belum terbiasa mengucapkan "tolong," "terima kasih," "maaf," dan "permisi" dalam interaksi sehari-hari mereka. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membangun karakter santun anak melalui pembiasaan kata-kata ajaib dalam kegiatan pembelajaran dan rutinitas sekolah sehari-hari. Penelitian ini berfokus pada pengembangan karakter santun pada anak usia 5-6 tahun melalui pembiasaan penggunaan kata "tolong," "terima kasih," "maaf," dan "permisi." Partisipan dalam penelitian ini adalah 10 anak di Kelompok B usia 5-6 tahun di KB/TK AZ-Zaitun Bekasi. Penelitian ini menggunakan model Penelitian Tindakan Kelas dari Kemmis dan McTaggart yang dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, dokumentasi, dan catatan lapangan. Kriteria keberhasilan penelitian ini ditetapkan pada pencapaian minimal 80% dalam pengembangan karakter santun anak. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembiasaan kata-kata ajaib efektif dalam membangun karakter santun pada anak usia 5-6 tahun. Hasil observasi meningkat dari 20,00% pada pra-siklus menjadi 50,00% pada siklus I dan mencapai 80,00% pada siklus II. Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa pembiasaan yang konsisten dalam penggunaan kata "tolong," "terima kasih," "maaf," dan "permisi" dapat membantu anak mengembangkan perilaku santun dalam kehidupan sehari-hari mereka.

Kata Kunci: Pembiasaan Kata-Kata Ajaib, Karakter Santun, Anak Usia Dini

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1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is a crucial stage in laying the foundation for children's character development. At the age of 5-6 years, children are in the golden age period, when language, social, and emotional development occurs very rapidly, making them more receptive to absorbing various values, habits, and behaviors from their surrounding environment. Therefore, parents and teachers play an important role in instilling character values through consistent habituation to form positive behaviors that become provisions for children in their daily lives. According to Cahya and Siregar (2024), early childhood are individuals who are in the early developmental period that is strongly influenced by parenting patterns and the environment in character formation. Meanwhile, Watini (2024) states that early childhood are children in the age range from birth to six years who are undergoing rapid growth and development processes, thus requiring appropriate guidance and stimulation to develop optimally.

Character education is one of the important aspects that needs to be instilled from early childhood because it becomes the foundation for forming children's attitudes, behavior, and personality. At the age of 5-6 years, children are in a period of very rapid development, making them more receptive to various values and habits obtained from the family and school environment. Therefore, character education needs to be provided from an early age through consistent habituation so that positive values become part of children's behavior in daily life. Ki Hajar Dewantara stated that the purpose of education is not only to develop intellectual abilities but also to form good character. In line with this, Maria Montessori emphasized that a structured and conducive learning

environment plays an important role in shaping positive habits in children from an early age (Andrianto & Kurniawan, 2025). According to Aprily (2023), character formation in children is not only the responsibility of parents but also teachers as educators in the school environment. In addition to developing cognitive abilities, education in early childhood needs to be directed toward forming attitudes, personality, and behaviors that reflect character values.

The family, school, and community environments have a significant influence on children's character development. However, in daily life, various behaviors still indicate that positive character has not developed, such as fighting with friends, speaking impolitely, taking other people's belongings without permission, and not wanting to wait their turn. These conditions show that character cultivation needs to be carried out from an early age through consistent habituation to form positive behavior in children (Alifah, 2021).

One of the important character values to develop in early childhood is polite character. Polite character reflects children's ability to appreciate, respect, and interact well with others according to applicable norms. Instilling polite character is not enough through giving advice but needs to be built through continuous habituation in daily life. Through such habituation, children learn to show respectful, caring, responsible attitudes, and are able to establish positive social relationships with teachers, friends, and people around them (Fajarini & Fauzi, 2023).

Polite character is one of the important character values to instill from an early age because it becomes the foundation for forming children's ability to appreciate, respect, and interact well with others. This behavior can be realized through the habit of using polite words such as please, thank you, sorry, and excuse me in daily life. According to Pangesti and Aerin, the habituation of using these words needs to be done consistently because many children are still not accustomed to applying them in social interactions. In line with this, Tasya and Sitorus (2025) explain that the habituation of using polite words in the school environment helps children understand and apply polite behavior when interacting with teachers and peers. Furthermore, Putrihapsari and Dimiyati (2021) emphasize that the formation of polite character will be more effective if supported by continuous habituation and role modeling from adults in the family, school, and community environments.

