



STRATEGIES TO FOSTER READING INTEREST THROUGH EMERGENT LITERACY AT TAMAN PENGEMBANGAN ANAK MAKARA

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Abstract

This research discusses the strategies to foster reading interest for children at early age at Taman Pengembangan Anak Makara, Universitas Indonesia that is compatible with emergent literacy implemented by effective early childhood teachers. The purpose of this study is to improve the strategy of basic literacy in order to increase reading interest in early childhood in day care centers. This research uses qualitative approach with case study method. The informants were vice coordinators of TPAM, facilitators and co-facilitators, and parents of students. The result shows that the efforts are infusing literacy introduction to children's language development, using interesting media when telling stories, reading books to children before bedtime, teaching children to love books, delivering books creatively and effectively, and providing training to the facilitators in TPAM. It was concluded that emergent literacy in TPAM emphasizes a child-oriented pattern. In essence, children can maximize their potential to have better literacy. The recommendation is that TPAM needs to give more training for the facilitators, add more varied books, and improve books related activities.

Keywords: Emergent Literacy; Early Childhood; Facilitator to Promote Literacy; Reading Interest; Book Collection

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A. INTRODUCTION

In order to foster a love for reading, it requires a continuous, positive attitude toward reading and the book itself. Perhaps, for most people, it might still be difficult to do since book has not become a priority and lifestyle. A person who has good reading skills, can understand the text, which is the basis for determining success in school, work, and life as a whole (Walgermo, Frijters, & Solheim, 2018). Therefore, the planting of love for books from an early age would be very useful for later

on. Children who are at the age before entering elementary school need to get basic literacy, which is called emergent literacy (Puranik & Lonigan, 2014; Puranik, Lonigan, & Young-Suk, 2011).

The research conducted by Gilkerson et al (2017); Mascarenhas et al (2016); Antasari (2016); Dickinson et al (2012) state that emergent literacy skills in early childhood starts from the home environment, especially by parents. If children are outside the home, the role is carried out by the school librarian, teacher, facilitator, or

caregiver. They must have an understanding of reading activities at an early stage and also culture in children. In addition, they need to build closeness with children. Based on the research of Tayob and Moonsamy, this intimacy is difficult to do for orphans in South Africa ([Tayob & Moonsamy, 2018](#)). These children have different conditions compared to children who have complete parents, they are in a state of trauma. Caregivers cannot build on the intimacy because they cannot understand the character of orphans.

TPAM, stands for Taman Pengembangan Anak Makara, as a place of research to foster interest in reading for early childhood because this daycare center is different than any other places, which makes it unique. TPAM implements a variety of child development theories of psychology, medicine, dentistry, nursing, literacy, and so forth. Although it is a daycare center, it contributes to grow reading interest for early childhood. Also, it is a laboratory for early childhood development.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading and emergent literacy

According to Renninger as cited in Pintrich, Schunk, & Meece, interest is not only personal feeling or personal preference of some certain activity or topic but also a mix between the highest perception to choose and put forward an activity, also a great deal of knowledge about it ([Pintrich, Schunk, & Meece, 2008](#)). In other words, Renninger argued that interest is an appreciation for an activity done by someone.

Reading is a dexterity acquired after learning process, not genetics that could only be developed nor built. Reading activity should be a routine for people to obtain knowledge and information ([Sugihartati, 2010a](#)). People who love to read will improve their reading ability, gain new vocabulary, then absorb knowledge of the world and even can increase their intelligence ([Puranik & Lonigan, 2014; Walgermo et al., 2018](#)).

Interest is an impulse of desire and a high tendency towards something. Reading interest means an inner impulse to read. A person tends to read books that can satisfy or please him. Based on the definition, reading interest is a desire to read that comes from within without external force ([Chinappi, 2015; Dickinson & et al., 2012; Sugihartati, 2010b](#)). If we read a lot, we could know more about things extensively and be intelligent. The more intelligent we are, the more book we read and the more interested we are in doing it. Thus, if we enjoy reading since early age, it would be a lot easier for us to indulge in reading activity when we grow up ([Mascarenhas & et al., 2017](#)).

