

IMPROVING CHILDREN READING SKILL THROUGH PICK AND PLAY MEDIA

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Abstrak

Reading is one of the important skill that children should master. In Early Childhood Education children start to learn reading from simple steps according to their developmental stages. The aim of this study is to determine whether the pick and play media can improve the reading skill of 24 children aged 5-6 years-old in group B TK Laboratorium FKIP Unri. This research used the experimental research method with one sample test. Research is carried out by observation, interview and documentation. The result of T-Test show that there is a significant difference and the result of data analysis show pretest score is 54,17% or in medium category and post test score is 80,36% or in good category. It indicates the increasing of children reading skill is about 26,19%. That means that the use of pick and play media can improve children reading skill. It implies that the pick and play visual media can be useful for early childhood education teachers and also parents in helping children explore and developing their reading skill from the very beginning because the right and interactive reading media will lead to the acquisition of reading skill in children.

Keywords: reading skill, visual media

A. Introduction

Early childhood education centre is an education centre for children from 0-6 six years old which aims to give stimulation in all developmental aspects. The right education is vital in this early years of human life because it will shape the foundation for the next stages of the children's life. Feeniy (2006) said that there are two principal purposes for early childhood programs, (1) to support children's learning and development, and (2) to provide care for children in families where adults are working or in training programs.

In early childhood education, basic knowledge of children's reading and writing are given according to the child developmental stages. Skills and strategies that are essential to effective literacy teaching in the early years include phonological awareness, phonics (for reading/spelling), vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and writing (composition). It is important to distinguish between skills which are constrained and unconstrained (Paris, 2005). Children grow in their ability to read and write when they understand that reading and writing are purposeful activities that are used to accomplish goals and needs. This awareness that literacy is functional evolves when children observe adults using reading in functional ways. Skills associated with learning to read and write are acquired by young children, with the

support of adults, as children engage in purposeful activities.

Early childhood has a characteristic as a play period. In this length of time children learning through playing activities which can lead teachers in choosing children learning approach, including reading activities. But in early childhood education practices, we can still find teachers who teach reading with the inappropriate method. Such using method for primary level for early childhood children where children are being encouraged to sit in chair and finishing reading task with book and pen. This kind of learning activities would be uncomfortable for children just like they are being forced to study.

The gracelessness of learning activities is not the only problems in children's reading. The other thing that causes problem is the higher parent's demand to have their children ready to read at the time they are graduating from early childhood education centre. The situation affects learning activities of early childhood education. Teachers try to answer the demand and put more time to teach children to read. Some of them only use the book and pencil method and forget to put fun and games in the learning. Teachers also having less concern for children developmental stages, the goal of making children being able to read become more important. This condition would make children feel that reading is not an interesting activity, they might feel it frustrating.

From the observation of children in TK FKIP Unri, there are some children aged 5-6 years old who haven't master early reading concept. Some students having difficulty in naming alphabet symbol, can't recognize first letter of words from things they can find around them, and still have difficulty to understand the connection between sound and alphabet shape. In class, teachers used printed books and simple media for reading. The children felt this activity monotonous and boring. They hardly finish the assignment given and prefer to chat or play. Because of that, the teaching of early reading in TK FKIP Unri needs strategy to help children enjoy learning actively.

The pick and play media is a media design to enhance children reading skill. It consists of pictures and frame which can help children understand the early reading concept. This media is visually attractive because it has colorful pictures and can match the theme used in teaching. It begins with simple skills such as differentiate geometric shapes like triangle, rectangular and circle as the basis of recognizing alphabet to the higher reading skill like naming first letter of things. The children will be able to play it individually or in pair.

Based on the problems, it is very important to develop a reading media for children age 5-6 six years old at TK FKIP Unri, in order to help them improve their reading skills. The media used in this research is the pick and play media.

Research Questions

Research questions are:

1. How is the reading skill of children in TK FKIP Unri before pick and play media given?
2. How is the reading skill of children in TK FKIP Unri before pick and play media given?
3. Is there any differences between children reading skill before and after pick and play media given?

Research Purposes

The reasearch purposes are:

1. Knowing the reading skill of 5-6 years old children before pick and play media given
2. Knowing the reading skill of 5-6 years old children after pick and play l media given
3. Knowing the difference of children reading skill before and after pick and play media given

Research Contribution

The contribution of this research are:

1. Gives the altervative media which is fun and appropriate in children reading activities.
2. Knowing the difference of children reading skill before and after pick and play media given

B. Theories

1. Literacy

Literacy development, a lifelong process that begins at birth, includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening is a prerequisite to speaking. Learning to speak is an important step toward learning to read. Literacy defined as the ability to write, speak, listen, think, and read effectively is a crucial developmental step that enables young children, adolescents, and adults to communicate clearly. The development of literacy skills begins at birth, with language development. Parents and caregivers play a critical role in building infants' and young children's vocabularies. Researchers have found that children from middle-income families begin kindergarten with a vocabulary of approximately 20,000 to 30,000 words, whereas children from lower-income families start school with about 5,000 words. In other words, literacy gaps appear well before children step foot in a classroom (Bornfreund, 2012).

