



The Role of Caregiver on Pos PAUD's Training Program to Improve Emergent Literacy Development through Dialogic Reading Activity

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Abstract

Research on emergent literacy states that young children learn about reading through experiences with oral language. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of implementing dialogic reading techniques in a pos paud setting via caregiver training program by kader pos paud to improve emergent literacy development. In the first experiment, the sample consisted of 19 respondents in the control group and 17 in the experiment group. The result of the study indicated an improvement in emergent literacy knowledge and dialogic reading skill for kader pos paud that following the training program. The independent t-test result indicated that post-treatment score for the experiment group was significantly better than the control group. The paired t-test results showed significant gain between pre and post treatment for experiment group. The score was entered to SPSS version 17. In the second experiment, there are 8 children in the control group and 9 children in the experiment group. The emergent literacy test that made by the researcher was used to determine the emergent literacy development of the subjects. The Mann Whitney test statistical method indicated significant gain between the experimental group and the control group. A Wilcoxon test revealed a significant gain in emergent literacy development for the experimental group. Therefore, this study found that a caregiver on storybook reading may lead to a possible positive influenced in emergent literacy development for the pre-kindergarten children whose caregivers attended the training program.

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INTRODUCTION

Reports from PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) in 2009 assesses the ability of 15 years old student in math, reading and science, rated the reading ability of Indonesia students at rank 54th out of 65 countries assessed. In other words, students of Indonesia have the low ability of literacy level because the highest level is at level six while the lowest ability at level two. Described in the report, that level 1a's student only able to understand the kind of text that contains information that is already known in everyday life. Students at level 6 (six) have the ability to understand the various type of reading materials that includes both everyday information and new information. This situation happened because children in Indonesia are not introduced to reading as early as possible so they can make inferences from the reading text.

To anticipate the early children who do not have the opportunity to develop literacy skills especially reading and writing, the government held a 'Mobil Pintar' and 'Motor dan Rumah Pintar' program in 2005. (Wicaksono, 2007). According to the evaluation of the Semarang City Regional Library, there has been no study that tried to measure the effect of 'Mobil Pintar' and 'Motor dan Rumah Pintar' program on the development of literacy in society. One of the reports in media said that the amount of 'Rumah Pintar' that are not used anymore is 37 of 152 and that number will likely increase (37 Rumah Pintar from 152, March 10, 2010).

According to Wulan (1998) children under five years old are ready to learn how to read with the appropriate methods. Astuti (2008) found that elementary student (first grade) who have the sensitivity to manipulate the smallest sounds of languages (phonemes) will be able to read pseudoword. Children who face the words that have not been understood will decode it letter by letter to connect these phonemes so it can be pronounced correctly. Decode capability is considered as a prerequisite for learning to read at a higher grade because in general there will be a lot of new words in that grade. The ability to manipulate phonemes are generally given to kindergarten children (Beauchat, Blamey, & Walpole, 2010).

Views of emergent literacy about the development of reading skills in early childhood explained that the children 'always' in the process of developing literacy behaviors. Teale and

Sulzby (in Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001) stated that emergent literacy generally used to refer to the process of becoming literate. Literacy-related behaviors that emerged during the pre-school is an important aspect of the process of literacy development (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001). That displayed behavior as a part of the prerequisites for developing literacy skills (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002).

Environments that support emergent literacy development observed by the researchers. That kind of environment is referred to as context that influenced the development of emergent literacy such as home environment (Ezell & Justice, 2000; DeBruin-Parecki, 2001; Lawhon & Cobb, 2002; Weikle & Hadadian, 2003; Bingham & Pennington, 2007), playgroups and kindergarten (Hawken, Johnson & McDonnell, 2005; Connor, Morrison, Slominski, 2006; Yu & Pine, 2006; Girolametto, Weitzman, Lefebvre, & Greenberg, 2007). One of the fundamental parts of the literate environment is shared reading activities. According to many experts of the development of literacy, reading with children is the easiest way for children to get the source of information and very rich opportunity to develop the language skills (especially emergent literacy) in a very supportive environment (Lonigan, 2004). A number of interventions have been developed to initiate the development of emergent literacy through shared book reading.