Emergent literacy is the development of the preschoolers' skills, knowledge, and attitudes that underlie reading and writing ([Puranik & Lonigan, 2014; Puranik et al., 2011](#)). Another definition mention that it is a term most commonly used to represent new ways in explaining notions of introducing the world of reading and writing to child at early age. The readiness of reading is characterized by a set of skills that are considered as a prerequisite for learning to read.

Prerequisite skills can be divided into two. The first one is spoken language skill, such as vocabularies,

syntax, narrative structure and language comprehension used to communicate. The second one is the ability to connect letters with sounds that can help to understand words on the printed material. The progress of recognizing words appears to be relying on phonological skill, whereas oral skill, like vocabularies and grammar, are more necessary predictors of reading comprehension ([Dickinson & et al, 2012](#); [Gilkerson, Richards, & Topping, 2017](#)).

Pre-school Basic Literacy Program

The preschool basic literacy program should be presented in any preschool about literacy skills that should be informal. In a pre-school, every individual interacts, and beneficial events could take place. Even though it is presented in pre-schools formally, here are short summaries regarding the programs ([Amundson, 2015](#); [Dickinson & et al, 2012](#); [Gilkerson et al., 2017](#)):

Read books to kids every day, and the reading materials could be story books with pictures, books with light storylines and other educational books. It requires austerity in vocal styles. In reading, the styles of vocal that are needed consist of intonation (tone, stress, and tempo) and timbre. The roles of these elements are vital to create imaginative power in the form of background, storyline and characters. If this process is conducted by monotonous language and vocal could make the children bored easily ([Gunawan, 2018](#)).

1. Listen to recorded books (read aloud) to children entertainingly.
2. Use easy and understandable language approach.

3. Act out the characters in books that have been read by playing dramas using props and costumes types.
4. Use dolls, stuffed animals and boards that are useful to the teacher while reading the book.
5. Involve the children in informal activities, in order to expand the concept about books to the children, such as how to read from left to right, beginning and end of a printed page, the concept of words and letters, and concepts of titles, writers, and trade illustrators.
6. Own different types of writing materials, such as striped paper, markers, crayons, pens and blank books of various types
7. Give real reasons to write, such as writing reasonable shopping list, thank-you cards, birthday cards, and experiences when they act out.
8. Give them some times to correct their spoken language with sharing time, conversation, informal discussion.
9. Listen to all types of reading with big volume and record tapes from various types and watch and listen television programs at their age.
10. Participate in all kinds of creative activities, might be related with parts of language theme.
11. Children should participate in all kinds of musical and rhythmical activities that are related to parts of language theme.
12. Read stories or tell stories before sleep.

Definition of Early Childhood

Child at early age is an individual that is going through a developmental process by leaps and bounds and fundamental for their upcoming life ([Chinappi, 2015](#); [Haas, et al, 2017](#)).

Early childhood's ages range from 0 to 6 years old (Act on National Education System in 2003). They are in the process of growing and unique development. Also, they have distinct pattern of growth that is according to the level of development.

Early age is a crucial period for children's growth, also called golden age. Children at early age are in a darting process of growth, both physically and mentally, that could not be replaced in the future. They learn in their own way. Based on several researches in neurology, it has been proven that 50% of child intelligence is shaped in the first four years.

Language Development of Children

The language development of children is included in early childhood education because of the age range, which is 0 to 6 years old ([Dickinson, et al, 2012](#)). Here are the early childhood language development stages: newborns until they are 3 years old already recognize books based on covers. They have not yet been able to read, but they have been able to pretend to read the book. They are very fond of listening to stories. They also have begun to doodle something that resembles letters, and love the game of words or rhymes.

