

The Improving of Children's early Reading Skill through Language Games

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Abstract

Development of children's early reading skill is still very low. This case could be caused by an unattractive learning, monotonous process and lack of learning variation methods used by teachers. The aims of this study were to increase children's early reading skill through language games at TK Kristen Penabur Kota Wisata (kindergarten). This study was a classroom action research and the subjects of this study were 20 children of Group A of TK Kristen Penabur Kota Wisata (kindergarten), for school year 2016/2017. According to the result of action, it could be concluded that language games were able to improve the early reading skill of children of Group A at TK Kristen Penabur Kota Wisata (kindergarten).

Keywords: Early Reading, Children, Language Games

1. Introduction

Education for early children is not simply functions to give learning experience to the children, as part of early childhood education, it has very important task to develop many various kinds of students potential by introducing some attitude, behaviour, skills and intellectual in order to make children can adapt to the higher education level activities.

One of aspects that will be developed when they are entering formal education is language development, such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Reading and writing learning on early children is not the main purpose of kindergarten. However, parents anxiety force their children to be able to read in early childhood for Elementary School readiness. The demand from parents to make their children are able to read is often make an early reading learning at kindergarten become not fun, monotonous and boring. The using of word cards & worksheet is often makes the children not excited to learn anymore.

Attractive and fun learning is needed to increase children's early reading skill. Teachers, as a mentor, must have an adequate capability and skills in understanding children ability based on their growth and development, therefore teachers can give an appropriate stimulus based on children needs.

Based on the result of Group A teachers interview at TK Kristen Penabur Kota Wisata, it could be seen that children's early reading skill of Group A was still low. This was caused by reading learning activities using syllable cards, pictures, and worksheet sometimes made the children were not sure to mention it or even they appointed and spoke up the asked syllable doubtfully. Once in a while, the children were not willing to mention or point out the asked syllable. Utilized media for language games was used occasionally, moreover there were parents demand that expected their children at Group A were able to read, furthermore their children will be able to read smoothly when they were at TK B and continue to elementary school.

Based on the background explained before, then the thesis statement of this study was whether language games can improve early reading skill at groups A of TK Kristen Penabur Kota Wisata. Designed games were fishing a syllable games, tapping a fly shaped syllable cards, looking for words in the labyrinth, jumping and mentioning syllable, etc. the researcher used 3 aspects of early reading skill stages : (1) aspects of recognizing letter, (2) aspects of spelling syllable, (3) aspects of reading words and understanding words that have meaning. From 20 children, 2 of them have begun to developed and the rest were not developed yet. This study was expected to give advantages for students in improving children's early reading skill. and the teacher could used this research as a motivation to increase their knowledge and creativity in establishing various kind of games at classrom and the school could expand their references of new method development through this research

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2. Literature Review

Based on Indonesian Law Number 20 on 2003 about National Education, related to Early Childhood Education, on article number 28 and clause number 1 stated that "Early Childhood education was designed to children since they were born until six years and be one of elementary education requirement. In order to prepare higher education for children, early reading is one of part of early childhood education.

Rahim, (2011) stated that reading basically was a complicated activities that engaged many aspects, not only spelling words, but also involving visual activities, psycholinguistics and metacognitive thinking. Reading is a process of translating writing symbols (letters) into spoken words. Reading involves words introduction activities, literal understanding, interpretation, critical reading and creative understanding.

There are three components of reading process, such as recording, decoding and meaning recording, that refer to words and sentences, and then associated with sounds based on appropriate writing system, while decoding process (coding) refers to the translation process of series of graphics into words.

According to Soejono, (2010), early reading was a phase changing of human from can not read at first into a human that able to read.

Children ability to understand the basis shape of letters has a quality of psychological and neurological requirements.

In psychological side, children have to be able to differentiate other certain shapes first. By using child cognitive skill, children will be able to differentiate straight line, curve, semicircular and so on.

Based on neurological side, children may could be able to read before their neurobiology enabled. Jolongo (Hilda 2009) divided three stages of children knowledge in reading word, they are (1) Logographic (pre-school age), in this stage, children read a word as a whole unit and give more attention to environment.. (2) Alphabetis (kindergarten age), in this stage, children use letters to identify words and their attention focus on letters, the activities could be playing with letters in a book, a bar, or using letter magnet. (3) orthographic (elementary school age), in this stage, children begin to see patterns in the word.