Children learn about reading and writing through *play*. Teacher of young children, will see this happening every day. Teacher observed children learning to talk, read, or write when they are playing "peek-a-boo" angaging in nonsense speech play, listening to and singing familiar jingles and rhymes, scribbling, pretending, and using objects as symbols. Because literacy is a continuous process, children are working on all aspects of oral and written language at the same time (Jackman, 2009)

Understanding what is developmentally appropriate for young children can help you recognize what is important in the development of oral and written language. Here are a few suggestions for guiding children into letter recognition (Hill-Clarke & Colley, 2002; National Institute For Literacy, 2002; Wasik, 2001; in Jackman, 2009):

- Begin with a child's name. Learning to recognize and produce his name is an appropriate activity for learning the alphabet.

- As a child continues to recognize his name. He begins to see the similarity between letters in his name and letters in words in the environment.
- Introducing alphabet books and reading storybooks can also create additional awareness of letters.
- The alphabet can easily become part of any thematic activity.
- The latter-of-the-week can also extend the connection of the alphabet appropriately and as part of the curriculum.

Literacy Processing Theory

Mary Clay (2001) works about literacy and come with literacy processing theory. This theory of literacy processing serve to guide teaching and learning in reading recovery.

- a. Reading and writing are complex problem-solving processes. When children read and write, they pick up and use information from a variety of sources, work on it, make a decision, and evaluate the response in a continuous cycle of learning. Readers and writers take the initiative to solve problems as they acquire and practice in-the-head strategic activities.
- b. Reading and writing are reciprocal and interrelated processes. A complex theory of literacy learning acknowledges that writers have to know how to do certain things that overlap with things that readers have to know or do. The two processes are concurrent sources of learning and contribute to each other in early literacy learning.
- c. Literacy learning involves reading and writing continuous text. Readers and writers read continuous text, not just letters, sounds, or words in isolation. Reading and writing continuous text requires the integration of many behaviors essential for meaningful communication.
- d. Literacy learning involves continuous change over time. As children learn to read and write, their processing systems are changing as they make new links and learn more each time they read or write. Close and careful observations inform teachers about changes in a child's literacy behaviors over brief periods of time. Daily recording of behaviors enables teachers to make helpful teaching moves.
- e. Children construct their own understanding. The child must actively work on printed messages using all his current abilities and knowledge, while a teacher supports the child as appropriate.
- f. Children come to literacy learning with varying knowledge. What children can do when entering school is closely related to their prior opportunities to learn. Therefore, children begin their learning journeys in many different places.
- g. Children take different paths to literacy learning. Children enter the literacy learning process with differing profiles of competencies and will, therefore, take unique paths to literacy learning.
- h. Building in strengths makes it easy for children to learn.

Teachers must know a child's strengths in order to work with existing competencies and make maximum use of each child's current literacy repertoire to support accelerated learning.

- i. Learners extend their own learning

With massive opportunities to read and to compose and write messages pitched at an appropriate difficulty level, children learn more and improve their literacy processing.

2. Play

Play is children everyday activities. Child development theories and the experient practitioners tell us that children learn best through direct, hands on experience. The characteristic of play are (Feeniy, 2006):

- a. *Play is intrinsically motivated.* Play is its own reward. Children play because it is satisfying, not because it meets a basic need or receives an external reward. It is the motivation and not the activity that makes something play.
- b. *Play is freely chosen.* Children choose play. The play opportunity beckons, and the children decide to play. Adults may invite but never compel children to play. The moment the compulsion enters and a task has been assigned it becomes work, not play.
- c. *Play is pleasurable, enjoyable, and engaging.* Pleasurable, focused on pursuit of an activity is hallmark of play in children and adults. Although play can be seriously pursued and can include challenges, fears, and frustrations, it is a quality of enjoyment that stands out when we think of play. Activity that is not enjoyable most of the time will not be chosen as play.
- d. *Play is process oriented.* The activity, rather than the end product, motivates. Children are more involved in discovery and creation (the process) than eventual outcome. Play can have players as part of play, and may change as the play progresses.
- e. *Play is active.* It requires physical, verbal, or mental engagement with people, objects, or ideas.
- f. *Play is self oriented rather than object oriented.* In the play basic question is the first order is the first business of most children is to find out the answer to that question "What is this object and what can it do?" Play theorists and researchers call this exploration and distinguish it from play (Bergen, 1988; Johnson, Christie & Yawkey, 1999).
- g. *Play is often nonliteral.* It is pretend. Many activities are "playful", but it is nonliteral pretending that is the pinnacle of play. Children suspend and alter reality to make believe.

3. Pick and Play Visual Media

The Pick and Play Visual Media is the media which is design to help children understand about shapes, alphabets and how the alphabets connect with the things around them. It is fun and also interactive so the children will enjoy playing it while they are actually learning about reading. It consist of two parts, frame and books, with pictures, colors and easy steps to play.