Furthermore, children who are 3 to 4 years old can find out that alphabets have different names and pictures, so they can create the doodles that have meanings only for them. Other than that, they recognize printed signs to differentiate alphabets. In this stage, they start to pay attention to the sounds of language they are using. Linking events from stories to their real life experience is what they love to do, too.

Five year old children are already able to write their names by writing alphabet letters and words they have learned by understanding and they can mention the sequence of the initial letter to the end of the word. They also use spellings that they have previously learned to write messages. During this age, the children can mention book titles and predict how the story goes based on the pictures or illustrations shown in the books.

Types of reading materials that are suitable for early childhood are as follows ([Muktiono, 2003](#)):

- a. 0 to 3 years old. At this age, books for them are called toddler book. It is filled with a lot of simple pictures in bright colors, and focuses on simple stories and light storylines that can grab children's attention. In addition, it stimulates them to learn to imitate the words that are said to them. This is due to the fact that children at this age are listeners and great imitators. Books that contain only series of related images that form a simple story without words will also draw children's attention from this age range. They will train the child's visual and mental since they stimulate their imaginative skill. Therefore, this type of book is good for them to start telling the stories in their own way just by looking at the pictures. Moreover, books should be made of thick cardboard and firm plastic, so that they are not easy to tear by the children.
- b. 3 to 6 years old. In this age range, books that portray the objects or experiences close to their daily lives would be very exciting for them. Various fairy tales and folklores are attention grabbers for

them. They like to listen to sentences that are a bit complex but rhymed or rhythmic. Repeating words effectively would also be interesting for them. Books that offer constructive activities with pop-up pictures and splendid effects are loved by children at this age.

C. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses qualitative approach with case study method. The process of collecting data is done through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted to identify and provide a direct description of strategies to foster interest in early childhood reading conducted by TPAM. The informants were selected by purposive sampling techniques ([Wildemuth, 2009](#)). They were one vice coordinator of TPAM, one co-facilitator, one facilitator, and three parents. The names are pseudonyms.

The data that has been found either through observation, interviews, or document analysis will be recorded in the fieldnotes. This way, the data on this research are expected to be viewed holistically and thoroughly. After the data are recorded into fieldnotes, the researcher subsequently interprets the data obtained using the literature and concept of knowledge held by the researcher. The final stage of data analysis is the conclusion as a result of the research.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Taman Pengembangan Anak Makara (TPAM) is a childcare that conforms to the rules of health sciences and psychology for children aged 1 year 8 months to 4 years. TPAM was

established by the Faculty of Psychology in 2008, in collaboration with Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Dentistry, and Faculty of Nursing, Universitas Indonesia. It is a laboratory of child development and education as a form of academic community contribution to the society within scope of infants.

The instructors of TPAM

The number of instructors is 13 people, assisted by 2 officers. They serve around 15 toddlers every day. They are chaired by Lily, who has a master's background in psychology, and Lusi who is in charge of making learning concepts. Other staff have undergraduate education. They have their respective duties, such as welcoming new parents who register for the first time, or accompanying certain children.

Their abilities are supported by many factors. For example, almost all of them are already married and have children, so they can practice caring for children in their homes. In addition, the relationships between them also appear to support each other and learn from each other ([Gunawan, 2018](#)). In general, the TPAM is a reference for various institutions, including the Syarif Hidayatullah Center for Child and Gender Studies at Jakarta, Day care Rumah Cerdas at Malang, PAUD Permata Ratu Pekanbaru at Riau, even institutions from Malaysia and Rotterdam.

Activities at TPAM

1. Interjecting Emergent Literacy Based on Language Development of Children

The introduction of emergent literacy is done through fun activities,

so children will feel more interested to participate. Children at early age are introduced to something through singing with the intention of enriching vocabularies along with introducing objects, even interjecting emergent literacy. In the morning before starting storytelling activity, the facilitator always does warming-ups with movements and songs. The songs chosen are songs with simple rhyming words. Through the songs, the children are also introduced to words about body parts.