The habituation that can be applied to instill polite character is the use of magic words, namely please, thank you, sorry, and excuse me. The use of these words teaches children to appreciate others' help, acknowledge mistakes, ask permission, and communicate politely. Repeated habituation will form positive habits so that character values can be embedded in children. Research conducted by Ilmiah and Jwd (2025) shows that the continuous application of the words sorry, please, and thank you is effective in shaping children's social character through the habituation process.

Based on initial observations conducted at KB/TK AZ-ZAITUN Bekasi, some children aged 5-6 years were still not accustomed to using magic words in daily activities. Some children still asked for help without saying please, had not said thank you after receiving help, had not apologized when making mistakes, and were not accustomed to saying excuse me when passing teachers or friends. These conditions indicate that the habituation of using magic words as part of building

polite character has not developed optimally, so planned and continuous efforts are needed in the learning process.

Various studies have proven that the habituation of using magic words can improve social character and polite behavior in early childhood. However, research that specifically examines the application of habituation of the words please, thank you, sorry, and excuse me in building the character of children aged 5-6 years through Classroom Action Research at KB/TK AZ-ZAITUN Bekasi is still limited. Therefore, this research has novelty because it focuses on the application of magic words habituation as a strategy to build children's polite character through actions carried out systematically in learning activities.

Based on the initial observations conducted at KB/TK AZ-Zaitun Bekasi in Group B aged 5-6 years, some children were still found to be unaccustomed to saying magic words such as please, thank you, sorry, and excuse me in daily activities. Some children still needed to be reminded by the teacher when interacting with friends and adults. These conditions indicate that polite behavior has not fully become a habit, so consistent and continuous habituation efforts are needed in the learning process.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method with the Kemmis and McTaggart model. This method was chosen because it aims to improve and enhance the learning process through systematic and repeated actions in several cycles. According to Fajarini and Fauzi (2023), Classroom Action Research is an effort to improve the learning process carried out in a planned manner to enhance the quality of learning and student learning outcomes. In line with this, Widiastuti and Watini et al. (2024) state that Classroom Action Research is a learning improvement process carried out systematically through the stages of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. Azzahro and Watini et al. (2024) also explain that the implementation of CAR through several cycles can increase children's involvement in the learning process so that learning outcomes develop optimally.

This research was conducted at KB/TK AZ-Zaitun Bekasi with research subjects consisting of 10 children in Group B1 aged 5-6 years, consisting of 4 boys and 6 girls. The focus of this research is the application of magic words habituation, namely please, thank you, sorry, and excuse me, to build children's polite character in daily activities at school.

The research procedure refers to the Kemmis and McTaggart model consisting of four stages, namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. These four stages were carried out in two cycles, and each cycle was used as a basis for improvement in the next cycle.

Data collection techniques were carried out through observation and documentation. Observation was used to observe the development of children's polite character during the learning process, while documentation was used as supporting data in the form of activity photos and notes during the research. Data were analyzed descriptively quantitatively using the percentage of children's developmental achievement in each cycle and supported by qualitative descriptive analysis to describe the process of implementing the action. The research was declared successful if at least

75% of children achieved the Developing as Expected (BSH) and Very Well Developed (BSB) categories on the polite character indicators.

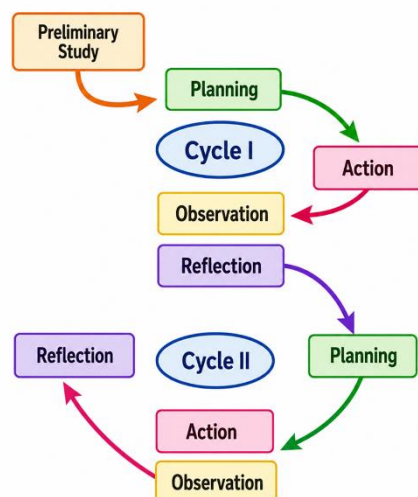


Figure 1. Kemmis and McTaggart Classroom Action Research Model

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Before the implementation of the action, the researcher conducted a pre-cycle stage to determine the initial condition of the polite character of children aged 5-6 years at KB/TK AZ-Zaitun Bekasi. At this stage, the researcher coordinated with the classroom teacher, prepared research instruments in the form of observation sheets, and conducted initial observations on March 13, 2026, during learning activities. The observation results showed that most children were not accustomed to using magic words such as "please," "thank you," "sorry," and "excuse me" in daily interactions. Children still needed teacher guidance in consistently applying polite behavior. These conditions indicated that children's polite character had not developed optimally, so action was needed through the application of magic words habituation in Cycle I.