On the other hand, according to Meyer, Wardrop, Stahl and Linn (1994) shared reading activity does not always give a stunning effect for emergent literacy development. The appropriate methods used, attitudes and interactive behaviors that occur between adults and children is an aspect that needs to be considered in order to improve literacy development. That opinions are supported by experimental studies of Ezell and Justice (2000) illustrated that adults who refer to the writing material when reading to the children, both verbal (eg comments, questions, and requests) and non-verbal (pointing to the writing and tracking the texts) increased verbal expression related to the text in the book. The study involved 24 adults and 24 children with average age four years old. An articles are written by Justice and Ezell (2004) also described the use of verbal and nonverbal signs in shared book reading will attract children's attention and interaction to the reading text. The children's attention that is directed to the reading text at shared book reading activity will affect the mastery of the rules of written language. In both these studies, the interaction between parents and children

is not maximized because questions used just to attract attention to the reading material. In another study, researchers tried to combine a variety of shared reading techniques in order to get maximum results.

Experiments that conducted by Whitehurst, Arnold, Epstein, Angell, Smith and Fischel (1994) described the increase in language skills especially in vocabulary aspect after used a dialogic reading program. The study was conducted in low-income families, at the government's child care of New York for six weeks. In the research by Whitehurst, Epstein, Angell, Payne, Crone & Fischel (1994) also found an increase in the children's literacy skills especially in the aspects of identification letters and the first sound of the word after dialogic reading activities. In his writings, Doyle and Bramwell (2006) belief that dialogic reading activities will give children the opportunity to participate. That kind of opportunity will be meaningful experiences that stimulate children to learn. Meta-analysis research by Trivette and Dunst (2007) concluded that dialogic reading activity is the most influential method to improve children's language skills. While shared book reading activity has lower interaction than dialogic reading activity and more intended to make children become more acquainted with a writing material.

DeBruin-Parecki, (2009) argues that this type of interactive behavior in the dialogic reading activities can be taught to caregivers with a variety of cultural and languages contexts. The usual issue including caregivers in the training program is time, concerns with the inability to follow the training, cost issue, languages and culture such as differentiation of culture's traditions and belief. Levin and Aram (2010) found in their experiments that it is difficult to change the belief of young children's caregivers who think reading is an activity to have fun and change it to believe that reading is an intentional learning activity. Young children's caregivers who received a dialogic reading training do not apply the new skills when interacting with the children.

The ability that wants to be developed by a dialogic reading method in this research is language skills which include vocabulary and comprehension of the story scheme as a part of an outside-in domain, the knowledge of letters and awareness of letters as part of inside-out domain. The school's setting usually provide stimulation that is related to coding language

symbols which directly related to the conventional reading ability (as part of the inside-out domain) rather than spoken language ability (outside-in domain). It's suitable to Pujiati's opinion (2007) that a lot of elementary schools have a new student's requirement especially for first-grade students to mastering reading and writing ability. Pradono (1995) said that even before elementary school's grade, there is often encountered a lot of playgroups demand the children to learn to read that basically very hard to children under five years old. As a result, children are able to pronounce the letters and words but they will not be able to understand its meaning because the limitation of children's vocabulary and conceptual knowledge.

One reason of the inappropriate stimulation in early childhood is limited knowledge of the caregivers. Most of the young children's caregivers lack the basic knowledge required to develop early literacy so they tend to overestimate their experiences. These conditions cause unwillingness of the caregivers to search for more knowledge. Therefore, there is a necessity of the programs to develop the caregiver's professionalism and knowledge's assessment of young children's caregivers (Cunningham, Zibulsky, & Callahan, 2009).

In this study, researchers used home environment's context as a place to develop emergent literacy. The usage of home context, suggestion that the mother or adults around the young children act as the responsible agent that improving the children's knowledge and skills. Adults around the young children refer to 'Kader Pos Paud'. Therefore, before stimulating children, Kader Pos Paud will get a brief training about emergent literacy and dialogic reading. DeBruin-Parecki (2009) said that measurement of dialogic reading's effectiveness usually focus either caregivers (parents) or child and rarely performed simultaneously. In addition, according to the observation of circumstances and environment, it is not possible to conduct the training program of young children's caregivers in a long time. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of implementing dialogic reading techniques in a pos paud setting via caregiver training program by kader pos paud to improve emergent literacy development.