In accordance with Miller's (2000) theory of an effective preschool basic literacy program, children participate in all types of musical and rhythmic activities, which are often associated with the theme of all language units. TPAM engages in activities involving children with music activities, so children can widen their vocabulary knowledge.

After dancing and singing, they start the story telling session. The two children chosen by the facilitators will tell their stories. Sometimes, almost all children raise their hands up when the facilitator asks if somebody who wants to share their stories that day. The facilitator will then choose the child who rarely shares, so that they get to experience it.

The stages of language development of children aged 3 to 4 years have been able to relate events in the story to their daily experiences ([Mascarenhas, et al, 2017](#)). In addition, they can already tell the incident expressively. The children at TPAM have been able to tell the teacher and his friends.

TPAM teaches letter recognition to the children through symbols. While observing, it was seen that the children were taught letter recognition, and one

of the ways to do that was tracing the broken lines which would make a letter or number. The facilitators at TPAM has not yet given reading nor writing exercises. They only introduce the children to letters and numbers. By getting introduced to the world of literacy first, it would trigger the children to have a great curiosity. Therefore, before mastering reading and counting, they have to be familiar to letters and numbers.

2. Using Interesting Media for Storytelling

Every morning, they will have a storytelling session, using interesting media, which has been implemented by the facilitators at TPAM. This activity is routinely carried out by instructors to children. For the storytelling activity, they do it in a different way. They will tell a story related to the topic they will teach that day. This is done to make the children put their focus and grasp the meaning of the lesson more. Storytelling activity could boost their imagination ([Yolanda, 2014](#)).

Before the activity is executed, the facilitators have taken the story into account and made the story not too long yet attractive. Thus, what will be conveyed through the story can be done immediately. This happens by considering the ability of early childhood thinking that has not been complex.

The facilitators at TPAM are making the use of several media tools to do the activity. Creative and various media tools are utilized in order to make the children interested and not get bored easily. It could be hand-props, wayang, PowerPoint slides, puppet, and roleplays, read aloud and last but not least, books. This is also to

make the child not just fixated on one media only. Figure 1 shows that facilitator used laptop to present the story. They sat on the floor around the storyteller, accompanied by 2

facilitators. Images on the laptop can be seen more clearly by everyone if the image is transferred via LCD to the wall.



Figure 1.
Using laptop

Based on the propriety of various structured activities by TPAM, it can be concluded that TPAM has carried out preschool basic literacy programs in accordance with Miller's (2002) theory. This shows that there is one strategy to foster interest in reading for early childhood in line with the main theory.

The strategy is to use a variety of media to tell stories, which will trigger the children to be more interested in the book, so it can foster reading interest. The children have gained many ways to keep meaningful content from reading material or books in a way that is not always has to be read. They will also gain valuable experience when introduced to the world of literacy.

3. Bedtime Reading for Children

The facilitators at TPAM have a special way to foster reading interest in early childhood, which is reading books to children before nap. This is a

mandatory activity performed by a facilitator at TPAM. After washing up and changing to pajamas, the children will straight away look for books at the book corner to read before sleep. They can choose whatever they like and then bring the books to the bedroom. They also look orderly when choosing books.

Children who are often read to sleep by facilitators at TPAM will show interest to read his own book. Although they can not read yet, they are interested in the pictures in the book. They pretend to read by making up their own story. They also have begun to ask what letters were in the book. From that point, the lecturer at TPAM then begin to introduce letters step by step.

Children usually pretend to read and repeat stories when they see and flip through the pages of books that have been read to them. The children at TPAM do those things as well. They are able to comprehend books with

simple and interesting pictures. However, they are still unclear about what they are reading. Therefore, the facilitator still has to read for them.

4. Teaching Children to Love Books

Furthermore, facilitators at TPAM are teaching the children to love books. They make use of books that are suitable for their age. They have special criteria for the books that are going to be read which are will be kept at the corner bookshelf.