Pre-Cycle

Before the action was carried out, the researcher conducted an initial observation to determine the condition of children's polite character. The observation results showed that most children were not accustomed to saying magic words such as please, thank you, sorry, and excuse me in daily activities. Some children still needed to be reminded by the teacher when asking for help, receiving help, making mistakes, and when passing by others.



Figure 2. Pre-Cycle Observation Activities

The pre-cycle observation results showed that 3 children (30%) were in the Not Yet Developed (BB) category, 5 children (50%) were in the Starting to Develop (MB) category, and 2 children (20%) were in the Developing as Expected (BSH) category. No children had reached the Very Well Developed (BSB) category. These conditions indicated that children's polite character still needed to be improved through consistent habituation activities.

Table 1. Pre-Cycle Observation Results

No.	Indicator	BB	MB	BSH	BSB
1	Children are accustomed to saying "please" when asking for help.	40%	40%	20%	0%
2	Children are accustomed to saying "thank you" after receiving help.	50%	30%	20%	0%
3	Children are accustomed to saying "sorry" when making mistakes.	30%	60%	10%	0%
4	Children are accustomed to saying "excuse me" when passing by others.	50%	40%	10%	0%
Total Children (n = 10)		10	10	10	10

Cycle I

Cycle I in this study was part of the research series conducted over three months, from March to May 2026. The research implementation followed the stages in the Classroom Action Research model, namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The implementation of actions in Cycle I was conducted in 4 meetings starting in March 2026, before the Eid al-Fitr holiday. At this initial stage, the activities carried out were still limited and light, such as reintroducing songs about magic words to children. This activity aimed to provide initial stimulus and remind children of the use of the words "please," "thank you," "sorry," and "excuse me" in daily life. In addition, the researcher conducted more observations of children's behavior in interacting, considering the children's condition while fasting. Furthermore, the implementation of actions continued after the Eid al-Fitr holiday in April 2026. At this stage, learning activities were carried out in a more directed and intensive manner through various activities that supported the habituation of using magic words, such as singing and simple discussions.

Planning

The researcher coordinated with the classroom teacher to develop learning activities focused on introducing magic words. The researcher prepared lesson plans and media in the form of simple songs about the words "please," "thank you," "sorry," and "excuse me."

Action Implementation

The action implementation was carried out from 08:00-11:00 WIB. The implementation process was conducted in the Group B1 classroom of KB/TK Az-Zaitun. The series of activities during the learning process was carried out based on the prepared lesson plans, including the following:

Opening (08:00 - 08:25): The activity began with welcoming children according to school SOPs. Children were then directed to line up, do attendance, and enter the classroom. Furthermore, the activity continued with prayers before learning and ice breaking in the form of simple songs to create a pleasant learning atmosphere. Main Activity (08:25 - 09:40): In the first meeting, the teacher introduced the importance of using magic words through educational video songs and then invited children to discuss when these words are used. In the second meeting, children began practicing the use of magic words during learning and play activities with friends. In the third meeting, children made "Magic Word House" media as a means to recognize and remember the use of polite words. In the fourth meeting, the teacher provided reinforcement through the habituation of using magic words in all learning activities and then evaluated the development of children's polite character. Snack Time and Break (09:40 - 10:10): Children carried out break activities such as washing hands, praying before eating, eating together, and playing freely in the school environment. Closing Activity (10:10 - 11:00): In the closing activity, the teacher invited children to do simple reflection by asking again about the magic words they had learned. Children were given reinforcement and motivation, then the activity ended with prayer and greetings.

Observation

The observation results showed an improvement compared to the pre-cycle condition. Some children began to be accustomed to saying please when asking for help and thank you after receiving help. However, some children still needed guidance to say sorry and excuse me spontaneously. The observation results showed that 1 child (10%) was in the Not Yet Developed (BB) category, 4 children (40%) were in the Starting to Develop (MB) category, 3 children (30%) were in the Developing as Expected (BSH) category, and 2 children (20%) were in the Very Well Developed (BSB) category.

