

ENRICHING THE ACTIVITY OF READING SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Abstract: Nowadays, there are so many phenomenons where parents tend to rely on tutor or teachers' help for their children's reading activity even though most of them can read. This study aims to reveal parents' awareness who can read to facilitate their children for reading earlier. This study focuses on theory analysis relating to the ways of enriching the activity of early childhood reading skills development. The method used is literature review based on documents. The result of analysis shows that there are several ways to enrich the children's reading skill which are: (1) reading loudly, (2) introducing story books including the way to demonstrate the texts reading and enriching children comprehension towards texts read.

Keywords: reading, parent, early childhood

1. Introduction

Education in 21st century is characterized by the needs of children who are able to think critically, creatively, communicatively, and cooperatively (Kemendikbud, 2018). Furthermore, the 21st century needs the basic literacy skill which involves writing and reading, counting, science, digital technology, and understanding culture. It all can be achieved if the children like reading. Many scholars suggest to introduce literacy earlier to children starting from they were born when they are experimenting with oral language (Gambrell & Mazzoni 1999, 81 in Beaty 2013). In addition, the result of the research also shows that the children's literacy skills have good outcomes during 5 years of their lives (Adams, 1990; Pullen & Justice, 2003; Yaden, Rowe, & MacGillivray, 2000).

The curiosity of children to know writing is viewed clearly when they are in neighbourhood, and they often give a writing text to read by their parents or elders (Schickedanz et al, 1990 & Otto, 2015). That kind of offer shows that a child comprehends if writing has an intention (Otto, 2015). In this case, the children need active interaction with printed and spoken languages. In fact, the ability to read can be developed naturally by children. However, it does not mean that the ability of direct reading is naturally ongoing without support from elders (Beaty 2013, 351). If they are given facilities, suitable supports and stuffs, they will pass through all the steps naturally in developing their reading skills, similar to situation when they study to speak.

There are various ways to teach children in developing their reading skills; one of them is using story books (Otto 2015, 185). Without book, children only have a little bit passion in reading. Then, without any support from their parents about how to read, the children will think that reading is something not important to do (Beaty 2013, 251). The various story books are available on the market starting from the import and the local books. Unfortunately, most of books are looked for by elder, but those are not used and applied well so that the outcome does not improve well. Cognitive psychologists think that elders do not know how to improve the outcome when they have important roles in developing "the root of literacy" in children (Beaty, 2013). Therefore, parents are suggested to pick one of book series to be the materials in order to make it the orientation in reading learning.

Based on the background above, this study aims to reveal the awareness of parents who can read to facilitate their children in reading learning earlier. This study gives description of various techniques done well by any parents in order to give the best outcome in achieving the purpose of education. In line with the explanation, the result of this study aims to describe about enriching the activity of children's reading skill development that consist of (1) the importance of reading book for early childhood, (2) the ways to read a book to children, (3) the ways to introduce a book to children including the way how to demonstrate a text reading, and the way to enrich children comprehension towards texts read.

2. Literature Review

a. Why is the activity of reading book important for early children?

The result of the research indicates that reading a book gives positive impact to children in entertaining and stimulating imagination in order to expand their language skills, and it will help them to internalize the characters of the story and to develop the interpretation of the story (Morrow 1985, 129 in Tompkins & Hoskisson 1995). If this is held continuously, it will give benefit to improve written language and more specific concepts knowledge in terms of alphabet and phonemic knowledge (Neuman 1999; Otto 1996 in Otto 2015, 327).

Reading books early gives benefits for life such as (Tarigan, 2015) : (1) introducing books early helps children get used to treat a book as the source of interesting and enjoyable information, so when they get older, they will get used to do it and are ready to read any kinds of books. (2) Reading books to children, parents will get used to apply formal language. It will enrich the children's vocabularies; they will study with using language well and correctly. (3) Through reading books, children will get happiness and joy when they are close to their parents so that it will give the sensation of intimacy among them.

b. How to read a book to children?

