

Research Article

The description of the early stage of literacy for the children

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Abstract

Along with the development of technology, it turns out that there are still many people who are complacent with every convenience that is presented. They prefer things to be instant and easy, so they sometimes forget the value of a process. One of the fundamental processes that are starting to be neglected by people are reading and writing activities. The basic abilities that should be fostered since children through early literacy have not been implemented. In fact, one aspect of the task of early childhood development is developing basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills. This makes early literacy an absolute basis for the development of every young individual so that they can develop properly. The literacy skills that have been fostered in the future will be the basic foundation in developing reading interest that leads to broad knowledge and insight. This study was made with the aim of providing an overview of early literacy skills and appropriate interventions can be given as a form of preventive treatment for children.

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Introduction

Task of development is the task appearing in certain period of time during the life path of an individual. A development task in certain period of time must be able to be solved since its completion will be the foundation for the upcoming success in solving the next problem. Such development task comprises of three aspects, i.e. cognitive, affective, and psycho-motoric development. Those three aspects must develop simultaneously so the best quality in an individual can be achieved.

One of many stages of life development occurs when an individual achieves the pre-school age. Pre-school age is the earliest step of children phase which occurs when a child is 3-6 year's old. In accordance with the law number 20 of 2003 on National Education System, Chapter I, Article 1, Section 14, it has been explained that "Early age children development is an effort of guidance that is aimed to children from the time they are born to the age of six which is conducted to the exposure to the educational stimulus to assist the physical and spiritual development and growth so children will have the preparedness in delving deeper into a further level of education". In the early age of development, i.e. 0-6 year, brain develops very fast until the capacity of 80 percent. At that level of age development brain receive and absorb various kind of information, either the good one or the bad one. That was the period when the physical, mental, and spiritual development of children will be formed. To this end, some people called such period as children's *golden age*. Because various kinds of major children developments occur during the age of preschool, some children have been involved in the informal education, i.e. play group, kindergarten, or creativity centers that are prepared for children.

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Hurlock, (2010) describes the tasks of early children development in the age of 3-6 years' old cover as follows. (1) Learning about physical skills that are needed to play; (2) Develop healthy attitude to understand oneself as a growing creature; (3) Learn to adjust oneself with one's peer group; (4) Begin to develop acceptable social role for men and women; (5) Develop the basic skills to read, write, and count; (6) Develop the understandings that are needed for one's daily life; (7) Develop the empathy, life values, and levels of value; (8) Develop the attitude towards social groups and institutions; And, (9) reach one's personal freedom.

As one of children's development tasks, basic skills to read, write, and count makes early literacy as an inescapably important foundation for young individuals so they can develop as they are. It happens because early literacy will be the basic foundation to develop the reading motivation until concludes with wider knowledge and deeper insight.

Early literacy is the period when children know about communication, language (verbal and nonverbal), reading, and writing before they can actually read or write (Read & Ghoting, 2015). According to Sénéchal & LeFevre (2014) good early literacy skills help children to learn to read more easily and increase children's success rates in school. This is supported by the results of the analysis conducted by the National Early Literacy Panel (NELP) (Literacy, 2008). Through a book entitled 'Developing Early Literacy', it can be seen that conventional reading and writing skills that are developed from birth to the age of 5 have a clear and consistently strong relationship with conventional literacy skills in the future.

Method

This type of research is library research, which is a series of studies related to library data collection methods, or research whose research objects are explored through various library information (books, encyclopedias, scientific journals, newspapers, magazines, and documents). Literature review or literature research is research that examines or critically reviews the knowledge, ideas, or findings contained in the academic-oriented literature, and formulates its theoretical and methodological contributions to certain topics. The focus of library research is to find various theories, laws, propositions, principles, or ideas that are used to analyze and solve formulated research questions. The nature of this research is descriptive analysis, namely regular decomposition of the data that has been obtained, then given an understanding and explanation so that it can be understood well by the reader.