C. Methods

This research used the experimental research method with one sample test. For many true experimental designs [1], pretest-posttest designs are the preferred method to compare participant groups and measure the degree of change occurring as a result of treatments or interventions. Pretest-posttest designs grew from the simpler posttest only designs, and address some of the issues arising with assignment bias and the allocation [2] of participants to groups (Shuttleworth). Research is carried out by observation, interview and documentation

Population and also the sample in this research are 24 children in group B TK FKIP Unri. All of the children aged 5-6 six years old and had similar problems in reading skill.

D. Findings and Conclusion

The data that had been collected from the experiment is being analyzed statistically. The findings will be described as follows:

Research Finding Description

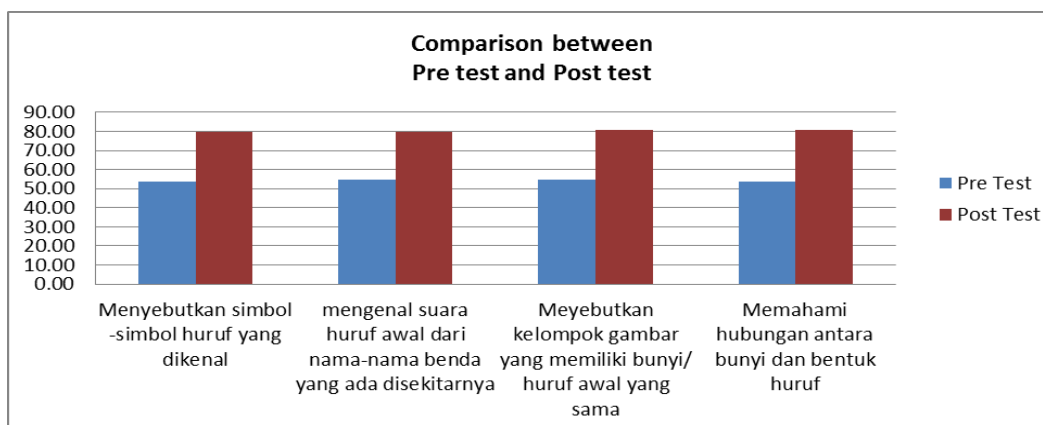
1. The data was analyzed with One Sample T-Test” is similar to compare one group’s average value to a single number, which is the difference children reading skill before and after pick and play media given. T-test result is 0,01, it show that there is significant difference between children reading skill before pick and play media given and after pick and play media given.
2. **Children Reading Skill Before the Treatment of Pick and Play Visual Media (Pretest)**

In pretest the children reading skill is measured through observation of four reading indicators for 5-6 six years old children. The indicators are (1) Naming alphabet symbol, (2) recognizing first letter of words from things they can find around them

(3) Naming group of picture/things which has the same first letter, and (4) understand the connection between sound and alphabet shape (Permendikbud No. 137 Tahun 2014). The result of pretest show that children reading skill is in average category The same indicators also used to measure the children reading skill after treatment of pick and play visual media. The result of posttest show that children reading skill is in good category. Tables 1.1. show the children reading skill before and after the treatment of pick and play visual media

Tables 1.1. Children Reading Skill Before and After The Treatment of Pick and Play Visual Media (Pretest)

No	Indicators	% Pre Test	% Post Test
1	Naming Alphabet symbol	53,57	79,76
2	Recognizing the first letter sounds of things around her	54,76	79,76
3	Naming group of picture/things which has the same first letter	54,76	80,95
4	Understanding connection between sounds and shapes of the alphabet	53,57	80,95
Total		54,17	80,36



From tables 1.1 we can see that children reading skill before pick and play visual media was given is 54,17% which is in average category. In naming alphabet symbol the pretest score is 53,57% . Children ability to recognize first letter of words from things they can find around them score is 54,76%, in naming group of picture/things which has the same first letter the score is 54,76%, and in understanding the connection between sound and alphabet shape the score is 53,57%. After the treatment of pick and play visual media is given, there are increasing reading skill which are significant. In naming alphabet symbol the posttest score is 79,76% . Children ability to recognize first letter of words from things they can find around them score is 79,76%, in naming group of picture/things which has the same first letter the score is 80,95%, and in understanding the connection between sound and alphabet shape the score is 80,95%. The total posttest score for childrean reading skill is 80,95 or in very good category

Findings in this research show that the pick and play visual media is an effective media to help children learning and mastering their stages of reading skill. Clay (2001) noted that children construct their own understandings. The child must actively work on printed messages using all his current abilities and knowledge, while a teacher supports the child as appropriate. In this research, the visual media given as a support for children's reading. Children actively exploring the media because it is easily played and interesting.

The reading activities offered by the pick and play visual media is fun and interactive. Children is exciting to play it from one page to the next page. As Jackman said that children learn about reading and writing through *play* (2001). The media used to

Conclusion

It implies that the pick and play visual media can be usefull for early childhood education teachers and also parents in helping children explore and developing their reading skill from the very begining because the right and interactive reading media will lead to the acquasition of reading skill in children.

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