RESEARCH METHOD

The problems that will be answered in this study is whether the role of training program

can improve emergent literacy knowledge and dialogic reading's skill in Kader Pos Paud who joined the training compared with Kader Pos Paud who didn't have the training and whether Kader Pos Paud who got skills from the training can improve emergent literacy development of preschool children.

Methodology Subject

Experiment I

Participants are Kader who teach four years old's children with the following criteria: (1) Have never followed the same training, (2) high school graduate, (4) able to read and speak Indonesian language, (5) does not work in the formal sector. The total number of participants for experiment group are 17 people and the control group is 19 people.

Experiment II

Criteria for participants include: (1) the child has normal senses, (2) able speak the Indonesian language; (3) have never participated in early childhood's formal education. The total number of subjects for experiment group are nine children and eight children for the control group.

In the first experiment, the control group was given a dialogical reading training while the control group was given a different training that not dialogical reading just a shared book reading. In the second experiment, experiment group get a reading session with PEER and CROWD techniques whereas in the control group was given the usual reading method that applies in the Pos Paud. The experimental design is the untreated control group design with pretest and posttest (Cook & Campbell, 1979). Training conducted for two days and each day lasts for three hours. While the treatment of the early children was conducted for three weeks, and the children were have reading session three times each week.

Data Collection Method

Experiment I

Kader will be given a questionnaire to assess the knowledge of emergent literacy development. Observations will be conducted during Kader's training program as pretest and posttest on the aspects of reading skills. After training, participants were given a questionnaire to evaluate training that will be used as manipulation checks.

Experiment II

Demographic Questionnaire and the Home Literacy Environment Inventory based on Marvin and Ogden (2002) and Whitehurst

(2004) research asked for information regarding the habits and behaviors of children and their parents, including age, education, and parental income. Family size will also be considered to control the difference of the young children's background. All data obtained were used for matching the characteristics of participants. Emergent Literacy Development Test was given before and after treatment. The design of test was adjusted to the regulation of Education Department about early childhood education. The regulation stated that literacy competence of children three to four years old is able to express ideas using 4-5 words. Meanwhile, according to Missall, Carta, McConnell, Walker, & Greenwood (2008) in Individual Growth and Development Indicators provided a description of language and literacy competencies that must be mastered for children aged 3-5 years. The competencies are: a) use a new vocabulary with simple grammar; b) follow the instructions given orally; c) sensitive to the sequence of events in a story; d) able to ask and give comment; e) recognize letters (10 letters especially related to the letters form the children's name).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Training is successful when continuously update the knowledge and skills that have been previously owned so it can improve the effectiveness of teaching. According to Byington, and Tannock (2011) training that included concept and application of the latest knowledge is an important consideration for caregiver's participation in the training. Researcher as trainer provided an example directly or by video demonstrates the activity of dialogic reading techniques in small groups or large groups. The perception and belief that Kader was able to practice and understand the material training also seen when to apply the manipulation checks.

There should be a continuous and systematic development program to equip teachers especially in language and literacy knowledge (Justice, Mashburn, Hamre & Pianta, 2008). There is a misunderstanding between teaching children to read and preparing children with skills and knowledge to be ready to learn to read. Kader has been unrealizing about the concept of early literacy, especially emergent literacy.

Kader argues that teaching letters meant teaching reading. It seems that caregivers have

Experiment I

Tabel 1. Pre and Posttreatment Differences in the Experimental and Control Group

Component	Treatment	N	M	SD	Sig
Emergent Literacy	Before Control	19	6.6842	2.80976	0.324
	Experiment	17	7.4706	1.69991	
Knowledge	After Control	19	7.1579	2.08868	
	Experiment	17	9.2353	1.09141	
Dialogic reading skill	Before Control	19	4.3684	1.86221	0.946
	Experiment	17	4.4118	1.93839	
	After Control	19	5.1053	2.78677	0.000
	Experiment	17	10.9412	4.49264	