Results

The literacy condition of the Indonesian people is at a low level. This can be seen based on the data derived from the results of the International Association for Evaluation of Educational study on the reading literacy of fourth grade elementary school students in 30 countries in the world, concluding that in 1992 Indonesia was ranked 29th, one level above Venezuela, which was ranked last in the ranking or in the 30th position. The data above is relevant to the World Bank data in 1998 which showed that the reading literacy of the sixth grade elementary school children in Indonesia was in the last rank with an average score of 51.7. This position is below the children of the Philippines (52.6), Thailand (65.1), Singapore (74.0), and Hong Kong (75.5) (Baderi, 2003). In addition, the results of the Central Connecticut State University study (2016) placed Indonesia at 60th out of 61 countries in terms of literacy.

The Central Statistics Agency (2018) states that the Indonesian people have not made reading their main source of information. Indonesians prefer watching television (93.21%) and/or listening to radio (12.73%) rather than reading newspapers/magazines both printed and online (19.24%). The results of the (Fleischman et al., 2010) found that Indonesia was ranked 57th out of 65 countries in the world in terms of literacy ability. This illustrates how low the literacy ability of the Indonesian nation is. Even sometimes, with this easy access, parents forget that it is not uncommon to have various content that is sometimes not suitable for consumption by children at an early age in these media (Pratiwi et al., 2019).

Quoted from online mass media (Isnaniyanti, 2012). Muria News (2016), the Regent of Jepara revealed that in 2013 around 5.74% of residents in Jepara district had not been touched by literacy education. Meanwhile, children aged 10

years and over who are capable of literacy are 7.71% for girls and 2.98% for boys. The results of Tairas (2012) research show that 19.5% of students in grades 3-6 SD identified learning difficulties, which include learning difficulties in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The disturbance is due to the lack of mastery of early literacy skills in students.

Reading activities in Indonesia have not become a trend, even according to statistical data in Indonesia there are still illiterate people. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (2021), the percentage of illiteracy in East Java population with age above 15 years (7.44%), 15-44 years (0.94%) and 45 years and over (15.62%). Meanwhile, the percentage of Indonesia's population as a whole who is illiterate at the age above 15 years (3.96%), 15-44 years (0.73%), and 45 years and over (9.24%). This shows that the literacy rate of the people of East Java is lower than the average literacy rate in Indonesia. Meanwhile, in people who are literate, a study was found which showed that as many as 57.4% of elementary school students in Malang City lacked or did not like to read. In fact, the facts on the ground also show that children tend to prefer playing games and watching television rather than reading (Isnaniyanti, 2012).

According to (Muktiono, 2003), the ability to read accompanied by strong reading habits is very important in improving the social and economic fields. In other words, reading is a key in creating quality human resources. This certainly has a major impact on improving the people's economy. One of the factors that must be considered so that children can have strong reading habits, is a capable early literacy ability. However, based on the facts above, it can be seen that the literacy ability of the Indonesian people is low.

As human resources in the future, Indonesia's young generation is expected to be able to become pillars that support the country, one of which is in the people's economy sector. In an effort to make this happen to the younger generation, the effort that needs to be done is to develop early literacy in children. This is because qualified literacy skills will give birth to an interest in reading activities. With a high reading interest, strong reading habits will be formed so that the information and knowledge obtained can improve the quality of the young generation's human resources in global competition. To realize this goal, it is necessary to make efforts to break the chain of low literacy culture, especially for children. However, based on the data above, it shows that children are more likely to choose to play games and watch television than reading.

Froebel (Roopnarine & Johnson, 2012) argue that childhood is a very important and valuable stage of development because it is a period of formation in the period of human life. Therefore, this phase is often seen as a golden age in the world of education and development. This phase is a stage of development that is very fundamental for individual development because at this time there is a very large opportunity for the formation and development of a person's personality.

One of the stages of development according to Piaget is the early childhood stage which is known as the preoperational stage. This stage occurs in children aged 2 to years (Papalia, 2015). The preoperational stage is the preparation stage for organizing concrete operations. At this stage, the child's thinking is more based on concrete experience than logical thinking, so if he sees objects that seem different, he says they are different. At this stage, the child is still in the pre-operational stage and does not understand the concept of conservation, namely long eternity, material eternity, area, etc. Apart from that, the characteristics of children at this stage do not understand and cannot think about two or more aspects simultaneously.