Books with more pictures and less writings are the right ones to be given to children at early age, so they could flourish their imagination through pictures. They have thick materials, so they cannot be ripped easily. Children also tend to pay more attention to the pictures only because they have not been able to read independently. The content of the book should be interesting as well, one that is close to daily activities.

TPAM has chosen the right type of book. At the age of 0 to 3 years, books for them are called toddler books which have contents filled with images of simple, brightly colored objects. This type of book contains series of pictures that are related to one another, forming a simple story without words. Books without words will train their visual and mental ability since the books stimulate imagination. Therefore, this type of book is good for them to tell their own version of the stories just from looking at the pictures. Books in this age range should be made of solid cardboard and plastic material that is not easy for children to tear down.

Besides choosing books based on the child's age, an effort to maximize the use of books in hope to grow the love for book from children is needed.

Thus, the facilitators also teach the children to take care of their books gently. These have been taught from the earliest age possible.

Moreover, the facilitators teach them how to look after the books. Children who tear a book will be given an advice on how it will disadvantage them and their friends. They always remind the children to take care of the books. Eventually, the child will understand that books should not be damaged and should be treated nicely.

In addition, maximizing the function of the book should also be followed by strategic book placement. Placement of book is also important to note in order to easily help children to get books as it will foster interest in reading.

5. Conveying Book Contents Creatively and Effectively

Delivering contents of books creatively will aid children's enthusiasm and reading interest. Through creative delivery, children would feel happy when books are read to them. It will also prompt them to imagine what the book is about. Thus, they will feel more attracted and think that it is a fun activity.

Additionally, effective way of delivering the content is essential. This is so that children will not feel disinterested during reading activity and not take too much time. It also maximizes the content of the book which can also be moral message that should be effectively conveyed. Children can focus more, so they will understand the contents of the book easier.

The facilitators really pay attention to the duration when they do storytelling activity. They will only read

books for 5 minutes to avoid disinterest from the children because if they read longer than that, the children will lose their focus. When that happens, the children will start to run around and do other activities which will make them miss out on the main activity. In fact, if the activity is too long, it will not interest them anymore. Therefore, facilitators should make use of time effectively.

Facilitators will ask the children about the story that has been read, which is one of the creative ways. This is to make sure that they do not lose focus. Besides that, the facilitators want to assure that they understand the story. After all, as the time goes by, most of the children who are used to having the facilitators read to them look more focused while listening to the story.

Reading books with entertaining expressions is one of the examples from the facilitators at TPAM to read aloud creatively. This way, they will draw the children's attention. Children will have better understanding about types of expressions, and it will be easier for them to imagine what is actually inside the book.

In line with the Gunawan's theory which explains that in early childhood, children will tend to be more interested in the way of delivering the contents of the book by using facial expressions entertainingly during storytelling process ([Gunawan, 2018](#)). This is due to the fact that various facial expressions correspond to the characters in the book read to them. They can also directly enjoy change of expressions of each character and every emotional situation in the story.

Other than expressions, intonation and voice processing are essential to read aloud creatively. This

is useful for boosting children's imagination. Voice intonation is arranged in such a way, so it will not be too loud and too slow. Voice processing is for imitating characters that is done to help the children vision and make them more alive.

6. Training for the Facilitators at TPAM

The coordinator and the vice coordinator at TPAM provide training to the facilitators with the purpose of increasing the capability and ability of each of them. Several forms of training are done in cooperation with the Faculty of Psychology, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Dentistry, and Faculty of Nursing of Universitas Indonesia.

To improve the ability of the facilitators in fostering reading interest of early childhood, they are given training on the read aloud method to enhance the interactions with students. In fact, the result of the training is significant enough as it is proven with interactive storytelling activity along with mastered reading techniques. Overall, this training provides good results on the ability to foster interest in reading for early childhood, starting from the preparation stage of selecting the appropriate book until the end the process of reading the story.