Based on explanation above, it could be concluded that early reading is a process of translating symbols into spoken words by recording, decoding and meaning recording, that could be happened if children were able to differentiate other shapes at first, and then with a cognitive skills they were able to differentiate straight line, curve, semicircular and so on.

In neurological aspects, children are probably able to start reading. The stages that could be done are reading a word as a whole unit (Logographics). Then, Alphabetis stands for using letters to identify words while children are focusing their attention to letters. The activities are

playing with letters in a book, a bar, or using letter magnet. The next stages is Orthographic that children are able to see pattern of words in this stage.

Child development pattern is a complex pattern because it is a result of many various process including biological, cognitive and emotional process. Biological development is a change of child body. Cognitive process is a change of thinking, intelligences and language of children, in which a development in remembering a poem, visualizing how to solve mathematics problem or connecting sentences into a meaning talk. Whereas, emotional process is a change related to children relation to others.

Santrok defined the period of early children is the end of baby age until five or six years old. During this period, children are become more independent, ready to school, and spending a lot of time with friends and starting to learn how to follow the command and identify letters.

According to Harlock, children on early childhood were at the process of unique personality development and demand a freedom. It was a group stage, exploration stage, frequently asking stage and imitate stage.

Children on age 4 until 6 years old (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional 2007) perceived some skills such as ;

1. Able to communicate by using pronoun me.
2. Have many various vocabularies of verbs, adjectives, noun, question words and conjunctions.
3. Show understanding of something.
4. Able to express their thinking, feeling, and act by using simple sentences.
5. Able to read and express something.

Therefore, it could be concluded that children on early childhood are at the process of unique personality development in playing ages, exploring and having an ability to follow the commands and identify letters. Based on their language development, they are able to communicate, have a list of verbs, adjectives, noun, question words and conjunctions.

The acts of children on early childhood differ from children on higher level of formal education. The activities is not sitting down at the desk with worksheet and pencil anymore, but learning activity of early childhood formal education done by playing at either in or out classroom

Froebel stated that children education as:

1. Auto-active development. Students are basically an active individual.
2. Freedom or free situation. Children are given freedom in order to get an opportunity to develop their fantasy or dreams, especially creation to make anything with fantasy.
3. Observation and modelling.

This activity aimed to develop all of children senses. Hence, all of early childhood activities were done by playing.

According to Vygotsky, playing had direct role towards children cognitive development. Children can not think abstract because they think that meaning and object blend into an entity. Bruner had an opinion that playing was a medium to develop children creativity and flexibility.

When children are playing, they think about achieved goals therefore they can try to combine many various of new behaviour. There are many advantages when they are playing, one of them is creating learning process. By giving children an opportunity to play, they also will get a lot of new experiences.

In the development of children early reading skill, there are many research approach such as synthesis method based on associate theory. It has an understanding that an element (letter) will be meaningful if it combined with other element (other letter) to create a meaning. Therefore, it created a sentence or meaningful story.

This games was done by using assistance of image whenever it introduce letter (for example *a*) along with *ayam* (chicken) *angsa* (goose) images.

The next is global method. In this method, children use everything for the first time. For instance, the element "a" only has a meaning if the "a" are functional on words or sentences such as "*ayam berlari*". Global method introduce early reading to children started with sentence.

Then, there is whole linguistics. Linguistics ability will involve children ability in seeing (observing), listening (understanding), communicating (expressing or responding), reading image and writing. Yan mobson stated that language games had advantages to handle boredom of routine exercises and encourage children to study, because language games were able to create fun and relax situations but still on learning process.

Lewis and Bedson stated that there were many kinds of language games such as: (a) Movement game. Children were physically active in this game. It usually was an attractive game and supposed to be controlled carefully. (b). Card game. Children collected, shared, exchanged, chose, and counted cards that had a meaning or functions as object symbol or activities. (c) Board game. This was a game that stirring such kind of *spido* following a line. It was a fun skill game. (d) Dice Game. Surface of dice was replaced by letters. (e) Drawing game. It was a special game because it flung out seperator between brain functions. Drawing needed creativity and sensitivity towards universe. On the other words, children had to understand instructions and explained their arts. Drawing game was very helpful for shy and uncommunicative children. (f) Guessing game. A word guessing game aimed to guess the answer of a question. (g) Role playing. Role playing could be seen as a simple drama activity. Role playing stimulated children imagination and the real communication exam for children. (h). Song game. Song game often engaged movements, however, both of them were different because music had important role in early childhood education.