The book choice becomes an important thing that has to be done by parents or elder based on the needs of children's learning (Morrow & Gambrell, 2001 in Roskos, 2013). Moreover, parents can give their children options to read books that they are interested to (Otto 2015, 186). The reading of story books can be chosen by reading a book loudly to focus on the similarity of words sound and the fonemic awareness through texts which are characterized by their rhytems, their patterns and some clauses which are difficult to say (Brown, 2007).

Reading loudly has a characteristic as the maximal study potential where the children have opportunity to involve and respond actively (Marrow dan Gambrell 2001 dalam Roskos, 2003). Yet, reading loudly improves more positive attitudes in reading and increase children's literacy skill earlier (Manning & Word dkk dalam Jalongo 2007, 47). Several particular ways done by parents in reading loudly are: firstly, they understand and comprehend the materials of reading that will be read. Therefore, before reading a story, the parents have to read the materials of reading and understand the contents of the reading text. As the result, the parents will know the parts of the story that need some particular stresses, words, or concepts before reading to avoid misconception. Furthermore, the parents also should make the mood more interesting and express the emotions built by the story, also bring literacy into the real situation through gesture, sound effect, and change in tone and voice.

Secondly, the parents should read with no constantly looking at the text read. They should give some eye contact during reading the story, have a low seat close to their children, and hold the book in proper angle so that their children can look the illustrations. Thirdly, the parents should read the text with full of confidence. Lastly, they should use proper utterances, proper intonation, master punctuation, read clearly, and read no stammered. If not possible to finish a whole parts or chapters in a story, the parents should try to stop in a tense part of the story.

c. How to introduce books to children?

The important thing that has to be paid attention is the parents' or elders' mastery of introducing books techniques (Cox, 1999). The techniques applied must be effective so that the information will be delivered well. Therefore, the parents have to have proper comprehension and master the techniques of introducing books with demostrating the reading texts well and enriching the children comprehension towards the texts read.

1) Demonstrating a text book

The effective way to demonstrate book consists of three parts, which are: before reading, while reading, and after reading (Mason, Peterman & Kerr 1989 in Otto 2015, 329).

a) Before reading

- Habituating the children to pick a book they like and their curiosity towards the book (Roskos 2003). Parents better show all story books to their children based on their ages and ask them to pick their most favorite book to read.
- Knowing the concepts of book such as cover, tittle and pages. For instance, before reading a book, children are introduced about all the things relating to cover such as the introduction of the cover color, the writing, and vocabularies consisted in the cover, and the introduction of pages with explaining how to count together while showing pages consisted in the book (Roskos 2003).
- Introducing characters in the story told such as introducing the color of characters or pictures (hair, suit, pants, skin color) and color of each book pages (Jalongo, 1992).

b) While reading

- Parents read a whole story to their children.
- Use expressions and voice characteristics with showing the differences between the language of book with daily conversation (Jalongo & Mary Renck 2007, 47).
- Show the steps of reading starting from the left side to the right side, from above to below while showing the parts read.
- The comprehension of children towards story books can be developed with using dolls fingers or characters which are made by flannel (Otto 2015, 329)
- Read a book continuesly to build intimacy and to improve the possibility of children trying to read by themselves. (Roskos 2003).


c) After reading

- Ask children to be the main character, then parents ask the content of the story read with using 5 W (What, when, why, who, where) so that they will get more vocabularies.
- Ask children to start reading the words by themselves because in this step they have got more vocabularies to do the first step of reading by themselves (Tompkins & Hoskisson 1995, 250).
- Parents guide their children to tell them of unknown words because this step is the gradual process done by the children to use all the information they have.

The books that can be demonstrated are the books that have approved by children previously to read together. More specifically, this study will provide the example of demonstrating a story book which is taken from an author named Devi Raissa as the student of psychology master's degree of Indonesia University. The production of the books which are printed by her own is specially intended to baby and children at 0-7 years old which one of them entitled *Asal Mula Namaku* that is intended to children at 3-7 years old.