According to Piaget (Santrock et al., 2014) in the pre-operational stage there are two sub-stages that occur, that is: (1) The symbolic function substage that occurs in children aged 2-4 years. At this stage the child will develop the ability to mentally imagine an object that does not exist. In this substage, children develop two aspects of preoperational characteristics, namely egocentrism and animism; And (2) Sub-stage of intuitive thinking that occurs in children 4-7 years. At this stage the child begins to use primitive reasoning and wants to know the answers to all forms of questions. Therefore, Piaget called this period the 'intuitive' period. The 'intuitive' period which emphasizes curiosity about the answers to all forms of questions is the forerunner in growing early literacy in children. With high curiosity, children will explore many things that can be done by writing, reading, and telling stories.

This is in line with the opinion expressed by Mag (2015), children tend to be more easily formed in the early stages of their lives. Every experience they absorb in their early years can be the foundation that leads to a significant increase in their personality. According to this view, children are considered to be highly impressionable and more accepting than they were when they were adults, so any experiences they encounter initially will have permanent consequences. Therefore, the key to the subsequent formation of their personality is seen as already present in the first meeting between the child and his initial environment.

Early childhood is a sensitive period in which early stimulation of brain centers involved in language leads to the development and maintenance of neuronal connections critical for language functioning. So that this age is the right time for someone to grow early literacy skills. Literacy is not just fixated on reading and writing. However, the ability of a child to identify, understand, criticize, and create so that they will be stimulated to have a high passion for reading and writing (Permatasari & et al., 2017). Kuder & Hasit (2002) states that the notion of developing literacy includes the process of reading, writing, speaking, listening, imagining, and seeing. More deeply, Barratt-Pugh & Rohl (2020) argues that literacy is not just the achievement of children's cognitive abilities. Literacy is the participation of children in social and cultural environments that shape their perspectives, knowledge, values, and communication skills. In the context of early childhood, literacy skills that are taught and inculcated at an early age are called early literacy. Early literacy is when children know about communication, language (verbal and nonverbal), reading, and writing before they can actually read or write (Read & Ghoting, 2015).

According to Purcell-Gates (2001), early literacy components include phonemic awareness, writing and story concepts, reading styles, and literacy as a socio-cultural activity. Meanwhile, Green et al. (2006) stated that the literacy abilities of preschool children can be grouped into six types, namely; (1) storytelling skills; (2) motivation to read writings; (3) vocabulary; (4) phonological awareness (sounds of language); (5) knowledge of letters; (6) and awareness of writing.

Sénéchal & LeFevre (2014) argue that good early literacy skills help children to learn to read more easily and increase children's success rates in school. This statement is reinforced by the results of an analysis conducted by the Literacy (2008) which states that conventional reading and writing skills developed from birth to the age of 5. It has a clear and consistently strong correlation with conventional literacy skills in the future. In general, there are six variables representing early literacy skills or early reading skills that have a medium to large scale predictive relationship, namely; (1) letter knowledge; (2) phonological awareness; (3) quickly recognize letters and objects (rapid automatic naming/RAN) on letters and numbers; (4) quickly recognize letters and objects (rapid automatic naming/RAN) on objects and colors (5) write their own letters and names; (6) and phonological memory.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the literacy level of the Indonesian people is still relatively low. This can be seen from the data above. Based on the results of the discussions that have been carried out, it is necessary to provide suggestions in the form of interventions in the hope of breaking the chain of literacy skills which so far are still relatively low. The intervention that the researcher designed refers to the child as the target, this was done by the researcher as an effort to prevent (prevention) the development of low literacy skills.

Recommendations

Through the explanation above, it can be seen that the literacy ability of the Indonesian people is very low. One way to overcome this is to break the link in the younger generation by developing early literacy in children. However, it should be done in a fun way. Boring methods of learning, let alone the ones suppressing children's psychology, can reduce their attention and even their interest. Based on this, the researcher recommends an intervention that is preventive in nature, namely the Program for Improving Children's Early Literacy Skills through the Shared Reading and Fairytale Method. The two methods were chosen because they qualify as educational and fun methods. It is important to launch this

program considering the declining awareness of the interest and importance of reading among the younger generation. Through these two methods, it is hoped that early literacy can be formed without sacrificing their feeling of pleasure in learning.

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