Experiment II

Tabel 2. The summary of Mann-Whitney Statistic Test

Treatm	Group	N	Mean	SD	Asym
Before	Control	8	3.1250	1.45774	0.832
	Experiment	9	2.2222	1.78730	
After	Control	8	3.3750	2.06588	0.008
	Experiment	9	8.0000	3.20156	

Tabel 3. The Summary of Wilcoxon Statistic Test

Treatm	Group	N	Mean	SD	Asym
Before	Control	8	3.2500	1.73205	
After		8	1.5000	0.51640	
Before	Experiment	9	5.1111	3.89402	
After		9	1.5000	0.51450	

knowledge about children development and learning but do not know how to implement their knowledge in practice. Early childhood caregiver’s decision to not involved in letters activities to improve knowledge of letters in early children reflects their belief that knowledge of letters is a competence that should be taught in the preschool or reflects their lack of knowledge about ways to provide appropriate stimulation to the children’s literacy development (Lim, 2010)

Knowledge of early childhood caregivers is not the expression of their confidence towards the way to teaching literacy in early childhood. According to Cunningham, et al., (2009) there are two types of caregivers: one group’s type believe that they still need knowledge and skills to teach literacy in early childhood. On the other side, another caregivers type already confident with their ability, so they don’t feel the need for additional knowledge and skills. Assessment

of the latest type of caregivers should be done carefully so it will not decrease their motivation and enthusiasm in the training. In addition, the provision of intervention should be done gradually so the need can be fulfilled without affecting Kader’s self-esteem. It seems that not all caregivers know the level of their skills and knowledge because previously there has been no adequate evaluation of the competence of early childhood’s caregivers. These conditions also appeared when Kader performed discussion session and role play process. Often there is a gap between the perceptions of caregivers about the knowledge that they have according to their perception and the knowledge that they possessed actually. This condition occurs because there is no calibration capability. Therefore, caregivers should know the skills and knowledge they owned, so they will be able to provide the proper stimulation (Cunningham, Perry, Stanovich, &

Stanovich, 2004). Kader with more experiences in early childhood education usually offers much more feedback and comment. Most Kader also believes that it is not necessary to stimulate reading in early childhood. That kind of leader also said that reading just makes a sound about the text material or that children under one-year-old have not ready to listen to a story.

These results are consistent with the results of several study analyzed by Morrow and Brittain (2003). The review's outcome showed that children in the group who get books reading session regularly over a period of time, have a better score in the measurement of vocabulary, reading comprehension and decoding abilities compared with children in the group who did not get books reading session with adults. One indicator of wealthy literacy environment is there is a routinely and continuously shared reading activity. Shared book reading is an activity that can be carried out between adults (mother, caregiver, father, or sibling) and children with various ages and diverse backgrounds. Shared book reading is easy to do, doesn't take a lot of time, can be enjoyed by all people involved, and has many benefits. De Temple and Snow (2003) states that shared book reading recommended as an activity to improve the school readiness of children and as a way to prevent difficulties in learning to read. Reading book activity with dialogic techniques allow young children to gain plenty of experience with oral and written language that helps stimulate the children development during preschool periods such as the rules of written language, books organization, the differences between language in everyday conversation and language used for reading material, and recognize different types of reading material. Children will also have a basic knowledge of letters and vocabulary through exposure toward reading material in a storybook. Shared reading activities can also help children to experience relatively complex conversations.

Added by Fletcher and Reese (2005) that shared book reading considered as a good context to stimulate the development of literacy. Adults usually use more complex vocabulary while reading together than in the conversation or play time. In addition, adults use longer speech to answer and respond to children's questions and use higher abstraction language. With the mediation of books, adults will be easier to direct the children's attention and participation.

Dialogic book reading is different from ordinary shared book reading because involve active participation from both sides, both the

reader and the listener. According to Justice and Kaderavek (2002), there are children who did not enjoy reading books activity because reading book together is an activity based on the use of language. Children with language constraint will consider such activity is too excessive and compelling children to have conversation and discussion. The dialogic reading activity is very demanding for children to communicate compared to role play and pretend play activity. Similarly in this study, there are children who are or interested in the rooms surrounding, can not sit quietly but always walking or sometimes stand up while making a comment. According to the two experts above, this condition caused by children's delight in reading together mediated by an active involvement in such activities.