This book is basically trying to introduce alfabeth, but in specific way which is made by an interesting story. This book adapts story into the characters of the story, which each character is given a letter, namely A, I, U, E, O, Z, Dad, and Mom. This book also tells about how a pregnant mom wants boiled rice cake in East Java which is specically called Mojokerto. In the first page, there is the intruction for use page and the guideline for parents to help them reading. Furthermore, there will be athe explanation about how to demonstrate the text book with the examples of story books entitled *Asal Mula Namaku*.

Table 1 The concept before reading a book

	Activity
	<p>a. Introducing the book cover. In this step, make sure the parents explain in detail all the things consisted in the book cover. For instance, (“This cover has light green color, the words consisted in the cover of this book are “<i>Asal mula Namaku</i>”, there are six characters in this book. This book was written by Devi Raissa and the illustrator of this book named Guntur G. This book was printed out by Rabbit Hole and this book is intended to children at 3-7 years old).</p>
	<p>b. Introducing the title of the book For instance, (Look! the title of this book is “<i>Asal Mula Namaku</i>”). The parents should introduce the title by pointing and the words one by one. For example, the word “ASAL” A-S-A-L is read ASAL untill the children can combine all the titles consisted in the book.</p>
	<p>c. Introducing the pages The parents guide their children by showing each pages consisted in the book and using the way to open each pages and trying to count the pages.</p>

- d. Introducing the characters in the story
For instance, (explaining the six characters in the book which are A, I, U, E, O, Dad, and Mom with explaining the characteristics of their bodies, suit colors, and pants, hairs, and skin colors.



Table 2. The concept of reading a book






	Activity
	<p>a. Read a whole story of the book In this step, the parents read all the contents in the story starting from the first page until the last page which is pages 26.</p>
	<p>b. Use expressions and voice characteristics. In this book, there are six characters; each of them has their own characteristics. Parents should differentiate each character through expressions and voice characteristics so that the children can catch up the difference of each character read. Use puppet characters to easily read the story.</p>
	<p>c. In the time of reading the story, parents should show the reading steps from the left side to the right side, from above to below while showing the parts have been read.</p>
	<p>d. Re-read the book of Asal Mula Namaku and ask them to repeat every single sentence read by parents</p>

Table 3. The concept after reading

	Activity
	<p>a. Parents ask the content of the story read by using 5 W (<i>What, when, why, who, where</i>).</p> <p>For examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who are the characters involved in the story of <i>Asal Mula Namaku</i>? 2. How is the characteristic of each character in the story of <i>Asal Mula Namaku</i>? 3. What things does make the difference of each character in the story of <i>Asal Mula Namaku</i>? 4. Why the characters are given names only a letter for each? 5. Where do the characters live?
	<p>b. After asking the content of the book, parents can ask the children to repeat the story by guiding them through each pages consisted in the story.</p>

Since the children's listening comprehension build the basis of understanding the next reading, the activity of reading a story book with demonstrating the text book correctly based on the steps above is important. Reading a familiar and favorite story book continuesly will help children to remember of the events of the story (Otto, 2015). The comprehension of this listening process allows children to understand parts of the story without looking the illustration immediately. However, reading a story book together has to have a high quality illustration with supporting the story and the theme. So, when children will recreate the story, they will use the illustration as the way to remember some particular texts (Otto, 2015).

2) Enriching the comprehension towards reading text


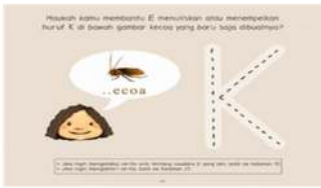
In the process of enriching reading texts, there are several techniques according to several scholars (Roskos, 2003 & Otto, 2015) which can help parents for enriching the comprehension of children towards reading texts:

- Do a conversation which consists of the use of many vocabularies correctly, understandable and suitable vocabularies for children, give stress in some keywords with repeating the explanation, talk in quick tempo, tell no unclear things and using logical planning and thinking as the basic of a speaking clearly.
- Use some new words or words that are rarely faced by children in daily conversation to enrich children's vocabularies.
- Improve the children's comments into the more complete comments.
- Discuss a challenging topic cognitively and improve the level of difficulties.
- Parents should communicate directly in the forms of question and answer and explore the comprehension of children relating to the stories read so that the children will get more vocabularies.