Table 2. Cycle I Observation Results

No.	Indicator	BB	MB	BSH	BSB
1	Children are accustomed to saying "please" when asking for help.	0%	40%	40%	20%
2	Children are accustomed to saying "thank you" after receiving help.	0%	70%	20%	10%
3	Children are accustomed to saying "sorry" when making mistakes.	0%	60%	30%	10%
4	Children are accustomed to saying "excuse me" when passing by others.	0%	50%	40%	10%
Total Children (n = 10)		10	10	10	10

Reflection

Based on the reflection results, the application of magic words habituation in Cycle I had shown an improvement in children's polite character, but the results had not yet reached the research success indicators. Some children still needed to be reminded to use polite words in certain situations. Therefore, in Cycle II, learning improvements were made by using more interesting methods and providing opportunities for children to practice using magic words directly.

Cycle II

In Cycle II, the researcher made improvements to the learning plan based on the reflection results from Cycle I. The teacher added more interesting role-playing activities, provided simple rewards such as achievement stars, and strengthened habituation with more consistent positive reinforcement. The teacher also became more active in providing real examples in every activity so that children became more accustomed to using magic words. Cycle II was conducted in four meetings.

Planning

Based on the reflection results from Cycle I, the researcher perfected the learning tools, prepared media in the form of hand puppets for storytelling activities, and materials for making flower bouquets as more interesting learning media for children.

Action Implementation

In the first meeting, the teacher delivered a story using hand puppets that contained examples of using the words please, thank you, sorry, and excuse me. In the second meeting, children practiced using magic words through role-playing activities with friends. In the third meeting, children made flower bouquets while practicing the use of polite words during group collaboration. In the fourth meeting, the teacher conducted habituation of using magic words in all learning activities and then evaluated the development of children's polite character.





Figure 3. Documentation of Cycle II Activities

Observation

The observation results in Cycle II showed significant improvement. Children began to be accustomed to using the words please, thank you, sorry, and excuse me without always being reminded by the teacher. Interactions between children also appeared more polite and respectful. The observation results showed that 2 children (20%) were in the Starting to Develop (MB) category, 3 children (30%) were in the Developing as Expected (BSH) category, and 5 children (50%) were in the Very Well Developed (BSB) category. There were no longer any children in the Not Yet Developed (BB) category. Thus, 80% of children had achieved the BSH and BSB categories, so the research success indicators had been met.

Table 3. Cycle II Observation Results

No.	Indicator	BB	MB	BSH	BSB
1	Children are accustomed to saying "please" when asking for help.	0%	10%	50%	40%
2	Children are accustomed to saying "thank you" after receiving help.	0%	20%	60%	20%
3	Children are accustomed to saying "sorry" when making mistakes.	0%	30%	40%	30%
4	Children are accustomed to saying "excuse me" when passing by others.	0%	20%	50%	30%
Total Children (n = 10)		10	10	10	10

Reflection

Based on the pre-cycle observation results of 20%, followed by an increase in Cycle I to 50%, and Based on the research results conducted over two cycles, it can be concluded that the application of habituation of using the magic words "please," "thank you," "sorry," and "excuse me" can help build the character of children aged 5-6 years at KB/TK AZ-Zaitun Bekasi. The research results showed an improvement in children's ability to apply the use of magic words during the learning process. In the pre-cycle stage, the research success percentage was still relatively low at 20%. This indicates that most children were not accustomed to using magic words in daily life and still needed guidance from the teacher. Children tended not to understand the importance of saying

"please," "thank you," "sorry," and "excuse me" when interacting with others. Based on the pre-cycle observation results, most children were still in the Not Yet Developed (BB) and Starting to Develop (MB) categories. Children often were not accustomed to saying magic words when asking for help, receiving help, making mistakes, or when passing others. Some children still needed to be reminded by the teacher to use polite words in daily activities. This shows that the habituation of using magic words had not been optimally applied, so action was needed to improve children's character development.

During the research process, the researcher conducted actions in two cycles, where each cycle consisted of four meetings. During the observation implementation over four meetings in Cycle I, the researcher observed changes in children's behavior in using the magic words "please," "thank you," "sorry," and "excuse me" in daily activities. Learning activities were carried out gradually through magic word songs, role play, magic word cards, and direct habituation when children interacted with teachers and friends.