Therefore, Kader who read the story needs to be sensitive to the differences in children's interests and enthusiasm to involve in the activity. Therefore, to overcome those obstacles Kader should try to obtain children's participation in reading activities. By observing a child who likes to answer questions and labeling the object during reading activity, Kader would make that child as a model to stimulate another children's interest. When children start to get bored, Kader will restrict the question because children will not happy to be questioned. If the children are more interested in image than listening to the story or if the language used in the storybook too complicated for children, Kader changed the way of interact to fit the children's interests and abilities.

The effort was done by Kader to actively involve subject in dialogic reading activities suitable with the result of research conducted by Trivette and Dunst (2007). The study showed that reading education using an interactive book reading techniques to actively involve children in reading activities showed a more positive outcome. These findings indicated that not only reading books have benefit to the children, but rather involve the children in conversation about text material will make children have more favorable benefits (Van Kleeck, 2004).

There are several techniques that applied by Kader to involve children as active participants in shared book reading activity. It is used as a guide by a researcher in providing treatment. Sometimes Kader asks the children, add an explanation to children's answers or pointed at image and text. Kader tried to adjust these techniques to the response generated by the subject, for example when reading "Ada Suara-Suara di sekitarku", Kader pointed to the pictures

on the front page then when there are kids say 'Kembang api', to respond with this Kader asking questions, "Bagaimana suara kembang api?" (adapted to the title). The number and type of techniques used by kader to help children adapted to children's language ability through the Kader's questions and statements as Kader read the book. Shared book reading will make children learn more about literacy because children listening and discussing the various types of books with caregivers. The existence of a mutual understanding relationship between young children and caregivers facilitate both sides to share experiences related to the content of story and characters in the book. Children learn to use pictures and context to guess the meaning of a word. Open-ended questions that provided by caregivers give children an opportunity to answer questions as many as possible without limits. Caregivers that help to predict the story from the image in the book will help children to explore the story's structure and plot. Besides, the evaluation provided by caregivers will help children to do analyze thinking. Asking children to relate the story with their experience were an easy way to remember the story's content and new words (Oueini, Bahous, & Nabhani, (2008). Interactions that occur between Kader and children known as scaffolding.

Scaffolding showed by Kader, besides teaching children to pay attention to Kader's instruction of Kader also as a way to show a new experience that can be gained from the book. Scaffolding performed by Kader also as a way to attract children's attention to the parts of the book and written material that being read. The children's attention in shared book reading activities, according to Evans, Williamson, and Pursoo (2008) is influenced by the increase of age, book illustration, type of writing and the reader's intonation. The distinction of utterances or alteration in the reading's intonation affected the children's ability to concentrate.

Another study also states that sometimes, the use of dialogic reading technique is very exhausting. Research on women in Turkey concludes that the dialogic reading techniques can lead to frustration and children's lack of interest. In Turkey, dialogic reading techniques still considered a new technique, it is the same as in Indonesia. Therefore, there are needs to do the modification and technical changes adapted to culture and habits of each family and pre-school education (Kotaman, 2007). Provision of open-ended questions that characterizes this activity should be given slowly. For example, in the first

meeting with a new book, children doesn't have to be given any question or limited to just one question then when the child has already familiar with the activity, kader will be able to ask more questions.

CONCLUSION

The dialogic reading training program has an influence on the improvement of dialogic reading's knowledge and skill. The implementation of dialogic reading treatment in young children has a significant effect of improving the emergent literacy development. The short training with enrichment characteristic such as dialogic reading training will help Kader get another alternative to provide early stimulation. The application of dialogic reading method into regular stimulation program should consider the plan to set target ability that will be stimulated and adjusted the techniques that will be used in the program. The reading training program must consider the parent's learning habits and beliefs because it requires a routine activity. For other researchers who interested in the same topic, it is necessary to consider confounding variables such as the children's curious tendency so it will be hard to control their behavior. In addition, the researchers need to consider the physical environment that will be used as training facility because the new environment will trigger the children's curiosity so their attention easily distracted. Shared book reading research typically use mother as their subject, other researchers need to consider to include the role of the father in reading activities.

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