The training provided aims to improve the competence of the facilitators. This strategy align with Colker's theory which explains about characteristics of effective early childhood teachers ([Colker, 2008](#)). It can be said that this research intends to facilitate more knowledge on early childhood education for the facilitators and how to put themselves among the

children, so that learning process could go smoothly.

Strategies to foster reading interest

The first strategy is to do activities with children. The six activities above are fundamental activities carried out at the TPAM. At each activity, they grow children's awareness to empower themselves to develop. With programs that are arranged in such a way and evaluated every month, the facilitators systematically carry out strategies to increase reading interest in early childhood. In addition to the 6 activities above, they also conduct programs to explore the environment, such as going to the bank, circling the university environment, visiting historical sites outside the university, and holding competitions on August 17.

Environmental exploration can increase children's curiosity to be greater.

The second strategy is to communicate with parents. In addition to carrying out various activities, facilitators at TPAM always communicate with parents. They have the principle that parents are still the first teacher for their children, and the facilitator is only an intermediary media that helps parent education to children (Antasari, 2016; Gilkerson, et al., 2017). Meetings with parents are held every 3 months, and graduation meetings are held every 6 months. At this meeting, children are trained to perform art shows on the stage. In both meetings, the facilitators submit and discuss reports on child development. Figure 2 shows one of the report forms on social-emotional aspect.

LAPORAN EVALUASI PERKEMBANGAN ANAK

NAMA : Haidar Zayd Abulrahman
 SEMESTER/TAHUN : I (satu) / Tahun 2018 / 2019
 KELOMPOK : KUPU-KUPU

ASPEK PERKEMBANGAN	TERAMATI			TIDAK TERAMATI
	KONSISTEN	BELUM KONSISTEN	BELUM MUNCUL	
SOSIAL EMOSI				
Merapikan kembali mainan yang telah digunakan		✓		
Membantu saat ada yang meminta bantuan		✓		
Berinisiatif untuk melakukan sesuatu (misal: mengajak teman bermain)		✓		
Membuang sampah pada tempatnya	✓			
Berdoa sebelum memulai kegiatan (misal: makan, tidur)	✓			
Meminta izin menggunakan barang milik orang lain	✓			
Mau berbagi miliknya, seperti makanan dan mainan	✓			
Berterimakasih jika mendapat sesuatu		✓		
Meminta maaf	✓			
Menunggu giliran	✓			
Menunjukkan reaksi berbeda terhadap orang yang baru ditemui	✓			
Berekspresi dalam bermain peran		✓		
Berinteraksi dengan teman		✓		
Bersikap kooperatif saat kegiatan	✓			
Mengikuti aturan main	✓			
Menyelesaikan tugas	✓			

Keterangan:

Depok, 21 Desember 2018
Cofasilitator

Figure 2.

One of the report form

The contents of the report detail all the activities carried out in terms of

physical, cognitive, and social-emotional aspects. Based on this

behaviour, the facilitator gives instructions or solutions, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the child to parents, so that parents can take the best actions, especially in growing and improving children's literacy.

E. CONCLUSION

Emergent literacy in Taman Pengembangan Anak Makara (TPAM) emphasizes a child-oriented pattern. In essence, children can maximize their potential to have better literacy. The facilitators start by instilling vocabulary, introducing letters, physical and emotional development, and social. This literacy program with the method of learning while playing is supported by the belief that facilitators do not replace the role of parents as the main teacher. Through the report book, they

indirectly help parents to get to know children better. The facilitators are friendly, creative, and always try to be innovative, so that children will remain interested while at TPAM (Johan, 2012). In addition, TPAM has divided the tasks well, according to the capabilities of facilitators. However, the TPAM must provide training to the facilitator on a regular basis.

Due to the increased interest in reading, the advice given is that TPAM needs to add more collections of books, with more choices. The book corner must be wider to accommodate more books, which can make a small library. In addition, preservation and conservation for books is very necessary because there are many books that are damaged. Finally, the TPAM must extend the duration associated with book-related activities.

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