After actions were taken in Cycle I through various habituation activities such as singing magic word songs, role play, using magic word cards, and direct practice in daily activities, the success percentage increased to 50%. At this stage, children began to show better behavioral changes. Some children appeared more confident in saying magic words when asking for help, receiving help, making mistakes, and when passing others. Children also appeared more enthusiastic about participating in learning activities because the activities provided were more interesting and actively involved children.

Nevertheless, the results in Cycle I still had not reached the research success indicator of 70% because there were still several children in the Starting to Develop (MB) category. Some children still needed guidance and reminders from the teacher to be more accustomed to using magic words consistently. This happened because the character formation process in early childhood cannot be done instantly but requires a habituation process carried out repeatedly and continuously.

Based on the reflection results from Cycle I, improvements were made in Cycle II by adding more interesting activities that actively involved children, such as using hand puppets, creative activities making flower bouquets, decorating pencil cases, making headbands, and making glass hangers. In addition, the teacher also provided positive reinforcement and simple rewards in the form of achievement stars as a form of appreciation for children's behavior. These activities made children more enthusiastic and motivated in participating in learning. Furthermore, during the observation implementation over four meetings in Cycle II, learning activities were designed more interestingly based on the reflection results from Cycle I. The researcher added various creative activities such as using hand puppets, making flower bouquets, decorating pencil cases, making headbands, as well as providing simple rewards and positive reinforcement. During the activities, it was observed that children became more enthusiastic, active, and began to be accustomed to using magic words independently without always being reminded by the teacher.

In Cycle II, the success percentage increased to 80%. This improvement indicates that most children had achieved the Developing as Expected (BSH) and Very Well Developed (BSB) categories. Children began to be accustomed to using magic words without always being reminded by the teacher. They also appeared more confident in interacting with friends and teachers during

learning activities. Children began to be accustomed to saying "please" when asking for help, saying "thank you" after receiving help, apologizing when making mistakes, and saying "excuse me" when passing others.

The improvement from the pre-cycle of 20%, to 50% in Cycle I, and increasing again to 80% in Cycle II shows that consistent habituation has an influence on children's character development. This improvement proves that the continuous use of magic words helps children understand good behavior and apply it in daily life. The results of this study are in line with the opinion of Khofifah (2022), which states that character cultivation in early childhood can be done through consistent habituation and role modeling. In addition, Hasanah (2022) also explains that children's character development occurs through continuous habituation in daily activities so that it can form positive behavior in children. This study is also supported by research by Ida Nurhayati (2024), which states that the implementation of habituation using the words "please," "sorry," "thank you," and "excuse me" can help shape the character of early childhood through repeated activities. The results of this study show that simple habituation carried out consistently can help children understand polite behavior from an early age.

Furthermore, the success of this study cannot be separated from the teacher's role as a role model in providing examples of using magic words during learning activities. The teacher not only provided guidance but also directly demonstrated good behavior so that children could imitate it. A positive school environment support also helps children become more accustomed to applying magic words in daily activities. Thus, the application of habituation of using the magic words "please," "thank you," "sorry," and "excuse me" has been proven to help build the character of children aged 5-6 years at KB/TK AZ-Zaitun Bekasi. Consistent, interesting habituation accompanied by positive reinforcement can bring about better behavioral changes in children.

The research results show that the application of magic words habituation can improve the polite character of children aged 5-6 years at KB/TK AZ-Zaitun Bekasi. This improvement can be seen from changes in children's behavior in each cycle. Children who initially still needed to be reminded to use the words please, thank you, sorry, and excuse me began to be able to apply them independently in various learning activities and when interacting with teachers and peers. This improvement occurred because habituation was carried out consistently and repeatedly through various interesting activities, such as watching educational videos, making "Magic Word House" media, storytelling using hand puppets, role-playing, and making flower bouquets. These activities provided direct experience to children so they more easily understood when and how to use polite words in daily life. The results of this study are in line with Pangesti and Aerin, who stated that the habituation of using polite words needs to be done consistently to become a habit in children's social interactions. This study also supports the findings of Tasya and Sitorus (2025), which explain that the habituation of using the words please, thank you, sorry, and excuse me can improve polite behavior in early childhood. Furthermore, Putrihapsari and Dimyati (2021) state that the formation of polite character will be more effective if supported by continuous habituation and role modeling from teachers and parents. Thus, it can be concluded that the application of magic words habituation is an effective strategy to build the polite character of children aged 5-6 years. Habituation carried out repeatedly, consistently, and supported by interesting learning activities can improve children's ability to apply polite behavior in the school environment. then continued with a significant increase in Cycle II to 80%, the application of magic words habituation was

proven to improve the polite character of children aged 5-6 years. Children began to be accustomed to using the words please, thank you, sorry, and excuse me in various activities without always being reminded by the teacher. Therefore, the research was stopped in Cycle II because the success indicators had been achieved.

4. DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings from the two-cycle implementation, it can be concluded that the habituation of using the magic words "please," "thank you," "sorry," and "excuse me" is effective in building the polite character of children aged 5-6 years at KB/TK AZ-Zaitun Bekasi. The research results demonstrated a significant improvement in children's ability to apply these polite expressions during the learning process. In the pre-cycle stage, the success rate was only 20%, indicating that most children were not yet accustomed to using magic words in daily interactions and still required substantial guidance from the teacher. Children tended not to understand the importance of saying "please," "thank you," "sorry," and "excuse me" when interacting with others. The pre-cycle observation results placed most children in the "Not Yet Developed" (BB) and "Starting to Develop" (MB) categories. Children frequently forgot to use polite expressions when asking for help, receiving assistance, making mistakes, or passing others, often needing repeated reminders from the teacher. This situation shows that the habituation of magic words had not been optimally applied, necessitating targeted interventions to improve children's character development.

During the research process, the researcher implemented actions across two cycles, each consisting of four meetings. Over the four meetings in Cycle I, the researcher observed noticeable changes in children's behavior regarding their use of the magic words "please," "thank you," "sorry," and "excuse me" in daily activities. Learning activities were introduced gradually through various engaging methods, including singing magic word songs, role-playing, using magic word cards, and direct habituation during interactions with teachers and peers. After implementing Cycle I interventions through these varied habituation activities, the success rate increased to 50%. At this stage, children began to show improved behavioral changes, with some appearing more confident in using magic words when asking for help, receiving assistance, making mistakes, and passing others. Children also displayed greater enthusiasm for participating in learning activities, as the activities provided were more interesting and actively involved them. This finding aligns with previous research on the effectiveness of habituation methods in early childhood character education (Sari et al., 2024; Kasmir et al., 2026).

However, the results in Cycle I had not yet reached the research success indicator of 70%, as several children remained in the "Starting to Develop" (MB) category. Some children still required guidance and reminders from the teacher to use magic words consistently. This outcome is consistent with the understanding that character formation in early childhood cannot occur instantly but requires repeated and continuous habituation over time. Research by Fajarini (2023) and Aprily et al. (2023) emphasizes that character building in young children is a gradual process that depends on consistent exposure and reinforcement. Furthermore, studies on moral development in early childhood confirm that habituation methods require sustained application to produce lasting behavioral changes (Kasmir et al., 2026; Yusrafiddin et al., 2026).

Based on the reflection results from Cycle I, improvements were made in Cycle II by incorporating more engaging activities that actively involved children, such as using hand puppets, creative activities like making flower bouquets, decorating pencil cases, making headbands, and creating glass hangers. The teacher also provided positive reinforcement and simple rewards in the form of achievement stars as appreciation for children's polite behavior. These activities made children more enthusiastic and motivated to participate in learning. Furthermore, during the four meetings in Cycle II, learning activities were designed more creatively based on Cycle I reflections, with the addition of various hands-on activities, simple rewards, and consistent positive reinforcement. Research by Aprily et al. (2023) and Andini (2024) supports the finding that multisensory and reward-based approaches significantly enhance the effectiveness of magic words habituation in early childhood settings.

In Cycle II, the success rate increased to 80%, indicating that most children had reached the "Developing as Expected" (BSH) and "Very Well Developed" (BSB) categories. Children began to use magic words independently without needing constant reminders from the teacher, and they appeared more confident in interacting with friends and teachers during learning activities. Children became accustomed to saying "please" when asking for help, "thank you" after receiving assistance, "sorry" when making mistakes, and "excuse me" when passing others. The improvement from 20% in the pre-cycle to 50% in Cycle I, and further to 80% in Cycle II, demonstrates that consistent habituation has a significant influence on children's character development. This finding is corroborated by research on the habituation of four magic words in implementing polite and courteous morals in early childhood (Andini, 2024; Putri, 2024), as well as studies on the application of magic words in supporting early childhood character (Nisa et al., 2025).