Based on the statement above, it was concluded that some of language games could be used to help children's early reading skill. There were some games that will be used in introducing letters such as fonetik games, spelling games, syllable games and vocabulary games.

3. Research Methods

This was a classroom action research. According to Mills, *Action research is any systematic inquiry conducted, by teacher, researchers, principals, school, or other stakeholders in the teaching environment to gather information about how their particular school operate.* Therefore, the aims of this study were to collect information about how was school going on, how the teacher taught and how the students learned. Arikunto stated that classroom action research was an observation to learning activities that intentionally appeared together in a classroom. The action to students was given by teachers or it used teachers instruction. On the other words, the teachers reported learning process of students, their behaviour, their attention to the process. In addition, they observed the result of process, recorded the result, discussed with other groups and so on. Therefore, what the teacher doing was write down action research report done by students.

Action research is one of qualitative-quantitative study (mixed method) that collaboratively made to happening problem. In detail Creswell, (2008) explained that : *action research has an applied focus. Similar to mixed methods, action research uses data collection based on either quantitative or qualitative methods or both.* Similarly, action research is a focus study that will be applied to a certain problem, that using qualitative, quantitavie or both as a data collection.

This action research was conducted in two cycle. The aims of this research were: (1) Improving early reading skill of group A ages 4-5 years old at *TK Kristen Penabur Kota Wisata, Cibubur, Bogor*, through language games. (2) Using language game as a strategy to improve children's early reading skill.

This research was conducted at *TK Kristen Penabur Kota Wisata, Transyogi Street on Km 6 Blok SJ Ciangsana, Gunung Putri, Bogor*. The time was adjusted to learning schedule of children ages 4-5 years old on March- April 2017. The subjects and objects of this study were 20 children ages 4-5 years in Group A.

4. Result and Discussion

The result of this action showed that language game can increase children's early reading skill significantly. It could be seen from the increasing of cycle I, as an action result of cycle I and cycle II. According to percentage of overall result, there was pre cycle incremental about 9%. After given an action, it increased into 58,8% at cycle I, therefore the average indicator became 67,85%. Hereafter, the average incremental of indicator was 15,2% from cycle I to cycle II, therefore the average of children's early reading indicator became 83%. Meanwhile, based on letter recognizing aspects, letter recognizing ability at pre cycle was 13%. Then, it increased about 55% on cycle I, therefore the average of letter recognizing ability aspects was 68%. Later, from

cycle I to cycle II, the average incremental of letter recognizing was 16,6%, therefore the average of letter recognizing ability aspects was 84,6%. Based on pronouncing sound of letter aspects, the average pronouncing sound of letter at pre cycle was 11.8%. Then, it increased about 46,3% at cycle I, so that the average pronouncing sound of letter aspects reached 58,1%. Further, the average incremental of pronouncing sound of letter was 24% from cycle I to cycle II, therefore the average pronouncing sound of letter ability reached 82,1%. Based on syllable reading aspect, the average syllable reading ability at pre cycle was 11,3%, and then it was increased about 50,3% and as the result it reached 61,6%. Later, the average syllable reading aspects increased about 20,7% from cycle I to cycle II, so that it reached 82,3% as the results.

Conclusion

Based on the data analysis and the discussion, it could be concluded as follows:

The process of improving children's early reading of Group A, TK Kristen Kota Wisata Cibubur was done by playing language games. The steps in improving children's early reading skill were started from preparing the games, media and tools. The games offered to children were throwing a ball into syllable, fishing a syllable, snake and ladders, *tapak gunung*, syllable dice, maze and finding a words on labyrinth. First of all, teacher explained the game rules and how to play it. There were assessment and reflection of each cycle to know children development level and improve deficiency of previous cycle. It was done until succesful criteria fulfilled, proven by data resulted from pre cycle until cycle I and cycle II. An ability of children of Group A TK Kristen Kota Wisata in recognizing letter developed well. It could be seen from the children ability in finding and showing letter cards or image in the games.

It was seen when they were playing too. They were having fun. The percentage is keep increasing from pre cycle, cycle I and cycle II. Then, it could be concluded that children's early reading skill improved through language games.

The implications of the research results are: (1) The necessity of language games in early reading activities and classroom learning activities, to make children able to solve the problem, to compete with others and as a meaningful strategy for children. (2) The necessity of playing activities in every learning to stimulate children. (3) The necessity of continuity supports for teachers and children, in order to improve learning process quality. (4) The necessity of change of teacher's role that centralized to children and their needs.

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