- Listen and pay attention of everything that children say, when they are talking, respond them well by asking something that needs to help and something they do not understand so that they do not switch their attention by shouting out and running away.
- Support the children to connect the events in the story in to their lives.
- The participation of children’s oral language can be developed to be involved in joint responses simultaneously, dialog segments, or a full conversation interaction.

There will be the explanation in enriching the comprehension of children towards reading text which focuses on the story book entitled “Asal Mula Namaku with tha character of E” below:

Table 4. Enriching the reading text

	Activity
	<p>a. One of the characters’ name in this story is E which consists of several events that is formed into 5 pages. The character of E in the story book of Asal Mula Namaku looks affraid, in fact, E is affraid of many things which the most one is cockroach. However, E finally can solve his problem because the fact that cockroach is affraif of human.</p>
	<p>b. Based on the E’s experience, parents can support their children to connect the events of the story to their lives. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is cockroach? - You think where does cockroach live? - What is the food of cockroach? - Please mention the color of cockroach? - Can cockroach be eaten by human? - What is the first letter of the cockroach word? <p>From only one character, parents can enrich the comprehension of children by connecting the events of the story to their lives. This can be done by parents continuesly so that the comprehension of children improves well.</p>

The activity of questioning is often done to discuss the more complex phenomenon which does not exist in front of children’s sight when they are discussing. The job of parents is to use the strategy that can expand the ability of children to think and present (Copples *et al* 1984, 25 dalam Otto 2015). When children are supported to present the concrete experience through various forms of communication such as oral text, written text, and art, they have opportunity ti construct this experience mentally, which explore their ways of thinking and their skills that consist of ask question and challenge the children to move out of the concrete experience correctly (Copples *et al*, 1984 dalam Otto 2015).

This thing is very important for parents when they enrich the comprehension of their children towards texts read, the questions asked by parents are series of what has been said by children, and it will challenge them to think more about complex situation. In addition, the ability of story telling in orders to reveal the several elements above, and is presented well, can be only mastered by experience and sedulous training. As the result, parents are expected to read more story books to their children and make them the basis to be used as an interesting reading learning.

Some people that are close to children besides their parents can give learning and knowledge to children especially the reading activity. Circle affects a lot in children development and can not be

sapareded from children's life. In the theory of ecology relating to development which is formulated by Urie Bronfenbrenner (Bappeans, 2006), a child is the core of circles that are surrounded by several interaction systems which one of them is the system of micro. The micro system is the closest system to a child including parents, family members such as sibling. Interaction is held by children immediately in long time span until they are growing older or in pre-school ages. Therefore, reading story books that consist of the techniques of demonstrating a text and enriching comprehension towards the texts read for children is not held only by parents, but also siblings and other family members that can give knowledge to the children so that they will get more vocabularies.

3. Materials And Methods

The method used in this study is literature review which the result of this study is written based on common theories and discussed to give a solution in the writing of this study.

4. Conclusion

The explanation about enriching the children reading skill development for early childhood can be done by various ways. The first way is reading loudly which is needed in order to develop more positive attitudes in reading and improve the children literacy skills earlier. The second way is introducing the reading texts that consists of (1) demonstrating the reading texts to create good communication by giving the children comprehension before reading, while reading, and after reading, (2) enriching the comprehension of children towards texts read so that they are expected to get more new vocabularies, think critically, improve their knowledge. The last way is the role of whole closest circles especially the family members to help children improving their reading skills in interesting way.

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