The results of this study align with the findings of Khofifah (2022) and Hasanah (2022), which state that character cultivation in early childhood can be effectively achieved through consistent habituation and role modeling. Similarly, Lestari et al. (2022) emphasize that repeated positive behavior habituation forms ingrained habits in children's personalities. The study is also supported by research from Ida Nurhayati (2024), which demonstrates that implementing habituation using the words "please," "sorry," "thank you," and "excuse me" helps shape early childhood character through repeated activities. Furthermore, research on the implementation of classical conditioning methods on the ability to use three magic words in early childhood (2024) confirms that structured habituation approaches yield significant improvements in children's polite behavior.

The success of this study is inseparable from the teacher's role as a role model in demonstrating the use of magic words during learning activities. The teacher not only provided guidance but also directly modeled good behavior for children to imitate. A positive school environment also supported children in becoming more accustomed to applying magic words in daily activities. Research by Sari et al. (2024) on internalizing character education through habituation confirms that teacher role modeling and consistent school culture are crucial factors in early childhood character formation. Similarly, studies on consistency of teachers and parents in forming polite character (2025) highlight that collaborative and consistent role modeling between educators and families significantly enhances character development outcomes.

Furthermore, the integration of multisensory learning approaches with magic words habituation has been shown to improve children's polite behavior as an observable indicator of religious and moral value development (Yusrafiddin et al., 2026). Research by Dagtan (2025) on politeness strategies in classroom requests among bilingual preschoolers further supports the effectiveness of structured politeness interventions in early childhood educational settings. Studies on social skills training programs for preschoolers (Larose et al., 2021) and interactional training interventions (Pronina et al., 2021) also confirm that targeted, consistent interventions can significantly enhance children's social and communicative behaviors.

The research findings demonstrate that the application of magic words habituation effectively improves the polite character of children aged 5-6 years at KB/TK AZ-Zaitun Bekasi. This improvement is evident from the behavioral changes observed in each cycle, where children who initially needed reminders to use the words "please," "thank you," "sorry," and "excuse me" began to apply them independently in various learning activities and when interacting with teachers and peers. This progress occurred because habituation was implemented consistently and repeatedly through various interesting activities, such as watching educational videos, creating "Magic Word House" media, storytelling using hand puppets, role-playing, and making flower bouquets. These activities provided children with direct experiences that helped them understand when and how to use polite words in daily life.

The results of this study are consistent with Pangesti and Aerin (2023), who stated that the habituation of using polite words needs to be done consistently to become a habit in children's social interactions. This study also supports the findings of Tasya and Sitorus (2025), which explain that habituation of using the words "please," "thank you," "sorry," and "excuse me" can improve polite behavior in early childhood. Furthermore, Putrihapsari and Dimyati (2021) state that the formation of polite character is more effective when supported by continuous habituation and role modeling from teachers and parents. Research by Witasari and Wiyani (2022) also confirms that children accustomed to using polite words demonstrate significant improvements in building courteous social interactions. Thus, it can be concluded that the application of magic words habituation is an effective strategy for building the polite character of children aged 5-6 years. Habituation carried out repeatedly, consistently, and supported by interesting learning activities can improve children's ability to apply polite behavior in the school environment. These findings contribute to the growing body of evidence on the effectiveness of habituation methods in early childhood character education (Sari et al., 2024; Kasmir et al., 2026; Yusrafiddin et al., 2026) and provide practical implications for educators seeking to implement evidence-based strategies for promoting polite behavior in young children.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the Classroom Action Research conducted at KB/TK AZ-ZAITUN Bekasi, it can be concluded that the application of habituation of the magic words please, thank you, sorry, and excuse me can build the character of children aged 5-6 years. The improvement in children's character can be seen from the observation results in each cycle, where the number of children achieving the Developing as Expected (BSH) and Very Well Developed (BSB) categories continued to increase until reaching 80% in Cycle II. These results indicate that consistent

habituation through learning activities can foster polite behavior, respect, responsibility, and care for others.

Teachers are advised to consistently apply the habituation of using magic words in every learning activity and daily activities at school as an effort to build children's character. Schools are expected to support the implementation of this habituation through programs involving all school members so that a positive culture is formed. Future researchers can develop this research by involving a larger number of subjects or applying magic words habituation at different levels or contexts to obtain more diverse results.

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